



## **St Luke's Science and Sports College Complaints Policy**

### **Aims**

St Luke's is fully committed to working in partnership with the parents and carers of all students. Our aim is to ensure that parents and carers feel able to raise any concerns at an early stage so that these can be addressed promptly and effectively. We value comments from parents and carers at all times about any aspects of school life.

### **Initial Concerns**

We welcome parents and carers, whenever they have a concern about an aspect of their child's education to communicate with the most appropriate person. Our 'communications flow chart' (annex A) can help in this respect. This ensures that the college is able to address any concerns immediately and prevent any issues becoming more serious. The college will always seek to resolve concerns to everyone's satisfaction to prevent the need for a formal complaint. Where there are difficulties in resolving an issue the school will seek to use the services of an impartial mediator from Children and Young People's Services to avoid the need for a formal complaints procedure which can be very stressful for all parties involved. Mediation aims to reduce the stress of dealing with a formal process and works with the disputants to resolve issues through mutual agreement. For more information go to:

## **Informal Stage 1(College Resolution)**

If you are concerned or unhappy with the way the college or a member of its staff has treated you, or you are concerned or unhappy with the way the college is operating its policies and procedures, then you can raise your concerns or make a complaint.

Usually the best way to deal with a concern or complaint is for the member of staff, Principal or college governor to talk with you so that they can understand what your concern or complaint is about, and take any appropriate action to put things right. The college will determine who is most appropriate to carry this out depending on the nature of the concern.

The person dealing with your concern may also want to take the opportunity to explain what has happened from the perspective of the college or staff member involved. Low level concerns or complaints can be dealt with quickly and effectively by the Principal or a governor using this approach, which is known as a 'college resolution'.

This way of dealing with your concern or complaint means solving, explaining, clearing up or settling your concern or complaint directly with you. It will not result in further action being taken against an individual member of staff, and the complaint will be closed after the process is completed.

Resolving your complaint in this manner can help to improve the service your community receives from the college.



## How does the College Resolution process work?

Once you have raised your concern or complaint, the person who is looking into it will contact you within 5 working days (in term time). They can arrange to talk to you face-to-face, on the telephone, or they can contact you by letter/email if you prefer.

For your part, you will need to;

- tell the college what happened and how you felt about it
- say what action you would like to see taken as a result
- agree the process for resolving your concern or complaint

This 'College Resolution' process is not about apportioning blame or about staff being dealt with through formal conduct or capability procedures – Colleges are centres of learning for everyone, and it is about learning from what has happened and working with you to make sure it doesn't happen again.

For its part, the College will:

- listen to your concerns
- explain what can happen to resolve your concern or complaint
- confirm with you the process that will be followed and who will deal with it
- if necessary, carry out a more detailed investigation into your concern or complaint. This is called a 'College Investigation' (see section on 'College Investigation' at the end of this document)
- provide information for parents and carers of children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) about how they can access support from The Devon Information Advice and Support service (this is a requirement in the SEND Code of Practice)  
[www.devonias.org.uk](http://www.devonias.org.uk) 01392 383080,  
[devonias@devon.gov.uk](mailto:devonias@devon.gov.uk)

## What can I expect from the College Resolution?

Most concerns or complaints are not likely to involve extensive or lengthy enquiries, and therefore you should expect an approach that is proportionate to the issue you have raised.

As the College Resolution process is aimed at quickly resolving your concern or complaint and learning from it, it won't lead to conduct or capability proceedings against a member of staff. However, where appropriate, the member of staff might receive further support or training as a result.

If your concern or complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with something the college has either done or not done, and not about somebody - for example, about the way the



college operates its policies or is directed to fulfil its statutory obligations - then it will still be resolved using this 'College Resolution' approach.

## Mediation

Sometimes during the handling of a complaint, communication between parents and the school can become difficult. Mediation can be a very useful way of helping people to resolve their differences and find an agreed way forward. Both parties need to agree to mediation. The school (or the parent) may suggest mediation, if communication becomes a problem.

Mediation can be sought at any point during the processes of resolution and investigation. The mediation process is informal, impartial and voluntary, and aims to resolve conflicts to the benefit of all. It does not apportion blame and concentrates on developing a better understanding of each other's point of view and works to secure future relationships. For more information, please contact: [roger.morris@devon.gov.uk](mailto:roger.morris@devon.gov.uk) 07966 474364.

For issues raised relating to SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) resources, specialist mediation is a requirement in the SEND Code of Practice. For more information please contact The Devon Information Advice and Support service: [devonias@devon.gov.uk](mailto:devonias@devon.gov.uk).

## What happens next?

There are different ways of dealing with the concern or complaint using the College Resolution process. These include:

- immediate resolution by providing information face-to-face or by telephone, as you choose.
- a letter / email from the College concluding the matter after proportionate consideration, explaining what has been done.
- individual communication between the you and the person your concern or complaint was about and/or a face-to-face meeting with the person your concern or complaint was about. The person your concern or complaint was about will need to agree to a face-to-face meeting taking place.

**When the named person has looked into your concerns you will receive further communication from the College within 10 working days of the original concern being raised. However, if the concern is complex, the person working on the College Resolution may contact you to let you know that more time is needed to look more fully into the matter.**



## What might happen as a result?

The College could take the following actions to resolve your concern or complaint:

- give you information or an explanation to clear up a misunderstanding
- apologise on behalf of the College
- learn from the issue, accepting that something could have been handled better and explaining what has been done to stop the same thing happening again
- arrange action by the Principal (or delegated to a member of the Senior Leadership Team) to address an issue with a member of staff through support and development
- apologise on behalf of the person your concern or complaint was about but only if they agree to this
- arrange action by the governing body to address matters of policy or procedure

## College Investigation – The Formal Complaints Procedure (Stage 2 and 3)

**If the complaint is about the Principal or one of the governors, then any letter of complaint should be addressed to the chair of governors c/o the College. If the complaint is about the chair of governors, then this should be addressed to the vice chair of governors.**

Stage 2 will be carried out by the Principal and Stage 3 by a governor. However if the complaint refers to the Principal the investigation will go straight to stage 3 for investigation by the chair of governors (or delegated to another impartial governor).

If following the College resolution stage, you, or the person dealing with your concern considers that your concern needs a more detailed investigation, or where the College Resolution has not delivered a satisfactory conclusion, a College Investigation will follow.

Although this is a formal investigation into your complaint, it will still be in the spirit of quickly reaching an effective outcome and maintaining positive and productive relationships. All parties need to work together to maintain productive relationships, and establish a way forward in partnership. This investigation may call for more information to be gathered before the person investigating can explain what has happened from the perspective of the College or the staff member involved. This way of dealing with your concern or complaint means solving, explaining, clearing up or settling your complaint directly with you, but doing so with a more detailed investigation than at a College Resolution level.



## How does the College Investigation process work?

Once you have raised your concern or made your complaint the Principal or governor who is looking into it will contact you within 5 working days (term time). They can arrange to talk to you face-to-face, on the telephone or they can contact you by letter / email if you prefer.

For your part, you will need to **(using Annex B)**:

- tell the College what happened and how you felt about it
- say what action you would like to see taken as a result
- agree the process for resolving your concern or complaint
- agree timescales and pathways for communication

For its part, the College will:

- listen to your concerns
- explain what can happen to resolve your concern or complaint
- confirm with you the process that will be followed and who will deal with it
- carry out a more detailed investigation into your concern or complaint
- produce and supply all parties with a written report of the findings
- ensure that any relevant findings are taken forward to influence College practice and policy

## What can I expect from a College Investigation

Some concerns or complaints may demand more detailed and perhaps time consuming enquiries, and therefore you should expect an approach that is proportionate to the complaint you have made. The person investigating your concern should keep in regular contact to keep you informed of progress on the matter.

Nevertheless, the College Investigation process aims to quickly resolve your concern or complaint and identify any learning from it.

## What happens next?

Your concern or complaint will be the subject of a proportionate investigation. This means that the amount of time dedicated to the matter will be in accordance with the seriousness of the matter.

At the conclusion, one of a number of things **may** follow. These include:

- resolution by providing information face-to-face or by telephone – as you choose
- a letter from the College concluding the matter after a proportionate investigation and explaining what has been done



- if your complaint was about an individual, individual communication between you and that person. This is organised through the Principal or the person dealing with your complaint
- a face-to-face meeting with the person working on your concern or complaint and/or the person your complaint was about. The person your concern or complaint was about will need to agree to a face-to-face meeting taking place

The College Investigation should be completed within 10 working days when you will receive a letter explaining the findings and any actions that may need to happen as a result. However, in complex matters it may take longer. The person investigating will keep in regular contact with you to keep you informed of progress.

## **What might happen as a result?**

The College could take the following actions to resolve your concern or complaint and will provide feedback to you on such actions:

- give you information or an explanation to clear up a misunderstanding
- apologise on behalf of the College
- learn from the issue, accepting that something could have been handled better and explaining what has been done to stop the same thing happening again
- arrange action by the governing body to address matters of College policy or procedure
- arrange feedback and support by the Principal to address any issues arising about a member of staff and their actions or behaviour
- apologise on behalf of the person your complaint was about, but only if they agree to this

## **Appeal against the decision made following The College Investigation (Stage 4)**

The College Investigation stage of this complaints procedure includes an appeal process should you not be satisfied with the outcome of the investigation. Following our initial investigation we will write to you to let you know of your right to appeal and you will have 20 working days to let us know if you would like to do so. (This does not include College holidays where there may be no one in College to respond to your request).

If you decide you would like to appeal, we will invite you to attend an appeal meeting and if the date is inconvenient we will provide an alternative date. You will also receive any paperwork that relates to the initial College investigation 7 days in advance of the appeal meeting.



At the meeting, a panel of three governors who have had no previous dealings with your complaint, will listen to your appeal, they will also listen to what the Principal has to say, and then they will come to a decision whether to uphold the complaint fully or in part, or whether the College has acted appropriately and that no further actions are necessary. The panel will not be able to hear any other complaints or additional concerns at this meeting.

Whilst this is part of the formal complaints procedure, we aim to make the meeting as informal as possible so that all parties can put forward their views in a positive and respectful manner.

When the appeal panel has considered all the information made available to them, they will make a decision and inform you in writing of the outcome within 5 working days.

**Sometimes when a complaint is very complex, and has taken a lot of time, it may be that the governing body may have difficulty assembling an appeal panel that fits the criteria of having had no prior knowledge of your complaint. In this case you may request that the College source an independent appeal panel to hear the final stage of your complaint.**

Following the appeal panel meeting the complaints procedure is complete. If you are still unhappy with the way the College has managed your complaint, you can submit a complaint to the Department for Education online at [www.gov.uk/complain-about-College](http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-College)

Or write to:

College Complaints Unit  
Department of Education  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Piccadilly Gate  
Manchester M1 2WD

Please remember that the College is committed to resolving your concerns wherever possible and that where this is proving complex, mediation is a powerful method of resolving matters. (see page 3).

Policy Adopted by Governing Body on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Date of Next Review: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2016

# Communications Flowchart

We want to ensure that your concern is resolved as quickly as possible, so getting the right person is key. Here is how to do it...



## Teaching and Learning

If your question is about the learning experience of your child or the progress they are making

**Contact Subject Teacher via**

- Email: subject (eg contact-mathys@st-lukes-devon.sch.uk)
- Leave a message at College reception

Problem Solved

Issue still not resolved

**Contact Head of Department**

- Letter
- Email: subject (eg contact-mathys@st-lukes-devon.sch.uk)
- Leave a message at College reception

Issue still not resolved

**Contact Deputy Principal**

- Leave a message at college reception
- Letter/Email: ksherwood@st-lukes-devon.sch.uk, ms.whitley@st-lukes-devon.sch.uk

Issue still not resolved

**Contact Principal**

- Letter
- Email: office@st-lukes-devon.sch.uk

## Student Support, Behaviour & Well-being

If your concern is about your child's well-being or attendance

**Contact Tutor via**

- Planner
- Leave a message at College reception
- Email
- Phone Mrs. Worth attendance officer 01392 204 601 ext 209 for attendance issues.

Problem Solved

Issue still not resolved

**Contact Head of House via**

- Letter
- Email: house@st-lukes-devon.sch.uk
- Leave a message at College reception

Issue still not resolved

**Contact Deputy Principal**

- Leave a message at College reception
- Letter/Email: ksherwood@st-lukes-devon.sch.uk, ms.whitley@st-lukes-devon.sch.uk

Issue still not resolved

**Contact Principal**

- Letter
- Email: office@st-lukes-devon.sch.uk

## Administrative

Finance    Safeguarding    Exams

**Phone College reception who will either answer your query or put you through to the appropriate department.**

Problem Solved

Issue still not resolved

**Finance - Contact Mrs. Burland ext 275**

**Student Services - Contact Mrs. Sencombe ext 255**

**Exams - Contact Mrs. Westaway ext 301**

Issue still not resolved

**Contact Bronia Burland**

- Leave a message at college reception
- Email: dburton@st-lukes-devon.sch.uk

Issue still not resolved

**Contact Principal**

- Letter
- Email: office@st-lukes-devon.sch.uk

We hope that the issue has now been resolved. If not, you can find the Formal Complaints Procedure on the College website.



### **St Luke's Science & Sports College Complaint Form**

Please complete and return to Mrs Annunziata-Jones (Leadership Administrator / Clerk to the Governors) who acts as the complaints co-ordinator – [cannunziata-jones@st-lukes.devon.sch.uk](mailto:cannunziata-jones@st-lukes.devon.sch.uk)  
She will acknowledge receipt of your complaint and will explain what action will be taken.

<b>Your name:</b>
<b>Student's name:</b>
<b>Your relationship to the pupil:</b>
<b>Address:</b>
<b>Postcode:</b>
<b>Day time telephone number:</b>
<b>Evening telephone number:</b>
<b>Please give details of your complaint.</b>
<b>What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.</b>
<b>Who did you speak to and what was the response?</b>

**What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?**

**Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Official use**

**Date acknowledgement sent:**

**By who:**

**Complaint referred to:**

**Date:**

**Complaint concluded:**

**Date:**