



# Complaints Policy

September 2023



## **Contents:**

1. College Mission Statement
2. Rationale
3. Communication
4. Aims
5. Serious Complaints Procedure – At a glance
6. Scope of Complaints Procedure
7. Making a Complaint



## **1.0 College Mission Statement**

High quality education changes the world, one child at a time.

We prepare our students for life in a diverse world by intentionally integrating students of all abilities, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, from all faiths and none.

We provide a caring and inclusive environment to help our students achieve excellence within a culture of acceptance and understanding.



## 2.0 Rationale

At Integrated College Glengormley we are very proud of the service we provide for all of our pupils and their families. We operate an ‘open door’ policy and pupils and parents are encouraged to address any difficulties, problems or issues which may arise – we believe that by working together we can ensure that the ICG experience will be a positive one for you and your child.

We welcome any comments which help us to improve the service we provide and we appreciate the need to have a clear complaints procedure in place so that any expressions of dissatisfaction can be investigated and responded to promptly. We believe we will deal with any concern both in a timely manner and with everyone feeling they have been treated fairly and respectfully. However, from time to time, problems do arise and if you feel you have a complaint to make, there are a number of steps you can take.



## **3.0 Communication**

**We welcome open communication with our staff; you can speak to staff by contacting:**

### **The Form Tutor**

Form Tutors are a usual first point of contact: your child meets their Form Tutor twice daily and they are responsible for the well-being of all the pupils in her/his Form Class. The beginning and end of the day are good times to contact the Form Tutor.

### **The Head of Year**

The Head of Year(s) is responsible for the pastoral care of their year group and they may be contacted by telephone, letter or by email.

### **The Head of Department**

The Head of Department is responsible for the teaching and learning within their departmental area and they may be contacted by telephone, letter or by email.

### **The Senior Link Teacher**

The Senior Link Teacher is responsible for supporting Head(s) of Year and Head(s) of Department in maintaining high quality teaching and learning and pastoral care provision within ICG.

### **The Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teachers - Serious Issues**

If you are not satisfied that the issue has been resolved, contact may be made with the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teachers, who will be happy to discuss any difficulties. They may be contacted by telephone, email or by arranging a time to attend a meeting in school.



## 4.0 Aims

When dealing with complaints the school will;

- ✓ encourage resolution of all concerns as quickly as possible
- ✓ provide timely responses to concerns and complaints
- ✓ keep you informed of progress
- ✓ ensure a full and fair investigation of your complaint where appropriate
- ✓ have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved
- ✓ respect confidentiality
- ✓ fully address complaints and provide an effective response
- ✓ take appropriate action to rectify the issue and prevent it happening again where appropriate
- ✓ be responsive to learning from outcomes which will inform and improve practice within the school.



## 5.0 Serious Complaints Procedure – At a glance

**Stage One:** Write to the Principal

**Stage Two:** Write to the Chairperson of Board of Governors

### **Time Limit**

Please contact the school as soon as possible, unless there are exceptional circumstances, complaints will normally only be considered within 6 months of origin of the complaint to the school.



## Stage One

When making a formal complaint, contact the Headteacher who will arrange for the complaint to be investigated. **If the complaint is about the Headteacher, proceed to Stage Two**

The school requires complaints of a serious nature to be **made in writing**, where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support you with this process.

Please provide as much information as possible including;

- ✓ name and contact details
- ✓ what the complaint is about
- ✓ what has already been done to try to resolve it and
- ✓ what you would like the school to do to resolve the complaint.

The complaint **will normally be acknowledged within 10 school working days** and a response normally made within 20 school working days of receipt of the complaint. This response will be issued in writing by the Headteacher and will indicate with reasons whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

**However, if the complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods then this will be dealt with as soon as the school reopens.**

If you remain unhappy with the outcome at Stage 1, the complaint may be progressed to Stage 2 - which is overseen by the Board of Governors.





## Stage Two

If the complaint is unresolved after Stage One, write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors (care of the school and marked 'private and confidential'). Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process. The Chairperson will convene a committee to review the complaint. Please provide as much detail as possible as indicated above.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged **within 10 school working days** and a final response normally made within 20 school working days from date of receipt of the complaint. The response will be issued in writing by the Chairperson of the committee.

**However, if the complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods then this will be dealt with as soon as the school reopens.**

## Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)

If following Stage Two you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you can refer the matter to the Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO).

The Ombudsman provides a free, independent and impartial service for handling complaints about schools in Northern Ireland. You have the right to complain to the Ombudsman if you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have received a poor service from a school and your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction.

A complaint should normally be referred to **NIPSO within six months of the final response from the School**. The school must advise in its concluding letter that the complaint may be referred to the NIPSO if you remain dissatisfied.



Contact details for NIPSO are:

**Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman**

Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman Progressive House

33 Wellington Place Belfast

BT1 6HN

Freepost: FREEPOST NIPSO Telephone: 02890 233821

Freephone: 0800 34 34 24

Email: [nipso@nipso.org.uk](mailto:nipso@nipso.org.uk) Web: [www.nipso.org.uk](http://www.nipso.org.uk)

A copy of this Procedure is available on the school's website or is available from the school on request.



## 6.0 Scope of Complaints Procedure

The Complaints Procedure sets out how any expression of dissatisfaction relating to the school will be managed. By taking concerns raised seriously at the earliest possible stage, it is hoped that issues can be resolved quickly and effectively.

### Complaints with separate established procedures

Some examples of statutory procedures and appeal mechanisms are listed below. The list is not exhaustive. The Headteacher/ Chair of Governors will advise on the appropriate procedure to use when the complaint is raised.

### Matters may still be referred to NIPSO, if it is felt that maladministration has occurred.

Exceptions	Contact
Admissions / Expulsions / Exclusion of children from school	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Operations and Estates Sara Long
Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Children and Young People's Services Dr Clare Mangan
School Development Proposals	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Education John Collings
Child Protection / Safeguarding	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Children and Young People's Services Dr Clare Mangan



The school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints, unless deemed by the Chairperson of the Board of Governors to be of a serious nature. The decision of whether to deal with such complaints will be at the discretion of the Board of Governors.



## 7.0 Making a Complaint

### What to expect under this procedure

#### Your rights as a person making a complaint

In dealing with a complaint we will ensure:

- ✓ fair treatment
- ✓ courtesy
- ✓ a timely response
- ✓ accurate advice
- ✓ respect for privacy – complaints will be treated as confidentially as possible allowing for the possibility of consultation with other appropriate parties about the complaint and
- ✓ clear reasons for decisions.

#### Your responsibilities as a person making a complaint

In making a complaint it is important to:

- ✓ raise issues in a timely manner
- ✓ treat our staff with respect and courtesy
- ✓ provide accurate and concise information in relation to the issues raised
- ✓ use these procedures fully and engage with them at the appropriate levels.



## **Rights of parties involved during the investigation**

Where a meeting is arranged the complainant may be accompanied, but not represented by another person. This Procedure does not take away from the statutory rights of any of the participants.

## **Timeframes**

Where concerns are raised with the relevant Teacher or Principal, a response will normally be provided during the meeting or within an agreed timeframe.

**Stage 1** – Normally acknowledged within 10 school working days, response normally within 20 school working days

**Stage 2** – Normally acknowledged within 10 school working days, response normally within 20 school working days

If, for any reason, the review of a complaint takes longer to complete, you will be informed of revised time limits and kept updated on progress.

**However, if the complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods then this will be dealt with as soon as the school reopens.**



## **Equality**

The school requires formal complaints to be made in writing. Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process.


## **Unreasonable Complaints**

The school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain.

There will be occasions when, despite all stages of the complaints procedure having been completed and the complaint having been reviewed by the Ombudsman, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If they try to re-open the same issue, the Chair of Governors will inform them that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed.

**If the complainant repeatedly continues to contact the school with the same issue it may choose not to respond.**



 134 Ballyclare Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 5HP

 [integratedcollegeglengormley.com](http://integratedcollegeglengormley.com)

 028 9083 7223