

# DALRIADA SCHOOL

## POLICY DOCUMENT



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## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

### **Foreword from the Headmaster**

Dalriada School aims to promote academic excellence and all-round personal development in a stimulating, caring, and happy environment which is sympathetic to individual needs, aspirations and talents. We are proud of our unique school ethos where each person feels safe, valued and respected.

If you have any concerns regarding your child's education at Dalriada please contact the School Office which will arrange for you to speak to the relevant member of staff. If you have a serious concern, this should be referred to the Headmaster. We take all concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve matters as quickly as possible. If concerns are addressed at an early stage, they are more easily resolved.

If they are not satisfactory resolved, please refer to the School's Complaints Procedure.

**NB** Complaints regarding statutory procedures and appeals mechanisms cannot be dealt with directly by the School. The Headmaster can advise you on whom to contact regarding such complaints.

**T.J. Skelton**  
**Headmaster**

# SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

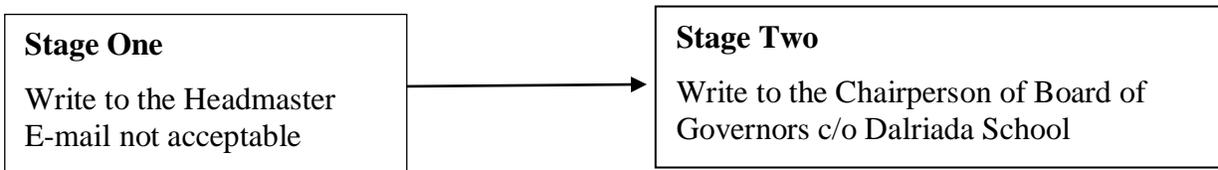
## Aims

When dealing with complaints we aim to:

- Encourage the 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 your complaint and provide an effective response;
- Take appropriate action to rectify the issue and prevent it happening again where appropriate;
- Be responsive by learning from outcomes in order to inform and improve practice within the school.

A hard copy of this Procedure is available from the school on request.

## Complaints Procedure – at a glance



## Time Limit

To help us resolve your complaint, please contact us as soon as possible. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, we will normally only consider a complaint within 6 months of its origin.

## Stage One

When making a complaint, contact the Headmaster, who will arrange for the complaint to be investigated. *If the complaint is about the Headmaster, proceed to Stage Two.* The school requires complaints to be made in writing. However, where this is not possible, the school will make reasonable arrangements to support you.

Please provide as much information as possible including:

- Your 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.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 5 school working days and a response normally made within 20 school working days of the receipt of the complaint. This response will be issued to you by the Headmaster.

***These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are being considered during school holiday periods.***

If you are unhappy with the outcome at Stage 1, your complaint may be progressed to Stage 2 as agreed 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'*), who will convene a sub-committee to review the complaint. Please provide as much detail as possible as indicated above.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 5 school working days and a final response normally made within 20 school working days from the date of the receipt of the complaint. The response will be issued to you by the Chairperson of the sub-committee. ***These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are being considered during school holiday periods.***

## **Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)**

If, after 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).

### **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: 028 9023 3821  
Freephone: 0800 34 34 24  
E-mail: [nipso@nipso.org.uk](mailto:nipso@nipso.org.uk)  
Web: [www.nipso.org.uk](http://www.nipso.org.uk)

## Scope of Complaints Procedure

1.1 The Complaints Handling Procedure sets out how any expression of dissatisfaction relating to the school will be managed. By taking concerns raised by parents or others seriously at the earliest possible stage, we hope to resolve issues quickly and effectively.

### Some examples of complaints dealt with:

- Not following school policy
- Communication delays / lack of communication
- Difficulties in staff / pupil relationships

In some cases, the complaint you raise cannot be dealt with directly by the school and the Headmaster can advise you on whom to contact

Exceptions	Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Admissions / Expulsions / Exclusions of children from school</li><li>• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)</li><li>• School Development Proposals</li><li>• Child Protection / Safeguarding</li></ul>	Contact the Education Authority <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a>

1.2 The school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints unless deemed by the Chair of the Board of Governors to be of a serious nature. Decisions concerning such complaints will be at the discretion of the Board of Governors.

## What to expect under this procedure

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

In dealing with your complaint we will ensure that you receive:

- Fair treatment;
- Courtesy;
- A timely response;
- Accurate advice;
- Respect for your privacy – complaints will be treated as confidentially as possible allowing for the possibility that we may have to consult with other appropriate parties about your complaint; and
- Clear reasons for our decisions.

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

In making your complaint you should:

- Raise issues in a timely manner
- Treat our staff with respect and courtesy
- Provide accurate and concise information in relation to the issues you raise
- Use these procedures fully and engage with them at the appropriate levels.

## 2.3 **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.

## 2.4 **Timeframes**

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

**Stage 1** Normally acknowledged within 5 school working days, and a response normally sent within 20 school working days

**Stage 2** Normally acknowledged within 5 school working days, and a response normally sent within 20 school working days.

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

*These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are being considered during school holiday periods.*

## 2.5 **Equality**

The school requires complaints to be made in writing. However, where this is not possible, the Headmaster should be contacted, and he will make alternative arrangements.

## 2.6 **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 reviewed by the Ombudsman, the complainant remains dissatisfied. It should be noted that the Ombudsman's decision is final and the matter will be considered closed.

Adopted by Board of Governors on 28 September 2017

**PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FLOW CHART**

