CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

St Mary’s welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes seriously concerns and complaints that may be raised.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction that needs a response.

We wish to ensure that:

- Parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so
- Parents realise that we listen to and take complaints seriously
- We respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way
- We take action where appropriate.

Complaints will be treated as expressions of genuine concern that require a response

The appropriate person to contact will depend on the nature of the complaint, the area of concern and the seriousness of the issue.

People who may be of assistance include:

- The Head of Boarding, Mrs Tina Campbell
- International Student Co-ordinator, Ms Gloria Ross
- The Dean of Students/Deputy Principal, Ms Joan Karmelita
- The Dean of Curriculum, Mrs Cheryl Haak
- The Dean of Administration, Ms Erica Herron
- The Head of the Junior School, Mrs Helen Adams
- The Principal, Mrs Lynne Thomson

The staff member you contact may direct you to a more suitable person.

Full fee paying International Students’ parents may also seek assistance from the International Education Conciliator (Alison Miller) located at the Department of Education Services (WA) telephone 9441 1929.

Making a complaint or expressing concern

If, as parents, you have concerns, you are entitled to raise them. If in doubt, you should contact the school, members of staff will be happy to help.

It may be best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue – for example, matters referring to the Year 6 class should be raised with the Year 6 teacher, concerns about House matters with the Head of House, sports concerns with the Head of Physical Education, etc. They may be able to sort things out quickly, with the minimum of fuss. However, you may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff, for example, the Head of Junior School, one of the Deans, the Deputy Principal or the Principal.

Complainants are required to provide their name.
If you have a complaint or suggestion and the appropriate person is not available, please leave a message and contact will be made to discuss your concerns and determine how best to proceed.

Further information or wider consultation may be required before proceeding further. This will be done as soon as possible.

The school is here for you and your child and we want to hear your views and your ideas.

**What will happen next?**

Should you raise something face-to-face or by telephone, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction.

If you have made a complaint or suggestion in writing, we will contact you within a week, to respond to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed.

In many circumstances, the person you contact will need to discuss the matter with a colleague and consider it further before responding. You will be given a date by which time you will receive a response. If a detailed exploration of the issue is needed, a further meeting will be required to explain the conclusion, the reasoning for it, and any action taken or proposed.

**Confidentiality**

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Principal and those directly involved. The Chairman of the School Board may also need to be informed. It is the school’s policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their child(ren).

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child’s safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police. You would be fully informed.

Whilst information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints might not be pursued.

Action, which may need to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of a complaint, would be handled confidentially within the school.

**Proceeding Further**

We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered.

Should this not be the case, the Principal will offer to refer the matter to the Chairman of the School Board. Alternatively, you may wish to write directly to the Chairman via the school. The Chairman will call for a full report from the Principal and will examine matters thoroughly before responding. A positive solution will hopefully be achieved, but if it does not, the Chairman will invite you to a meeting. You may wish to be supported by a friend, but legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage.

The school recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to express your concern and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the young people in our care.

The formal Complaints Policy is available on the school website.