



## PARENTAL COMPLAINTS LEAFLET

*Lathallan School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents. The school takes seriously complaints and concerns parents may raise. This leaflet will show you how to use our complaints system.*

**A complaint will be treated as a serious expression of dissatisfaction which needs a response.**

We wish to ensure that:

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

### **“How should I complain?”**

You can talk directly to a member of staff, write a letter, send an e-mail, or telephone. Be as clear as possible about your concerns and focus on the key issue.

Any member of staff will be happy to help. It may be best to start with the person most closely involved - for example, to raise house matters with the Houseparent and sports issues with the Head of PE. They may be able to resolve matters quickly, with the minimum of fuss. However, you may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff, for example, to the Head of Senior School or the Headmaster.

### **“I don’t want to complain as such, but there is something bothering me.”**

The school is here for you and your child, and we want to hear your views and your ideas. Contact a member of staff, as described above.

### **“I am not sure whether to complain or not.”**

If as parents you have concerns, you are entitled to raise issues. If in doubt, you should contact the school as we are here to help.

### **“What will happen next?”**

If 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 term time within five working days, to respond to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed.

In some 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 the issue needs to be investigated, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible. This will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

#### **“What happens about confidentiality?”**

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential and respectful manner. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Headmaster and to those directly involved. The Chairman of the Board may also need to be informed. It is the school’s policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children. Similarly, your child should know that he/she will not be adversely affected or unfairly treated if you make a complaint. We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly also of the identity of those involved. This would 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.

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

Action which needs to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints will be handled confidentially within the school.

#### **“What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?”**

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

If you are not satisfied, the Headmaster will offer to refer the matter to the Chairman of the Board. Alternatively, you may wish to write directly to the Chairman who will ask for a report from the Headmaster and will examine matters thoroughly before responding. This may result in a positive solution, but if it does not, the Chairman will invite you to a meeting. You may wish to be supported by a friend, although legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage. If the meeting does not bring about a resolution, the matter would be referred to the school’s Conciliation Committee. It is their task to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. The Committee Convener will invite you to a meeting. You will be asked if there is any further information you would like the Committee to consider beforehand. As with the Chairman’s meeting, you will be invited to bring a friend with you. We hope that we shall be able to satisfy your concerns. If we are unable to do so, mediation, using an external, impartial facilitator, may be a possibility. Serious complaints can also be addressed to the Registrar of Independent Schools at the Scottish Government.

**The school recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to complain, and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care.**