

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN LODGING A CONCERN

Policy accepted by Board of Governors: 16 November 2005

1. DEFINITIONS

A concern is a query or cause of unhappiness / disquiet that could become a more serious problem. A grievance is a concern that has not been satisfactorily addressed. The SMT should deal with concerns and only grievances must be referred to the Grievance Committee. A report on the committee's activities must be forwarded to the Board Exec, the Board and the SMT at least once per school term.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The aims of the Grievance Procedure are:

- 2.1 To facilitate the resolution of concerns as speedily as possible.
- 2.2 To provide a practical application for dealing with concerns.
- 2.3 To ensure a uniform approach in dealing with concerns.
- 2.4 To be open and accessible to all parties that form part of St Michael's School: learners, educators, non-educators and parents.
- 2.5 To promote the best interests of the school by promoting good relations amongst all persons concerned at the school and fostering a spirit of loyalty towards the principal, educators, the school and the broader St Michael's community.

NOTE:

1. All members of the St Michael's community are to follow these channels and procedures without exception.
2. A member of the committee must withdraw from a meeting which deals with any issue in which the member has a personal interest, for the duration of the discussion and decision making.
3. No intimidation of any member of the committee or any party involved in the grievance will be tolerated.
4. Confidentiality is to be maintained at all times.
5. NO legal representation will be allowed at any stage of this procedure.
6. Grievances may be lodged without any prejudice to the complainant's position.
7. Formal disciplinary action may be taken depending on the outcome of the Grievance Procedure. The disciplinary action should be guided by the policies of the school.

COMPOSITION OF THE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

1. The Grievance Committee must consist of three (3) permanent members viz. The Deputy Principal; an SMT member, and a Board Member. Further members can be co-opted on an ad-hoc basis depending on the nature of the grievance. In the absence of the Board member, a substitute can be nominated.
2. The Board member will be the chair of the committee. The recommendations of the committee should in all instances be reported to the Board of Governors.

TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office will be three years to coincide with the term of office of the Board of Governors.

PROCEDURES OF THE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

1. Any member of the school community may lodge a concern with any member of the Grievance Committee. The concern may be lodged verbally or in writing, or by placing a written concern in the suggestion box. The concern must be recorded officially by the member of the committee to whom it was reported within two (2) working days. It is

advisable that a concern should be registered immediately, but no later than thirty (30) days from the date on which the complainant became aware of the act or omission.

2. The committee member who received the concern must then bring the complainant and the respondent together to discuss the concern, in an attempt to resolve the issue at the lowest possible level. The meeting should take place within seven (7) days of receipt of the concern. The main points of the discussions must be recorded by the committee member.

The outcome of the discussions must be reported to the chair of the Grievance Committee by the committee member who received the concern. If the issue has been resolved, that must be recorded officially.

3. If the issue has not been solved, the concern becomes a grievance and the chair of the Grievance Committee must convene a meeting of the committee. This meeting must take place at least seven (7) but not longer than fourteen (14) days after receipt of the outcome of the informal discussions. This meeting is formal and minutes will be kept.

During this meeting the following must take place:

- The exact nature of the grievance must be clarified and finalised.
- All parties must be given the right to be heard and to respond.
- The committee members have the right to ask questions for clarity.
- The committee must reach a decision on the grievance.

A written notification of this decision must be handed to the complainant within seven (7) days of the date of the meeting. If the issue has been resolved, this must be recorded officially.

The complainant has the right to lodge an appeal against the outcome of the Grievance Committee meeting with the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors within 14 days of receiving written notification of the Grievance Committee's decision. The said chairperson must, within 7 (seven) days convene a meeting at which the following are present: the complainant, the respondent and a representative of the Grievance Committee. All parties must be given the right to be heard and to respond. The said chairperson must then make a decision on the validity of the outcome of the meeting of the Grievance Committee.

A written notification of this decision must be handed to the complainant within seven (7) days of the date of the meeting. If the issue has been resolved, this must be recorded officially. The complainant has the right to lodge a final appeal against the outcome of the Grievance Committee meeting with the chairperson of the Board of Governors within 14 days of receiving written notification of the outcome of the appeal. The said chairperson must, within seven (7) days, convene a meeting at which the following are present: the complainant, the respondent, a representative of the Grievance Committee and the chairperson of the Executive Committee. The chairperson of the Board must listen to all sides and then make a decision on the validity of the outcome of the appeal. Written notification of this decision must be handed to the complainant within seven (7) days of the date of the meeting.

The outcome of the final appeal must be recorded officially.

