



PROCEDURE FOR A PARENT BRINGING A CONCERN

At Michael Oak we learn and live as a community. In our classrooms and grounds we strive to make our school a safe, well cared for and happy place. We wish to make good friends and learn to trust and care for one another. We wish to respect those around us and give our best in all that we do.

1. In support of this intention we have:

- a) a clearly defined set of School Codes of Conduct for pupils, members of staff and parents, which form part of the formal agreements that we enter into at our school.
- b) a Formal Disciplinary Policy and Procedure to rely upon when the actions of our pupils, members of staff or parents are not in line with these codes.

2. This Procedure for a Parent Bringing a Concern outlines how we deal with challenges, difficulties, concerns and conflicts that may arise in our community.

- a) At Michael Oak, a 'concern' is defined as any dissatisfaction about the school that needs to be addressed in order to be resolved. This may be related to the actions of pupils (individuals and/or groups), members of staff, or parents.
- b) Concerns should be raised by the parent experiencing that concern. No concern based on hearsay, brought on behalf of others, or brought by groups, will be tabled or dealt with.
- c) Where a concern is a broad school-related matter, parents may raise the concern with the relevant Faculty which will decide whether it needs to be taken to College or any other mandated group within the school.
- d) Where a concern regards a specific teacher or therapist, College asks that the parent first approaches that person directly, at an appropriate time and in an appropriate manner, to outline the nature of the concern and request a meeting with them.
- e) If the parent feels unable to approach the teacher or therapist directly, he/she should approach another teacher within the Faculty concerned, who will not engage with the parent around the concern in any way but will set up a facilitated meeting of the parent and the staff member if this is deemed necessary.

- f) The teacher or therapist may not be able to deal with the issue immediately, but an appointment will be set up to meet with the parent at an appropriate time. be
- g) Meetings will take place by prior arrangement only, with only one family at a time, to deal with only their specific concern.
- h) If the concern is not adequately resolved to the satisfaction of all parties through the meeting, it will then be taken to the relevant Faculty, as these bodies hold the pedagogical responsibility for the school. (See point 4.)
- i) Where another teacher within the Faculty has been involved in setting up a facilitated meeting, that teacher will consult with both parent and teacher or therapist to ascertain whether the matter has been satisfactorily resolved for both parties.
- j) The teacher or therapist involved in the concern will inform faculty that the concern has been brought and will report on progress or resolution.
- k) Matters of a pedagogical and disciplinary nature need to be respected as resting with the teachers; at all times complying with the policies of the school.
- l) Should a pedagogical or disciplinary concern be sent to the Trustees, the Links Mandate, or the High School Forum, they will not table it for discussion but will immediately redirect it to the relevant teacher or faculty.
- m) Where a matter concerns a sports coach, the parent will take it to the sports coordinator.
- n) Where the matter concerns any admin, ground or support staff, it will be taken to the School Administrator.
- o) Where the matter concerns another parent, it should be raised with the class teacher or guardian.

3. Meetings of parents and staff:

- a) Meetings need to remain within the original parameters of the appointment regarding:
 - i. who attends the meeting
 - ii. what issues are to be discussed
 - iii. the timeframe of the meeting.
- b) Another colleague, a minute taker and a mentor may be present at the meeting. If the matter has been mentioned at the Faculty or to the chair of the Faculty, the Faculty or the chair will make this decision.
- c) Audio recordings of meetings are not permitted unless there is prior agreement by all parties attending the meeting.

- d) Should the meeting become counter-productive, it may need to be postponed to another time.

4. Should the matter be referred to the Faculty:

- a) The Faculty will acknowledge the communication and inform College of the matter.
- b) The Faculty will consult with the teacher or therapist and the parent bringing the concern, to establish a clear understanding of the matter and to decide on the best way forward.
- c) The Faculty will decide whether to involve the mentor where appropriate.
- d) A designated group will be appointed within the Faculty to follow up until the issue has been resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.
- e) At the end of this process, the chair of the Faculty will consult with all parties to determine whether they are satisfied with the outcome, and will refer the matter to the College if no satisfactory outcome has been reached.
- f) The chair will inform the parent and the College of the decision.

5. Should the Faculty refer the matter to the College, the College will:

- a) acknowledge the communication
- b) assess the nature of the concern
- c) implement an enquiry process, involving other parties where necessary
- d) decide whether a mediator is required
- e) consult the appropriate structures in the school, including the Trustees, where necessary
- f) inform the parent of the College decision, which is final
- g) inform the Faculty, and other relevant bodies including the Trustees.

6. Communication:

- a) Open respectful communication is essential.
- b) In order to maintain a healthy solution-oriented approach, it is requested that parents speak directly to the parties involved as outlined above.

- c) Parents are asked to refrain from speaking to other parties regarding their concerns.
- d) Parents are asked to refrain from raising personal concerns in public/class meetings and rather remain within the agenda items set for that meeting.
- e) Email communication may be used to request a meeting and outline a concern, but not as an ongoing means of communication – especially regarding a matter while it is in process.
- f) Staff will not engage in any informal discussions with parents or colleagues about a matter in process, whether via telephone, email, cell phone, WhatsApp or in conversation.
- g) The parent will receive a formal response via the relevant staff member, Faculty or College, to communicate that the issue is in process, and to communicate decisions made.
- h) The intention would be to deal with the issue as timeously as possible.

7. Michael Oak will deal with concerns parents bring with discretion and integrity.

- a) The safety, well-being and protection of pupils, staff and parents are central to all decisions the school makes about confidentiality.
- b) Staff may not be bound to holding a matter confidentially, as in our experience this limits healthy options for dealing with a matter.
- c) There are very few situations where absolute confidentiality is offered. At most, limited confidentiality will apply, based on the school's discretion.

8. We hope that by following this process, we will together be able to resolve concerns amicably, respectfully, efficiently and effectively.