

St. Margaret's Girls' College, Hong Kong

Guidelines on Handling Complaints

1. School Policy

Aiming at building a culture of communication and enhancing effectiveness of governance, we value opinions from any stakeholders, especially parents. Any opinions, presented as an informal or a formal complaint, will be addressed professionally, promptly, positively and fairly. No person shall be subject to victimization or reprisal for initiating or participating in the complaint investigation processes.

By formulating this school-based mechanism of handling complaints, it is hoped that our students can enjoy quality education and our teachers can have professionally fulfilling experiences in our school.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The school will delegate designated staff to examine actively any complaint relating to daily operation and internal affairs of the school (Appendix 1), formal or informal, with an open mind and with the intention of resolving the complaint.
- 2.2 To ensure fair and impartial handling, the designated staff and related individuals should declare interests. Any person concerned should not be involved in handling the case or have access to information relating to it.
- 2.3 Information provided by complainant will be kept confidential and will only be released on a need-to-know basis.
- 2.4 As complaints can be constructive ideas, a record of all complaints (Appendix 3 & 6) should be kept for school improvement.
- 2.5 Parents and staff are informed of the details of the procedures through school website, during meetings and school functions.
- 2.6 The school will regularly review whether the complaint handling policies and procedures are appropriate, and revise the handling procedures whenever to enhance the complaint handling mechanism and procedures.
- 2.7 The Guidelines are not applicable to handling of complaints related to ongoing legal proceedings or complaints under the jurisdiction of other organisations / government departments.
- 2.8 When dealing with unreasonable behavior of complainants, the designated staff needs to convey clearly that he / she must stop acting in such a way and, if necessary, terminate the meeting / conversation with him / her. In case of threat to the staff's personal safety or damages to staff's / school property, the incident will be reported to the police and legal action will be taken.
- 2.9 The following types of complaints need not to be handled:
 - 2.9.1 Anonymous complaints *(Note)*
 - 2.9.2 Complaints not made by the person concerned

- 2.9.3 Complaints involving incidents that happened more than one year
- 2.9.4 Complaints with insufficient information

Note: Under special circumstances (e.g. when there is sufficient evidence or when the case is serious or urgent), the Administrative Staff may decide whether to follow them up and state the reasons and the results of investigation in the Complaint Record (Appendix 6).

3. Procedures

- 3.1 Refer to Flow Chart of Handling Inquiries, Opinions or Informal Complaints (Appendix 2).
 - 3.1.1 Record Sheet of Case Handled by Informal Procedures (Appendix 3) to be completed when the case closed.
- 3.2 Refer to Flow Chart of Handling Formal Complaints (Appendix 4).
 - 3.2.1 Acknowledgement Letter to be sent to the complainant within 3 working days when receiving the complaint (Appendix 5).
 - 3.2.2 Complaint Record (Appendix 6) to be completed when the case closed.

4. EDB Guidelines

Please also read EDB ‘Guidelines for Handling School Complaints’ for information and action:

<http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/admin/pilot-scheme/index.html>

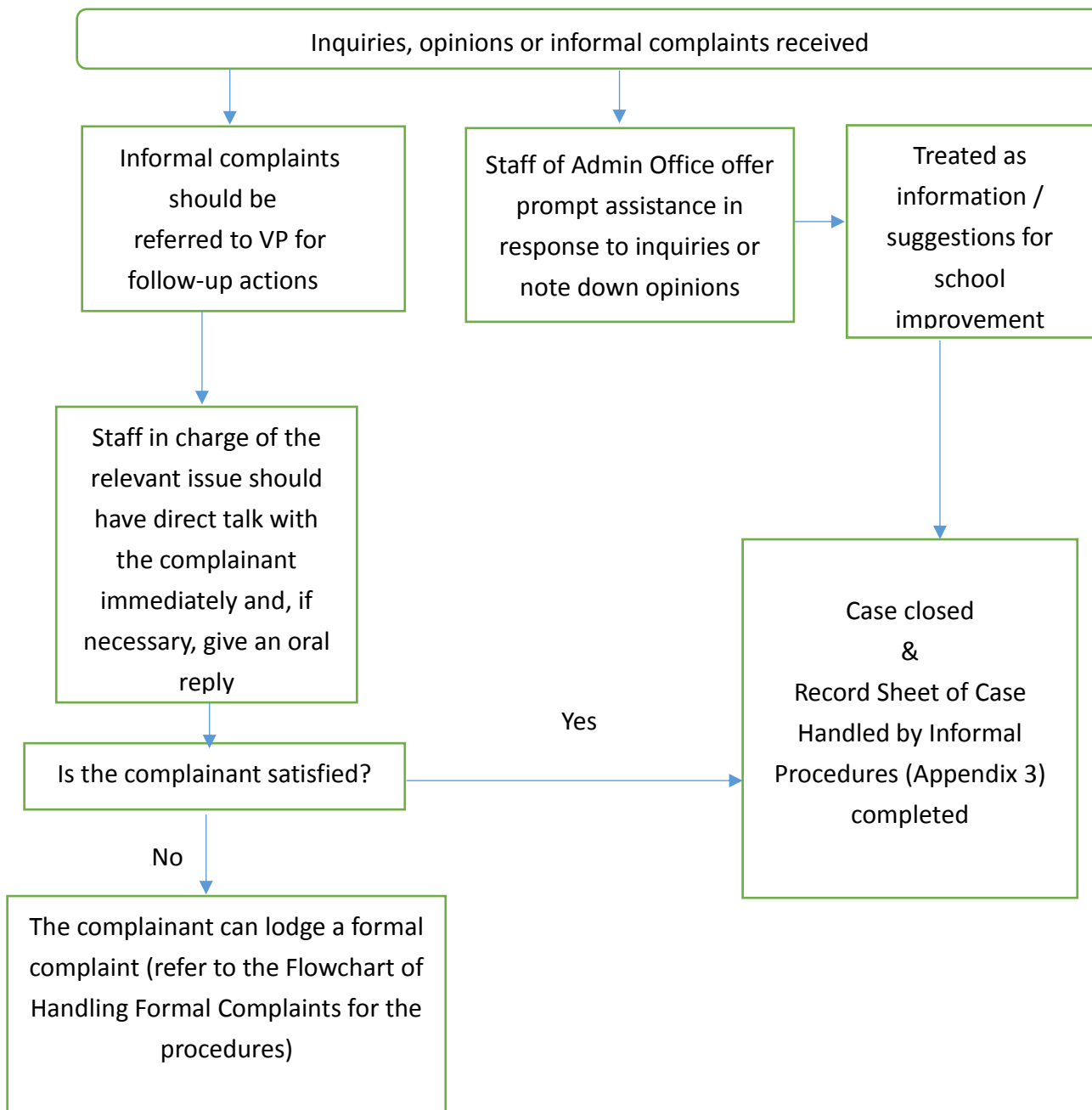
(Home > School Administration and Management > Administration > Pilot Project on Enhancement of Complaint Management in School > Guidelines for Handling School Complaints)

Examples of Complaints Relating to Daily Operation and Internal Affairs of School*

Domain	Examples
Management and Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School accounts (e.g. accounting records) ● Other charges (e.g. extra-curricular activities charges and registration fees) ● School policies (e.g. system of reward and penalty, arrangements regarding students' suspension from school) ● Standards of contractors' services (e.g. school bus services, supply of meal boxes) ● Service contracts (e.g. tendering procedures) ● School environment and hygiene (e.g. noise pollution, mosquitoes problems)
Learning and Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School-based curriculum (e.g. subject lesson time) ● Selection of subjects and class allocation (e.g. arrangements for students' choice of subjects) ● Homework (e.g. amount of homework, school-based assessment criteria) ● Student assessment (e.g. assessment criteria) ● Staff performance (e.g. behaviour/attitudes of teaching staff, job performance)
School Ethos and Student Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School ethos (e.g. uniform and other aspects of appearance) ● Home-school cooperation (e.g. consultation mechanism, communication channels) ● Student support (e.g. support for students with special educational needs) ● Extra-curricular activities (e.g. arrangements for interest groups and other student activities)
Student Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students' overall performance (e.g. academic results, conduct) ● Student discipline (e.g. foul and abusive language, smoking, fighting, bullying)

* The complaints about daily operation and internal affairs will be handled in accordance with the Education Ordinance, Education Regulations, Codes of Aid, relevant circulars, guidelines and codes of practice listed in this document to ensure compliance with the respective requirements.

Flow Chart of Handling Inquiries, Opinions or Informal Complaints



St. Margaret's Girls' College, Hong Kong
20 - 20
Record Sheet of Case Handled by Informal Procedures

Date of enquiry/complaint: _____ *Time :* _____ am / pm*

Mode : Call the General Office Call the Principal / Deputy Head / Class Teacher /
 Responsible Teacher*

In person By e-mail/ fax* Others (Please specify: _____)

Name of the Enquirer/ Complainant : _____

Role of Complainant : Parent Student Other (Please specify: _____)

Contact information (by telephone/fax/e-mail):* _____

Enquiries/Concern(s) :

Information/ Document attached : No Yes (Please specify: _____)

Action Taken : Contacted by phone Interview Others (Please specify: _____)

(Remarks: _____

Reply: Contacted by phone at _____ am / pm* on _____, 20__

Written reply dated _____

Result : Enquirer/ Complainant accepted the reply. No further action is required.

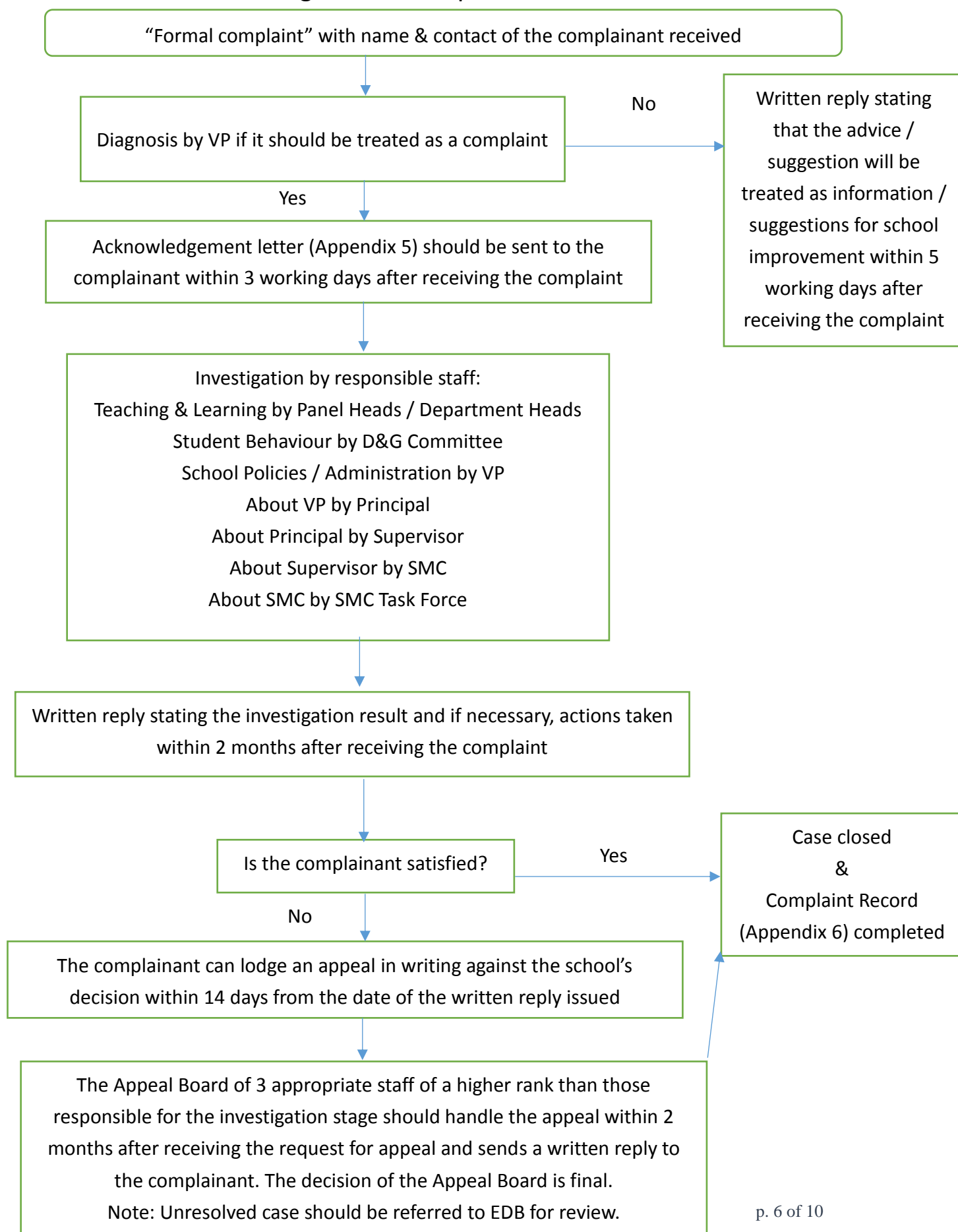
Others (Please specify: _____)

Signature of Senior Teacher/Responsible Person : _____ *Date:* _____

(Name/ Post: _____)

* Please delete where inappropriate

Flow Chart of Handling Formal Complaints



St. Margaret's Girls' College, Hong Kong
20 - 20
Acknowledgement Letter

_____ (Date)

_____ (Name of the complainant)

_____ (Address of the complainant)

Dear Mr / Ms _____,

We received your written / verbal complaint on _____ (date). The case is being investigated and a reply will be sent to you within _____ days / as soon as possible*.

If you have any inquiries, please contact Mr / Ms _____ (Teacher / Panel Chairperson / Vice Principal*) at 2549 0301.

Ms Frances Tong
Principal

**delete the inappropriate*

St. Margaret's Girls' College, Hong Kong
20 - 20
Complaint Record

Date received _____

Source: Directly lodged to the school
 Referred by the EDB
 Referred by other organization

Mode: Phone Letter Email Fax In person
 Others: _____

Personal information of the complainant:

Name: Mr / Ms / Mrs _____

Identity: Parent Councillor Public
 Organization _____
 Others _____

Authorized representative of the complainant (please state the name, address and contact telephone number of the representative and his/her relation with the complainant): _____

Tel: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Anonymous complaint but need to be handled:

Reason(s): _____

Subject(s) of complaint:

- Principal Vice Principal Teacher Staff
 Others: _____

Area(s) of complaint:

- School Policies / Administration Learning and Teaching Student Behaviour
 Others: _____

Summary of complaint:

Investigation stage:

- Person-in-charge: _____
Issue of Notice of Acknowledgement: (date: _____)
Telephone contact: (date: _____)
Interview with the complainant: (date: _____)
Issue of written reply: (date: _____)

Summary of findings:

Appeal stage (if applicable):

Date of appeal: _____

Person-in-charge: _____

Issue of Notice of Acknowledgement: (date: _____)

Telephone contact: (date: _____)

Interview with the complainant: (date: _____)

Issue of written reply: (date: _____)

Summary of appeal result:

Follow-up actions or recommendations (if applicable):

Signature of person-in-charge: _____