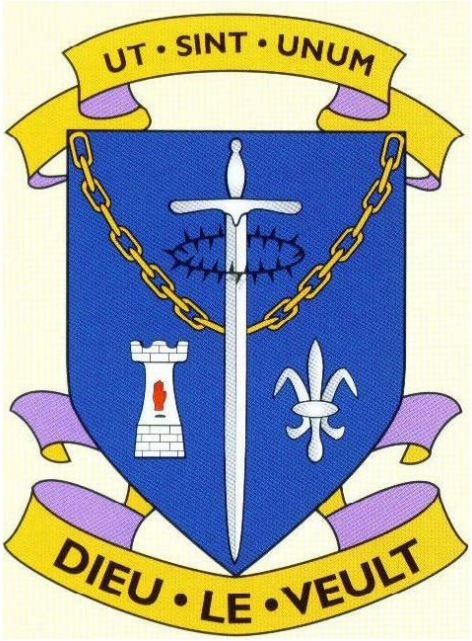
St Louis Grammar School Kilkeel



CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS POLICY

Date of Policy: December 2019
Date of Review: June 26
Date of next review October 2027

1.0 Policy Statement

St Louis Grammar School is committed to providing the highest quality of service to all our customers. If a customer is not satisfied with the quality of service provided by the School or School staff, they have the right to complain.

A complaint may be defined as '*A statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable*.' **www.oxforddictionaries.com**

The raising of complaints and the provision of feedback provides the School with an opportunity to improve its services. The School monitors complaints and the outcomes in order to improve the quality of our provision. This policy advises customers of the School's commitment to ensuring that any issues or problems are resolved quickly and as close to the source as possible, to the satisfaction of all concerned.

2.0 Scope

2.1 For the purposes of this policy, a customer may be a student, staff member, member of the public or third party stakeholder.

2.2 The School will comply with the Standards for Complaint Handling in the Public Service agreed by the Permanent Secretaries Group, ensuring that:

a) There are clear lines of accountability for the handling and consideration of complaints within the School.
b) Complainants have open and easy access to the School's complaints policy and information required to enable them to complain about any aspect of service.
c) Complaints are dealt with through an efficient and effective process.
d) All investigations are conducted promptly, thoroughly, openly, honestly and objectively.
e) Complaints are responded to as promptly as possible and all issues raised are addressed.
f) The School promotes a culture of learning from complaints so that, where necessary, service, processes and practices can be improved.
g) The school monitors the effectiveness of its complaint handling and responsiveness.

2.3 In addition, the School will:

h) Ensure that all positive comments are passed on to the relevant staff members.
i) Process all complaints in a fair, consistent and unbiased manner.
j) Endeavour to communicate with the customer within agreed timeframes throughout the process.
k) Ensure no customer is disadvantaged as a result of making a complaint

l) Promote equality of opportunity and good relations in line with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998).
m) Respect confidentiality and protect customers' data in line with legislation.
n) Monitor and review complaints and compliments for quality assurance and equality monitoring purposes.

2.4 Exemptions to this policy include:

a) Anonymous complaints, which will not usually be investigated, but will be recorded.
b) Matters where another policy or procedure applies.
c) The right of the School not to investigate unreasonable or vexatious complaints.

3.0 Categories of Customer Feedback

3.1 Compliments and Comments

3.1.1 If a customer feels that the School has exceeded the expected standard of service or wishes to leave a compliment or positive comment, they can either:

a) Complete a 'Customer Compliments Form' (Appendix 2). Forms may be downloaded from the School website or they are available at reception.
b) Email the School info@stlouisgrammar.kilkeel.ni.sch.uk

c) Advise a member of staff in person of the positive experience.

3.2 Informal Complaint

3.2.1 If there is an occasion where a customer is not satisfied with the service we provide; they have a right to complain.
3.2.2 We would encourage customers to seek to resolve any issues informally with the relevant member of staff e.g. face-to-face discussion.
3.2.3 Where a resolution cannot be found or if the complaint is sufficiently serious, the customer may submit a formal complaint in writing.

3.3 Formal Complaint

3.3.1 If a customer wishes to make a formal complaint, they can either:

a) Complete a 'Customer Complaints Form' (Appendix 1). Forms are downloadable from the School website or available at reception.
b) Email the School marking for the attention of the Principal: info@stlouisgrammar.kilkeel.ni.sch.uk

3.3.2 If a customer wishes to complain verbally, they will be asked to confirm details of their complaint in writing.

3.3.3 If assistance is required with the completion of or the submission of a complaint, customers should contact the Vice-Principal.

3.3.4 Complaints should be submitted to the School no later than three months from the date of the issue arising. In exceptional circumstances, the School may exercise discretion with this timescale.

3.3.5 Complaints may be submitted on behalf of someone else, for example a person over the age of 18 or a vulnerable adult. Consent of the individual may be required.

3.3.6 All formal complaints will be forwarded to the relevant Responsible Owner for an open and objective investigation. Upon completion of the investigation, a written response will be issued to the complainant. For the purposes of this Policy, the Responsible Owner is defined as the individual appointed to investigate the complaint.

3.3.7 The School will endeavour to adhere to the timeframes detailed below (Table 1).

Table 1

Communication	**Response Time**
Complaint acknowledgement letter/email to customer	5 working days***** from receipt of complaint
Letter/email issued to complainant if further information required to progress complaint	Clarification information to be returned within 10 working days of receipt
Complaint response letter/email to customer	20 working days from date acknowledgement letter/email issued

**Working days are those days on which the School is open. Weekends, statutory days, Bank Holidays and other School closures are classed as 'non-working' days.*

3.3.8 If, for reasons beyond the School's control the investigation and outcome exceeds, or is likely to exceed the timeframes set out in Table 1, the customer will be notified in writing.

4.0 Appeals

4.1 If a customer is dissatisfied with the School response to their complaint, they have the right to appeal. Appeals should be submitted in writing, with full details of the grounds for appeal, to the Principal.

4.2 Following receipt of an appeal the School will endeavour to adhere to the timeframes detailed below (Table 2)

Table 2

Communication	Response Time
Complainant submits appeal to the School	10 working days from date customer receives complaint response
Appeal acknowledgement letter/email to customer	5 working days from receipt of appeal from customer
Appeal response letter/email to customer	20 working days from date acknowledgement letter/email issued

4.3 Appeals will be considered by an individual(s) with no previous connection to the original complaint. The individual(s) appointed to consider the appeal request will depend on the nature of the complaint and appeal lodged.

4.4 If, for reasons beyond the School's control the investigation and outcome exceeds the timeframe or is likely to exceed the timeframe, the customer will be notified in writing.

5.0 If a Customer remains dissatisfied

5.1 It is hoped that we will be able to resolve any complaint through the complaints procedure. If the customer remains dissatisfied with the outcome they have the right to raise the matter with the Northern Ireland Ombudsman's Office (in his/her role as Commissioner for Complaints). Please note that this facility will only be operational after April 2017.

The Ombudsman can be contacted:

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman
Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6HN

6.0 Monitoring Complaints and Comments

6.1 The School welcomes and values feedback from customers. The School analyses all feedback and areas of complaint in order to improve our services. All complaints will be dealt with sensitively and in all cases the documentary evidence gathered and stored will remain confidential to those involved. Statistical information will be made available for Quality and Equality monitoring purposes.

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS FORM

Appendix 1

If you require assistance with making a complaint, please contact the Vice-Principal

Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality, consistent with a full investigation of the issue.

If you are submitting a complaint on behalf of someone else, please provide their name/contact details in Section 1B. We may contact the individual for permission to discuss the issue with you.

SECTION 1A – Complainant Details

Title:	Miss / Mr / Mrs / Ms Other:				
Name:					
Contact Address:					
Tel Number:					
Email:					
Student ID (if applicable)					
Status (please tick)					
Student ☐	**Parent or Guardian** ☐	**Staff** ☐	**Member of the Public** ☐	**Employer** ☐	**Organisation** ☐

SECTION 1B – Details of person on whose behalf you are submitting complaint, if different to above

Title:	Miss / Mr / Mrs / Ms Other:				
Name:					
Contact Address:					
Tel Number:					
Email:					
Student ID (if applicable)					
Status (please tick)					
Do you have their consent to raise this matter?: Y/N					
Student ☐	**Parent or Guardian** ☐	**Staff** ☐	**Member of the Public** ☐	**Employer** ☐	**Organisation** ☐

Section 2

Details of Complaint: Please ensure that all details are provided, including (if relevant) date, time and place of the event; and names of those involved. You may attach additional sheets if necessary.
Have you attempted to resolve this issue informally? Yes / No If Yes, please summarise any action taken to resolve your issue/s to date.

Section 3

What do you see as a suitable remedy to address the issue or matter raised?

This form should be returned to:

St Louis Grammar School
151 Newry Road
Kilkeel
Co Down
BT358TB

I understand that a copy of this form may be provided to a member of staff if they are the subject of the issue.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Office Use Only	
Date Received:	Date Acknowledged:
Received By:	Responsible Owner:

CUSTOMER COMPLIMENTS FORM

Appendix 2

If you require assistance with submitting this form, please contact the Principal*

If we have done something well, we value and appreciate your positive feedback.

Title:	Miss / Mr / Mrs / Ms Other:
Name:	
Contact Address:	
Tel Number:	
Email:	
Student ID (if applicable)	

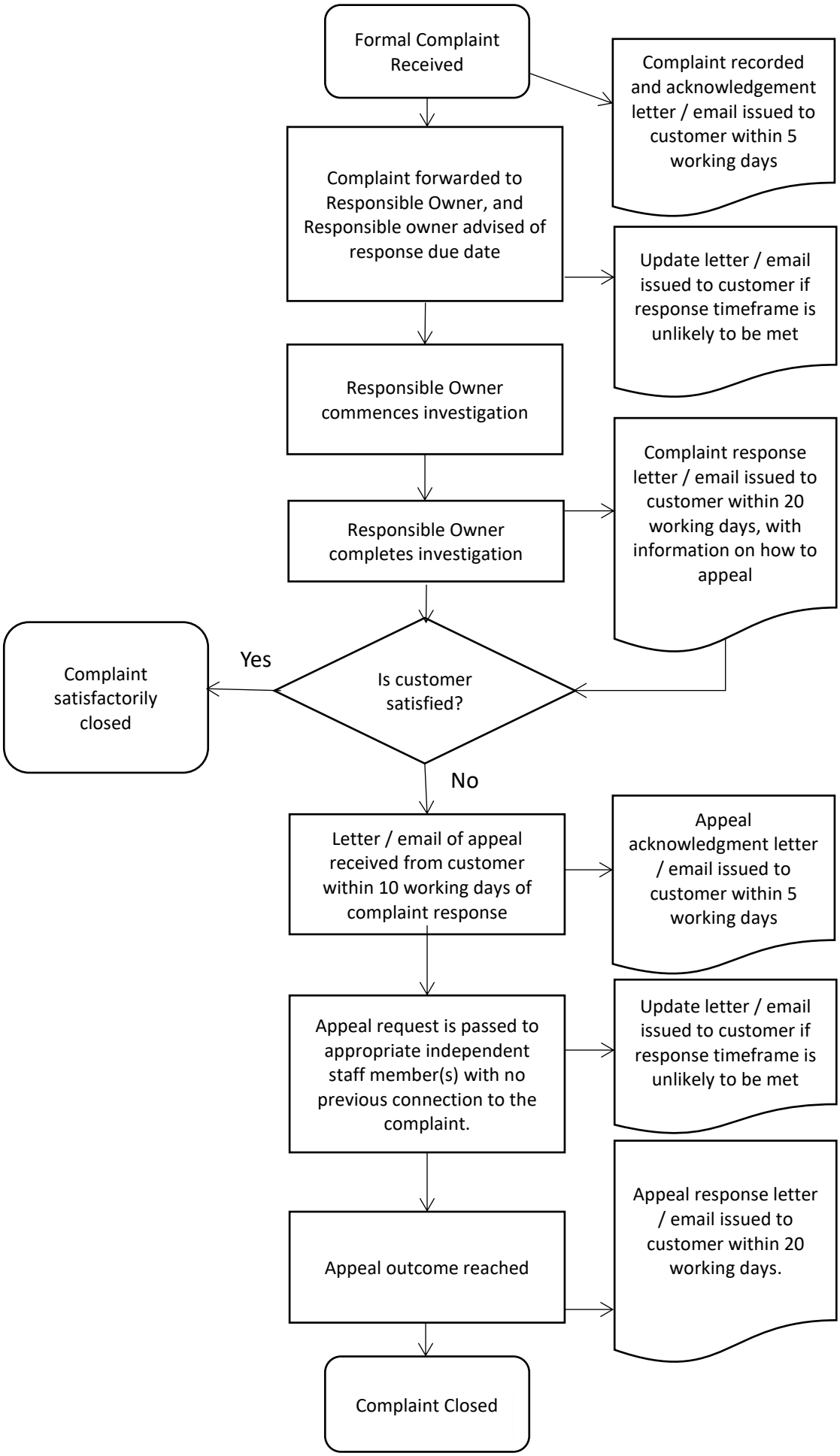
Status (please tick)					
Student ☐	**Parent or Guardian** ☐	**Staff** ☐	**Member of the Public** ☐	**Employer** ☐	**Organisation** ☐

Details of Compliment: Please ensure that all details are provided, including (if relevant) date, time and place of the event; and names of those involved if known. You may attach additional sheets if necessary.

This form should be returned to:
St Louis Grammar School
151 Newry Road
Kilkeel
Co Down
BT358TB

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Office Use Only	
Date Received:	Date Acknowledged:
Received By:	Responsible Owner:


Formal Complaint Received
Complaint recorded and acknowledgement letter / email issued to customer within 5 working days
Complaint forwarded to Responsible Owner, and Responsible owner advised of response due date
Update letter / email issued to customer if response timeframe is unlikely to be met
Responsible Owner commences investigation
Responsible Owner completes investigation
Complaint response letter / email issued to customer within 20 working days, with information on how to appeal
Is customer satisfied?
Yes
Complaint satisfactorily closed
No
Letter / email of appeal received from customer within 10 working days of complaint response
Appeal acknowledgment letter / email issued to customer within 5 working days
Appeal request is passed to appropriate independent staff member(s) with no previous connection to the complaint.
Update letter / email issued to customer if response timeframe is unlikely to be met
Appeal outcome reached
Appeal response letter / email issued to customer within 20 working days.
Complaint Closed