



Complaints Procedure and Guidelines

Adopted by the Governing Body on...March 2019

Next Review Date: March 2022

Guidelines for Complaints Procedures

St. John's School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes seriously complaints and concerns that may arise. This document will show you how to use our complaints system.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine concern 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 realise that we listen and take complaints seriously;
- ❖ We act where appropriate.

'How should I complain?'

You can talk directly to a member of staff, write a letter or telephone to make an appointment. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you.

Any member of staff will be happy to help. It may be best to start with making an appointment to speak to the person most closely concerned. They may be able to sort things out quickly with the minimum of fuss. However, you may prefer to take the matter to a member of the Leadership Team or the Head of School.

'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'm not sure whether to complain or not'

If as parents you have concerns, you are entitled to air them to the school. 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, the school will contact you within five working days (during term time) to respond to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed.

In many 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 a detailed exploration of the issues is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible. This 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 manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Head of School and to those directly involved. The Chair of Governors may also need to be informed. It is the school's policy that complaints made by parents or carers should not rebound adversely on their children.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the school's *Child protection and safeguarding* policy. 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 needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints would 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 that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered.

If you are not satisfied, the Head of School will offer to refer the matter to the Chair of Governors. Alternatively, you may wish to write direct to the Chair. The Chair will call for a full report from the Head of School and will examine matters thoroughly before responding. This may result in a positive solution but, if it does not, the Chair will invite you to a meeting. At this stage, the panel convened for this meeting will consist of at least three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. (Where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one person will be independent of the management of the running of the school). You may wish to be supported by a friend, but legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage.

We hope that we will be able to satisfy your concerns. 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.