



## Complaints Procedure

### Introduction

St Andrew's School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching, boarding and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this procedure.

St Andrew's makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils [and of prospective pupils] on the parent portal and in the school office during the school day, and will ensure that parents of pupils [and of prospective pupils] who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and of the form in which it is published or available.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, St Andrew's will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate, details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

### What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the school is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you [or your child] raises in good faith.

### Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and **informally**.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact the most appropriate member of staff, such as their son/daughter's form teacher, a Head of Department or, for boarding matters, the Housemistress. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the member of staff contacted cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Department or one of the Deputy Heads.
- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department or a Deputy Head will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher, or Housemistress, unless the Head of Department or the Deputy Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The member of staff who is dealing with the matter will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. This record will be on the School's management information system, in the pupil's file or a note to the Headmaster. All such records are kept under regular review by the Headmaster. Should the matter not be resolved within ten working days or in the event that the member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should **put their complaint in writing** to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet or speak to the parents concerned, within ten school working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing normally within 10 working school days of the meeting/conversation with the parents. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (having failed to reach an earlier resolution by Stages 1 and 2) they will be referred to the Convener, who will be appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. Letters should be addressed to the Chairman of the Governors, c/o The Clerk to the Governing Body, St Andrew's School.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The other two Panel members will be Governors. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Governing Body. The Panel Convener, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 21 days from the composition of the panel being finalised.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 5 days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. The investigation will take place without delay but may be protracted in more complex cases. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reconvene (in person or electronically) to reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete normally within 10 working days of the Final Meeting. The Panel will write (by email or letter) to the parents, informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmaster, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of. The findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair of Governors and the Headmaster.

## **Recording Complaints**

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all [formal] complaints, whether they are resolved at the [informal stage,] the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing and any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld). At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

UNDER THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE EYFS: All written complaints will be investigated and the complainants will be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint. St Andrew's will provide Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least three years.

Parents may complain directly to Ofsted or to ISI if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements.

- Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 123 1231 or by email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).]
- ISI may be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)

## **Document Review History**

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