



## Complaints Policy

<b>Review Cycle</b>	Annually
<b>Last Review Date</b>	September 2023
<b>Next Review Date</b>	September 2024
<b>Staff Responsible</b>	Mr T Jenkin
<b>Governor Responsible</b>	Mr J Fowler

THIS POLICY IS APPLICABLE TO ALL PUPILS, INCLUDING THOSE IN THE EYFS

## 9.8 COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### **Introduction**

The School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching 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. This procedure is used for all pupils in the School, including those in the EYFS.

St John's makes its Complaints Procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the School's website and via 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. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year is also available upon request from the School office.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, St John's will also make available, on request, to Ofsted, the Department for Education (DfE) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), details of this Complaints Procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Although this Procedure is made available to parents of prospective pupils, it is not available for use by them; it may only be used by parents of current pupils.

Complaints by parents of former pupils will be dealt with under this Complaints Procedure only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil to which the complaint relates was still registered as a pupil at the School.

The only exception to this is if the complaint is concerning a decision taken by the Head to permanently exclude or require the removal of a pupil under the School's Terms and Conditions in which case such a review must be requested by no later than five working days from the date of the decision to exclude or require the removal of a pupil.

"Parent(s)" means the holder(s) of parental responsibility for a current pupil about whom the complaint relates.

### **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.

The term 'normally' used in the timescales of the procedure below allows for some flexibility during the holiday periods. Deviation from the 'normal' time frame would be in exceptional circumstances only during term time.

### **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and **informally**.

St. John's School, Northwood



If parents have a complaint, they should contact their son's Form Teacher. Early communication of concerns is often the key, and, in many cases, the matter will normally be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult with the Head of Lower School, Head of Years 5 & 6, Head of Years 7 & 8. More serious complaints or concerns may be addressed to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or in some circumstances, directly to the Headmaster.

Complaints made directly to a Head of Department/Deputy Head will usually be referred to the relevant Form Teacher unless the Head of Department/Deputy Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally. The Headmaster would be the next contact point.

A complaint about the Headmaster should be made to the Chairman of Governors, Mr J Fowler, in the first instance, who will attempt to resolve it directly with the parent. Mr J Fowler's contact details are:

Email:

[jfowler@st-johns.org.uk](mailto:jfowler@st-johns.org.uk)

Postal address:

St John's School Potter Street Hill  
Northwood  
Middlesex  
HA6 3QY

On receipt of a complaint, the School will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within five working days or in the event that the Form Teacher 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 complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 48 hours. The Headmaster will decide, normally within five working days and definitely within ten working days of the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Headmaster will meet or speak to the parents concerned, within five 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 Head 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. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision. If parents remain dissatisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Complaints regarding EYFS pupils which are not resolved by stages 1 or 2 may be made to Ofsted and /or ISI- The Independent Schools' Inspectorate.

Contact details:

Ofsted:

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

8am-8pm Monday to Friday. Phone 0300 123 1234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Or you can fill in an online complaints form at

<http://live.ofsted.gov.uk/onlinecomplaints>

Ofsted regulations require that EYFS complainants will be notified of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of the school having received the complaint. We will try to resolve issues more quickly in accordance with the policy outlined above.

The school will provide Ofsted and ISI, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period and the action that was taken as a result of each complaint.

ISI

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA

Telephone: 0207 600 0100

## **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

If there has not been a satisfactory resolution of the Complaint at Stage 2 then parents may seek to invoke Stage 3 of the process. If they choose to do so, they should put their complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors, Mr J Fowler, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.

The matter will then be referred to a Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint within five working days and schedule a hearing



to take place as soon as practicable and normally within twenty-one days.

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 no later than five working 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 is unlikely to be necessary but may be used. 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. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within five working days of the Hearing. The Panel will write 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 and, where relevant, the person about whom the complaint is made within ten days of the Panel Hearing or as agreed. The findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Headmaster and the Governors. Once the complaint has been resolved the findings need to be signed and dated and copies sent to all relevant parties.

A written record will be kept of all complaints that are made formally in writing regardless of whether they are upheld: whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing; including a written record of the action taken by the school as a result of those complaints. Complaints which do not have safeguarding implications will be retained for a minimum of seven years. Complaints with safeguarding implications will be kept indefinitely.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except insofar as is required of the school where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

T. Jenkin Headmaster

September 2023