



# **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS POLICY**

**For St. James' School**

**Date: August 2011  
Annual Review  
Next Review: August 2012**

St. James' School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, and takes seriously complaints and concerns they may raise. This leaflet will show you how to use our complaints system.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction, 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 take action where appropriate

### **“How should I complain?”**

You can talk directly to a member of staff, write a letter, or telephone. 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 the person most closely concerned with the issue – for example, to raise house matters with the Housemaster or Housemistress, sports concerns with the Head of P.E. They may be able to sort things out quickly, with the minimum of fuss. However, you may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff, for example, the Head of the Senior or Prep Department or the Headteacher.

“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 am not sure whether to complain or not”**

If, as parents, you have concerns, you are entitled to complain. 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, we will contact you within five working days, 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 tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed. All complaints will be dealt with within 28 days and the paperwork for such complaints will be kept for a minimum of three years.

### **“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 Headteacher and those directly involved. The Chairman of Governors may also need to be informed. It is the school's policy that complaints made by parents 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 police. 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 Headteacher will offer to refer the matter to the Chairman of Governors. Alternatively, you may wish to write direct to the Chairman. The Chairman will call for a full report from the Headteacher, and will examine matters thoroughly before responding. This may result in a positive solution, but if it does not, the Chairman will invite you to a meeting. You may wish to be supported by a friend, but legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage.

Parents of children in Day Care, Foundation Stage or Out of School Care may also complain directly to Ofsted, whose contact details are available on request.

If the meeting does not bring about a resolution, the matter would be referred to the school's Conciliation Committee. It is their task to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. The Committee Convener will invite you to a meeting. You will be asked if there are any papers you would like to have circulated beforehand. As with the Chairman's meeting, you will be invited to bring a friend with you.

We hope that we will be able to satisfy your concerns. If we do not, you may wish to seek independent legal advice. There are certain circumstances in which the Secretary of State has an interest, and you could contact him directly or through your lawyer or MP; he would then ask the Independent Schools Council to investigate, usually through the Independent Schools Inspectorate.  
Boarders' Complaints

**If a pupil or parent wishes to make a specific complaint about any aspect of boarding and chooses not to initially lodge such a complaint with the School, he/she may contact Ofsted, the address and contact details are:**

**OFSTED**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Floor**

**Royal Exchange Buildings**

**St. Ann's Square**

**Manchester**

**M2 9QX**

**Tel: 08456404040**

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.