



# Complaints Procedure

## St James' School

### 1. Introduction

Our policy reflects the DfE guidance, in particular 'Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures' (DfE, 2020) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (DfE, 2023).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the policies listed below:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Behaviour and Discipline
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Admissions and Exclusions

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.

### 2. 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 their child's Form Tutor or Subject Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult the Head or Senior Leadership Team.

Complaints made directly to the Head will usually be referred to the relevant Teacher unless the Head deems it appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally. The Teacher 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 ten school days or in the event that the 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.

### 3. 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 Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Head will speak to the parents concerned, normally within five school 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 Head to carry out further investigations. The outcome of this will be reported to parents within a further 10 working days.

The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint, indicating whether it was resolved at preliminary stage or the panel hearing; and action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

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 Head will also give reasons for their decision. This will be reported to parents within 10 working days of the date the written complaint is received.

If the complaint raised is about the Head, the complaint should be sent to the board of governors who will aim to resolve the complaint at this stage.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

#### **4. Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Directors of Alpha Schools to convene a complaints panel.

The matter will then be referred to an appropriate Director of Alpha Schools for consideration who will establish a panel which will consist of three persons not directly involved in the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of The School and appointed in accordance with the DfE guidance. Each of the panel members shall be appointed by the “Directors” – the panel will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a meeting to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen 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 meeting. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than five days prior to the meeting.

Parents may choose a person to accompany them to the meeting.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents’ complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

Copies of the findings and recommendations are sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. In addition, the information is available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Head

During school holidays it is possible that some of the key personnel may not be available. If this is the case then the parents will be contacted within five working days of receiving the complaint and a clear timescale defined to replace the ones above. Under no circumstances should there be a delay of as much as 30 days between receiving the complaint and reporting back to parents.

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 make recommendations, which it shall complete within fourteen days of the meeting. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of their decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of

The School apart from where disclosure is required during The School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

If, having exhausted this complaints procedure, you are still not satisfied please telephone the Ofsted helpline on 0300 1231231 or the Independent Schools' Inspection Team at the Department for Education on 0370 0002288.

## **5. Confidentiality and additional information**

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

If, having exhausted this complaints procedure, you are still not satisfied please telephone the Ofsted helpline on 0300 1231231 or the Independent Schools' Inspection Team at the Department for Education on 0370 0002288.

Complaints can also be made to Ofsted online through <https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/online-complaints>.

Date of Review	Position	Name of Reviewer	Date of Next Review
August 2023	Headmistress	Miss T. Harris	August 2024
August 2023	Proprietor	Mr A. Khan	August 2024