



# Parental Complaints Policy

## Saint Nicholas School



<b>Approved by:</b>	 Headmaster  Chair of Governors	<b>Date:</b> 09/09/24
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	26/09/2022 09/09/24	
<b>Next review by:</b>	09/09/25	

*This policy applies to all sections of the School including EYFS*

## **INTRODUCTION**

This policy:

- Is non-contractual in nature;
- Applies to all members of staff except those who have not completed their probationary period;
- Can be adjusted by the School to suit specific circumstances;
- Can be varied unilaterally by the School.

Saint Nicholas School is proud of the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. It is inevitable, however, that situations will arise from time to time in which parents may feel that they have grounds for complaint. Any such complaint will be dealt with by the School according to the following procedure. In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

### **1. STAGE 1 – INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

- It is anticipated that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint, they should contact the EYFS Manager or their child's Form or Subject Teacher in the first instance. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form or Subject Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team. If the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team is unable to resolve the matter, it will then be necessary to consult one of the School's Deputy Head teachers.
- Complaints made directly to the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team, unless the Headmaster deems it appropriate for the matter to be dealt with personally.
- If the Form or Subject Teacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team considers that an issue might escalate to the formal stage they will make a written record of the concern and the date on which it was received.
- Should the matter not be resolved within ten working days, or should the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then the parent will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this procedure.

## **2. STAGE 2 – FORMAL RESOLUTION**

- If a 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 the parents concerned, within ten 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. The Headmaster will also give reasons for the decision. This will be done within five working days of the parental meeting.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to stage 3 of this Procedure.

## **3. STAGE 3 – PANEL HEARING**

- If parents seek to invoke stage 3 of this Procedure, following a failure to reach an earlier resolution, they will be referred to the Chair of Governors or, in his/her absence, the Vice-Chair of Governors.
- The matter will then be referred to a Complaints Panel set up by the Board of Governors for this purpose. The Panel will consist of two Governors not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and one other person independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors. The Convener of the Complaints Panel will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as is practicable and normally within twenty working 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 not later than two 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 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. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a

decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within fifteen working days of the hearing.

- ***NB it is not within the powers of the Panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, pupils or parents. The Panel may make findings and recommendations on disciplinary or any other procedural issues to the Headmaster or to the full body of School Governors as appropriate.***
- The Panel will ensure that a copy of its findings and recommendations is –
  - (i) sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
  - (ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair of Governors and the Headmaster.

#### **4.2 Records**

- A written record will be kept of all written, formal complaints to the Headmaster recording
  - (i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing; and
  - (ii) action taken by the School as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld)
- All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

#### **4.3 Contacting the Chair of Governors**

The Chair of Governors can be contacted via the School address: Saint Nicholas School, Hobbs Cross Road, Old Harlow, Essex, CM17 0NJ or via email at [Heads\\_pa@saintnicholasschool.net](mailto:Heads_pa@saintnicholasschool.net).

#### **4. EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS).**

Additional requirements apply for EYFS settings beyond those which apply to the main school. Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints is available to Ofsted and ISI on request.

The School will notify parents about an inspection once they have been notified. Once the final inspection report has been provided, it must be supplied to parents of children who attend the setting regularly.

In regard to complaints from parents of children in EYFS:

- a statement that the record of complaints is kept for at least three years
- parents can make a complaint to Ofsted and/or the Independent School's Inspectorate (ISI) should they so wish.

OFSTED, CONTACT: Clive House, 70 Petty France, London SW1H 9EX  
(Helpline 0300 013 0415)

ISI CONTACT: Ground Floor, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA  
(Tel 020 7600 0100)

## 5. Time scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

### Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

## 6. Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by [Saint Nicholas School](#), other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whistleblowing</li> </ul>	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be</p>

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	<p>made at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure.</p>
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### *Appendix 1 - Number of Complaints*

*The school is required to make available to parents the number of complaints received by the school in the previous year, which proceeded to Stage 2 or Stage 3. During the academic year 2023-24, the school received 0 complaints in this respect.*