
SAINT NICHOLAS SCHOOL

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS POLICY

Note: This policy applies to all sections of the school including EYFS

This policy is made available to parents via the school website or on request.

Reviewed November 2016

Review Date November 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

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.

2. 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 Teacher in the first instance. In many cases, the matter will 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 the relevant Head of School. If the Head of School is unable to resolve the matter, it will then be necessary to consult the Headmaster.
- Complaints made directly to the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant Head of School, unless the Headmaster deems it appropriate for the matter to be dealt with personally.
- The Form Teacher or Head of 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 ten working days, or should the Head of School 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.

3. 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 5 working days of the parental meeting.
- 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 of this Procedure, following a failure to reach an earlier resolution, they will be referred to the Chairman of Governors or, in his absence, the Vice-Chairman 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 Convenor 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.
- 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 head teacher;

4.1 Records

- A written record will be kept of all written, formal complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.
- 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.

4.2 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. Tel 01279 429910, office@saintnicholasschool.net.

5. 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 must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints must be made 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.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. In 2015/16 there has been (one) complaint registered under the formal procedure.

