

Complaints Procedure

This applies to all children including those in EYFS.

Written records will identify those complaints relating to boarding provision and action taken.

St Andrew's has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided for its pupils. However, if a parent does have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this procedure.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally and all complaints will be informally acknowledged as soon as possible.

If a parent has a complaint they should normally contact the person most closely concerned with the issue – for example, the key worker in the Nursery, the class teacher, the form tutor or the subject teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway to the parent's satisfaction. If this person cannot resolve the matter alone then it may be necessary for them to consult the Head of Pre-Prep, Head of Department, Deputy Head Pastoral or Deputy Head Academic. Indeed, the parent may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff, such as those mentioned above if they are not satisfied with the outcome.

The person dealing with the complaint will make a written record of the concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. This person will then:

- a) acknowledge the complaint within two working days;
- b) investigate and respond within *seven working days* from the date of the complaint to respond to the concerns and explain how the School proposes to proceed.

In many circumstances, the member of staff contacted will need to discuss the matter with a colleague or colleagues and consider it further before responding. If that is the case, and further reasonable time is required to consider the matter fully, the parent will be informed by email or letter. This member of staff will also ensure the Headmaster is aware of the matter.

If a detailed exploration of the issue is needed, a letter, email or report will be sent to the parent as quickly as possible, but in any case no later than 14 working days after the complaint was first received. This will tell the parent of the outcome of their complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

Should the matter not be resolved or in the event that the teacher 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.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint to the Headmaster If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parent should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. The Headmaster will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within *two working days* of the formal complaint being received by the Headmaster

In most cases, the Headmaster will meet or speak to the parent concerned within *five working days* of receiving the formal complaint. Normally, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations but the Headmaster should report back within 28 days of receipt of the formal complaint.

Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements require longer to look into and therefore will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 working days.

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 the parent will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision.

If the parent is still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure. The Headmaster will make it clear to parents at this time how to proceed via the Clerk to the Governors. A log of all formal written complaints will be kept by the Headmaster for three years.

Stage 3 – Formal Appeal to Governors

If a parent remains unhappy with the situation, they should appeal to the Chairman of the Governors by contacting the Clerk to the Governors in writing, detailing their complaint.

The matter will be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons 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 Chairman of Governors. The Clerk to the Governors will be called upon to record the meetings. The Chairman of Governors will acknowledge the complaint in writing and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within *15 working days* of the letter of acknowledgement.

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 *five working days* prior to the hearing.

The parent may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person whose identity should be clarified at least *three days* in advance of the meeting. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. Others may be requested to attend as felt relevant by the Headmaster and /or parents in order to secure a fair outcome.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the parent's complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

The Panel will consider

1. What actions the parents seek in order to satisfy the complaint in their eyes.
2. Whether the facts of the case are sufficiently established. The 'balance of probability' will apply.
3. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.

The meeting will be chaired in a manner seen to be fair to all parties. It will be a formal meeting and held in a room suitable for the purpose. The Clerk to the Governors will record notes of the meeting. It is unusual for the meeting to be audio recorded but this is possible if both the Chair of the Panel and the parents agree. Any

such recording will belong to school and be used in order for the panel to reach their decision. Everyone is expected to show restraint, good manners and courtesy.

After due consideration of all facts it considers relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within *seven working days* of the hearing. The Panel will write to the parent informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parent, the Headmaster, the Governors, and where relevant, the person complained of. They will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the governors and the head teacher. **The decision of the Panel will be final.**

A written record will be kept of all complaints that are made and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing. The action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld) will be recorded in writing

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and in confidence. 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 requests access to them.

If having exhausted the school's procedures, parents feel that the complaint has not been properly addressed, they can contact:

ISI – Independent School Inspectorate 020 7600 0100

The Foundation Years at St Andrew's are registered with OFSTED and parents of children in this area of the school can contact OFSTED and/or ISI directly should they have a complaint they feel is not being tackled by the school.

OFSTED

Early Years

Royal Exchange Building, St Anne's Square

Manchester. M2 7LA

Telephone: 03001231231

This document was informed by reference to the relevant documentation issued by DCSF (DfES), ISI, IAPS and the East Sussex Local Authority including Every Child Matters, and refers to the guidance issued for the Foundation Stage. It is also in accordance with the school's policy on equal opportunities and child protection/safeguarding policies.

All complaints with regard to boarding are dealt with in accordance with the School's complaints procedure. In addition to this it should be noted that:

- the complaints procedure is available to all staff and boarders, as well as to parents.
- boarders and their parents are informed by the school how they can contact ISI regarding any complaints concerning boarding welfare
- Prospective Parents and Parents may request the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

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