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## **Complaints Policy**

This Policy is relevant to the whole school, including EYFS.

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## **1.0 Introduction**

St Peter & St Paul School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents or carers do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school with care and compassion, in accordance with this procedure. St Peter & St Paul School makes its Complaints Policy available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the school's website and in the school office during the school day. St Peter & St Paul School will ensure that parents of current pupils and of prospective pupils who request it, are made aware that this document is published and the various formats it can be requested in. Parents or carers who require the Complaints Policy in another language or Braille should inform the school.

## **2.0 The Role of the Trustee Board**

The Trustee Board of St Peter & St Paul School understands its regulatory responsibilities and will maintain an effective oversight of this policy by evaluating its effectiveness and reviewing and implementing change.

## **3.0 What Constitutes a Complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent or carer is unhappy and seeks action by the school is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent or carer believes that the school has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

Parents and carers can be assured that all concerns and complaints are treated equally and will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your child, and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you or your child raises in good faith.



## **4.0 The three-stage Complaint Procedure**

### **4.1 Stage 1 - Informal Resolution**

- It is hoped that most concerns and complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents or carers have a concern or complaint, they should contact their son/daughter's Class teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction.
- If the Class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a member of Senior Leadership Team or the Headteacher.
- Complaints made directly to the Headteacher will usually be referred to the relevant Class Teacher unless the Headteacher deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Class 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 two weeks, or in the event that the Class Teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage Two of this procedure.
- If the complaint is against the Headteacher, parents or carers should make their complaint directly to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

### **4.2 Stage 2 - Formal Resolution**

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents or carers should put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher within 14 days of the lack of resolution from Stage One of this procedure. This can either be delivered by person/post or emailed to [headteacher@spsp.org.uk](mailto:headteacher@spsp.org.uk). The Headteacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headteacher will speak / meet the parents or carers concerned, normally within seven days of receiving the complaint during term time, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headteacher to carry out further investigations.
- The Headteacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headteacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, that all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing within 21 days. The Headteacher will also give reasons for the decision.
- Appeals Process: If parents or carers are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure. This should occur within 30 days of receiving the Head's response to the formal complaint

### **4.3 Stage 3 - Panel Hearing**

- If parents or carers seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The independent member of the panel will not include someone who regularly acts for the school, such as a solicitor. Suitable panel members would likely be people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to scrutinizing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments. Examples of persons likely to be considered would be serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools,



people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of Trustees. The Chair of the Board of Trustees, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as possible and normally within 21 days. The Chair of the Board of Trustees, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 21 days.

- The School should provide the Panel with clear terms of reference as regards the complaint.
- 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 normally not later than 7 days prior to the hearing.
- The parents or carers may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate and parents are not entitled to insist on this. Should the parent not decide to attend the hearing, the panel will still convene and consider the complaint in his/her absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion. This requirement to proceed does not prevent St Peter & St Paul School from accommodating parental availability for dates or considering comments concerning the composition of the panel.
- The Panel will consider the full merits of the complaint.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' or carers' 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 21 days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the parents or carers informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and recommendations, if any, will be sent in writing to the parents / carers, the Head, the Trustees and, where relevant, the person who is the subject of the complaint. The Panel's findings will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Trustees and the Head.

## **5.0 Dealing with Complaints**

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within five working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible.

## **6.0 Recording Complaints**

A written record of all informal and formal complaints that are made will be kept by the school. This will include a record of the resolution (whether at Stage two or if it progresses to Stage three Panel hearing), it will include action taken by the school regardless of whether the complaint is upheld.

This policy and procedure applies to the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage. St Peter & St Paul School will provide ISI, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least three years.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated and seriously and confidentially.



Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act (Education and Skills Act 2008) requests access to them, or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Where there is a safeguarding angle, complaints must be preserved for the term of the Independent inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and at least until the accused has reached normal pensionable age or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if it is longer.

If a complaint has been considered by at all three stages of the policy, there is no further recourse within the scope of the policy. Any repeated attempt by a parent to raise the same complaint is therefore outside the scope of the policy.

Parents and pupils may also contact the following with a complaint:

Pupils' Welfare Issues: Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) via Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership: telephone 01629 531 940.

**Contact Details of Inspection Bodies as regards complaints:**

The Independent Schools Inspectorate may be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)

**Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Complaints Procedures**

In order to ensure that the Complaints procedures are effective, efforts are taken to identify any patterns or trends in the causes of complaints. As such the complaints file kept in the Head's Office is reviewed by the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team twice per term.

**There were no complaints registered under the stage 3 formal panel hearing procedure during the academic year 2023-24.**

Next date for review May 2025 by Chair of Trustees