



Sacred Heart School

Complaints Policy and Procedure

At Sacred Heart School we all aspire to provide a happy, safe and secure environment in which every child is encouraged to achieve their full potential.

This policy is applicable to all pupils, including those in EYFS.

This policy is available to parents via the website and printed copies are available on request.

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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE STATEMENT

In line with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 and the Children Act Regulations (October 2005, HMI 2573) we are asked to provide parents at the school with a written Complaints Procedure. This procedure applies to pupils in the Main School and in the Foundation Stage and is outlined below.

At Sacred Heart School we place a high priority on positive relationships. We aim to be fair and transparent in our dealings with all members of the school community. We recognise that from time to time problems may arise and our aim is always to address matters promptly and seek a swift and mutually agreeable resolution. Most matters can be dealt with quickly and informally; others will require investigation and sometimes consultation to resolve. The process for dealing with all concerns relating to your child's education is set out below.

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

1. Any problem or concern should be raised in the first instance with the class teacher, who will make every effort to resolve your problem promptly at this informal stage. Such concerns might include homework, lost property or progress and assessments. If your concern is with the teacher speak directly to the Head Teacher. Most concerns can best be resolved through informal discussion, although it may be necessary to book an appointment in order to avoid interruption to teaching time and other duties.
2. If your concern is about an action by the Head Teacher personally you can discuss the matter informally with the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will then investigate and may seek to resolve the matter through discussion with yourself and the Head Teacher.
3. The Head Teacher, the member of staff for Pastoral Care and/or the Learning Support Teacher are always available to discuss matters which require attention beyond that of the class teacher.

The school aims to respond to any complaint made within 5 school days.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

4. If following any such informal discussions you are dissatisfied with the response then you may wish to put your concerns in writing to the Head Teacher or if it is in relation to the Head Teacher, the Chair of Governors.
5. The Head Teacher or the Chair of Governors will investigate the complaint and invite you to a meeting to discuss the findings (or provide a written response) normally within 10 school days of your letter, however in times of school closure, this period may be extended.

Stage 3: Panel Hearing

6. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome you may wish to put your concerns in writing to the Chair of Governors who will convene a meeting with three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint to address the issues raised by you. At least one panel member will be a governor and one member of the panel will be independent of the management and running of the school (for example: serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background or retired members of the Police Force). This meeting will normally be arranged within fifteen school days of your complaint being received, depending on the availability of all concerned including parents who may be accompanied by a friend or representative if they wish. After the meeting you will be advised of the outcome. This will normally be within 10 school days of the meeting, but in times of school closure, this period may be extended.

7. A written record will be kept of all complaints, actions taken and outcomes regardless of whether they were upheld and whether they are resolved at Stage 2 (formal) or Stage 3 (panel hearing). A copy of these findings and recommendations will be retained by the school for a period of 7 years and the full findings and recommendations will be sent to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. This record will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Head and the Chair of Governors.
8. 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, as amended, requests access to them.
9. EYFS: written complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and complainants notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.
10. For parents of pupils in the Foundation Stage, complaints may also be referred to Ofsted Early Years or Independent Schools Inspectorate (*see addresses below*) if you feel the school is not fulfilling the EYFS requirements.

Unreasonably persistent complaints

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore we will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:

- Has made the same complaint before, and it's already been through the school's complaints procedure
- Makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory or repetitive
- Knowingly provides false information
- Insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complaints procedure
- Pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner e.g. refuses to articulate the complaint, refused to co-operate with this complaints procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the time frames it sets out
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation goes on
- Makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on school time
- Seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value.

Steps we will take

- We will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns and give them a clear statement of our position and their options.
- We will maintain our role as an objective arbiter throughout the process, including when we meet with individuals.
- We will follow our complaints procedure as normal (as outlined above) wherever possible. If the complainant continues to contact the school in a disruptive way, we may put communications strategies in place.

We may:

- Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address.
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term.
- Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf, such as Citizens Advice.
- Put any other strategy in place as necessary.

Stopping responding

We may stop responding to the complainant when all of these factors are met:

- We believe we have taken all reasonable steps to help address their concerns.
- We have provided a clear statement of our position and their options.
- The complainant contacts us repeatedly, and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience and / or he or she is making substantially the same points each time.

- Where we stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so. We will also explain that we will still consider any new complaints they make.

The record of complaints will be available to Regulatory Bodies on request.

The number of formal complaints registered during the year 2023 - 24 was two.

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