



# St Andrew's

## BERKSHIRE

### Complaints Procedure

#### Introduction

St Andrew's School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching, boarding and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this procedure. The DFE does not distinguish between “concerns” and “complaints”. Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is now a complaint, and in the scope of the procedure, whatever the school labels it as. The school has the following procedure, which is for parents of all pupils, including all those in the Early Years Foundation Stage and also those who are flexi-boarding at the school.

#### What should you do if you have a complaint?

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints 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. We aim to resolve any complaints in a timely manner.

Timescales for each stage are set out below. When referring to the number of days throughout this policy, we mean Monday to Friday, when the school is open during term time. The school term dates are published on the website.

#### Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should, in the first instance, contact their son/daughter's form teacher or, for boarding matters, the Head of Boarding. In many cases, the matter will be resolved quickly and with minimal disruption.
- If the member of staff contacted cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult with the Head of Juniors/Middles/Seniors, or one of the Deputy Heads/Head of Pre-Prep. The Head Master, if appropriate, may be involved at this stage.
- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department or a Deputy Head will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher, or to the Head of Boarding, unless the Head of Department or the Deputy Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The member of staff who is dealing with the matter will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. This record will be on the School's management information system, in the pupil's file. All such records are kept under regular review by the Head Master and reported to the Committee termly.

- Should the matter not be resolved within ten working days, or in the event that the member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head Master. The Head Master will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head Master will meet or speak to 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 Head Master to carry out further investigations.
- The Head Master will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head Master 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 normally within 10 working school days of the meeting/conversation with the parents. The Head Master will also give reasons for his decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (having failed to reach an earlier resolution by Stages 1 and 2) they will be referred to the Convener, who will be appointed by the St Andrew's Committee to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. Letters should be addressed to the Chair of the St Andrew's Committee, Mr Philip Waite, c/o, St Andrew's School.

The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The panel will consist of at least three members who were not directly involved in the matter detailed in the complaint, one of which is independent of the management and the running of the School. Each of the panel members shall be appointed by the St Andrew's Committee. The panel will appoint one of themselves to be the chair of the panel throughout the proceedings. There will also be an independent note taker present for hearing. The Panel Convenor, 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 from the composition of the panel being finalised.

- 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 5 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 the parents do wish to be accompanied by a legal representative, the panel Convenor must be informed of this at least five working days prior to the hearing. The parents should note that the panel will wish to speak to the parents directly and this person will not be permitted to act as an advocate, or to address the hearing, unless invited to do so by the panel.

- 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. The investigation will take place without delay but may be protracted in more complex cases.

After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reconvene (in person or electronically) to reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete normally within 10 working days of the Final Meeting.

The Panel will write to the parents, informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head Master, the Committee and, where relevant, the person complained of. The findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair of the Committee and the Head Master.

### **Recording Complaints**

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all [formal] complaints, whether they are resolved at the informal stage, the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing, and any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld). At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

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 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

### **Under the statutory framework for the EYFS**

All written complaints will be investigated and the complainants will be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint. St Andrew's will provide Ofsted, 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 may complain directly to Ofsted or to ISI if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements.

- Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 123 1231 or by email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)
- ISI may be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)

**St Andrew's has received one formal complaint in the academic year of 2022/23**

#### Document Review History

Last review date:  
September 23

September 24

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Editor: Head Master