

COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

Record of review

Date	Amendments
Sept 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of new timeframes to allow for COVID-19 • Include procedures for complaints direct to Head office • Include findings section • Include NMS requirements for schools with boarding
Jan 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend introduction • Head and Panel give reasons and explanations for findings • More detail for partially upheld findings • Reworded EYFS paragraph • Reword section 6 on record keeping to include data protection • Removed any duplication

1 Introduction

This Policy applies to the entire setting including the EYFS and After School and Holiday Clubs.

St Edward's Prep has long prided itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint. They can expect it to be treated by the school with care and in accordance with this Complaints Procedure. Copies of this Policy & Procedure are available to all parents and prospective parents for viewing and/or downloading on the school's website and a hard copy is available free of charge from the school office. In accordance with paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 2014, St Edward's Prep will also make available, on request, to Ofsted, the Department for Education (DfE) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), details of the Complaints Procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

The difference between a concern and a complaint:

A "concern" may be treated as "an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought".

A "complaint" may be generally recognised as an "expression or statement of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem, about actions taken or the lack of action". Any action about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is considered to be a complaint.

We take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve them at the earliest possible stage.

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.

If a complaint concerns safeguarding or child protection issues please also refer to the school's Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy

The scope of this policy does not include staff grievances or disciplinary procedures, or parents of prospective pupils.

2 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the procedure current parents/carers should follow should they wish to make a complaint.

If the complainant contacts the school repeatedly on the same point, the correspondence can be viewed as "serial" or "persistent" and the school reserves the right to choose not to respond.

3 Procedure

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 normally contact their child's Form Tutor.

In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head.

Complaints made directly to the Head will usually be referred to the relevant Form Tutor unless the Head deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

The Form Tutor/Class Teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received and will note what the complainant thinks might resolve the issue. Should the matter not be resolved within ten working days or in the event that the Form Tutor and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised of their right to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

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Complaints made directly to the Wishford Head Office will be directed back to the Head of the relevant school. It is expected that all concerns (if they escalate) that all complaints will go through stage 1 and 2 of this procedure before reaching the Proprietor or senior members of Wishford Schools.

If the complaint is against the Head, parents should make their complaint directly to the Proprietor whose contact details are available in section 4 of this policy.

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, who will provide a copy to the Directors. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Head will contact the parents concerned, within two 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, or their nominee, to carry out further investigations before reporting back to the parents. In this case, a response should take no longer than twenty working days.

The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Head 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 the decision in writing. The Head will give reasons for the decision. In most cases the Head will make their decision and provided the parents with reasons within 20 working days of the complaint being put in writing.

Stage 3: Complaints Panel Hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3, they should do so in writing to the Proprietor with 5 days of receiving the Stage 2 decision, setting out their grounds of appeal. Any supporting evidence which the parents wish to rely on should also be provided with their grounds of appeal.

The Directors will appoint the members of the Panel, including the Chairman, who will be a person of good standing in the community but not associated with the school. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, at least one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable, normally within three working weeks.

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 days prior to the hearing.

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing. This may a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. The Head shall also be entitled to be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. Legal representation will not, normally, be appropriate. The panel will decide whether it would be helpful for witnesses to attend.

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, make findings as to whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within two weeks of the hearing. The panel will accordingly decide whether the complaint is:

- Upheld - the complaint is accepted in its entirety.

- Partially upheld - elements of the complaint are accepted, while other aspects are accepted. (In the case of a multi-part complaint the written record of the findings will explain individual parts and the finding for each part)
- Not upheld - the complaint is rejected in its entirety.
- Not substantiated - there is insufficient evidence to determine the complaint. No inference can be drawn from this outcome as to whether or not the complaint is valid.

The decision of the Panel will be final.

The panel will write to the parents informing them of its decisions and the reasons for it within 14 working days of the hearing

The Panel's findings and recommendations will be:

- provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about;
- provided to the Proprietor;
- made available for inspection on the school premises by the Directors and Head.

4 Complaints about the Headteacher or Proprietor:

If the complaint is about the Headteacher the complainant should write to the Proprietor; Mr Sam Antrobus at the following address:

25-27 High Street,
Corsham
SN13 0ES

If the complaint is about the Proprietor, the complainant should write to the Directors of Wishford Schools at the above address.

5 Timescale for dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously, sensitively and within clear and reasonable timescales. Unless additional time is jointly agreed between the school and the parents the following timetable should be followed:

- Informal resolution: 10 working days
- Formal resolution: 20 working days
- Appointment of Complaints Panel: 21 working days
- Resolution by the Complaints Panel: 14 working days from date of hearing

A working day is defined as a week day on which the school is in session and excludes weekends, bank holidays, and school holidays (even if the school is open for an INSET day, Holiday Club or similar). This means that during the school holidays or during periods of significant disruption to school life or as a consequence of unavoidable staff absence, it might take longer to resolve a complaint.

Parents of EYFS children should follow the three stages of this Policy & Procedure. If parents remain dissatisfied and that their complaint is about the school's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements they may take their complaint to the ISI or Ofsted. Parents will be notified of the outcomes of the investigation within 28 days of the complaint being received.

6 Recording Complaints and use of personal data

The school will keep a written record of all complaints, whether they are resolved at the informal Stage 1, the formal stage 2 or proceed to a panel hearing at Stage 3. The school processes data in accordance with its privacy notice [Privacy Notice](#) when dealing with complaints the school and any panel member may process a range of information, which is likely to include:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent(s) and pupil(s)
- Description of the issue
- Records of all investigations
- Witness statements
- /Name and contact details of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue

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- Notes/minutes of the hearing
- The Panel's written decision.

This may include "special category personal data, for instance, information relating to physical or mental health. Where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint, this data will be processed in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy

The record will indicate:

- whether the complaints were resolved following the formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing; and
- the action taken by the school as a result of the complaint, regardless of whether the complaint is upheld.
- The lessons learned by the school

Correspondence, statements and records relating to the individual complaint 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 requests access to them.

For the Academic year 2019/2020 the school received 1 formal complaint.

7 Contacts

Parents who believe the school is not meeting the requirements of the EYFS may complain to Ofsted by writing to this address:

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD;
or by telephone 0300 123 3155;
or by email to: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parents who are not satisfied may also contact ISI at:
Cap House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA or concerns@isi.net

8 Approval & Review

This policy was approved by the Proprietor. It will be reviewed every two years or as necessary following a change in regulation.



Signed: Sam Antrobus
Executive Chairman