

ST SWITHUN'S JUNIOR SCHOOL INCLUDING EARLY YEARS
FOUNDATION STAGE

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

The School has long prided itself on the quality of the 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 in accordance with this 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 son/daughter's class teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the member of staff cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Junior School Headmistress.
- Complaints made directly to the Headmistress or Deputy Head will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff unless the Headmistress or Deputy Head deems it appropriate for her/him to deal with the matter personally.
- The member of staff 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 7 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 Junior School Headmistress. She will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmistress will speak with the parents concerned, normally within 7 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 Headmistress to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmistress will keep written records of all discussions and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

- Once the Headmistress 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. The Headmistress will also give reasons for her decision.
- At this point parents, if parents are still unhappy with the situation, then they may contact the Headmistress of St Swithun's School.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the Headmistress's decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Bursar, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then 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 Bursar, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter to be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 3 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 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 and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 3 days of the Hearing. 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, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; by the Secretary of State for

Children, Schools and Families or where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails.

The number of formal complaints received in the previous year is available on request from the Clerk to the Governors. Records are kept for three years.

Complaints at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

In all instances we would hope that parents will direct concerns to the school but the following also applies for those with children in EYFS.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is registered with Ofsted and in addition to the existing process outlined above, complaints can be addressed to Ofsted. Details on how to proceed can be found at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/About-us/Contact-us/How-to-complain>.

If the school is notified of a complaint via Ofsted the complainant will be notified of the outcome within 28 days of receiving the complaint. The school will provide a record of any complaints to Ofsted on request.

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PSG