



# St Hilary's School

## Complaints Policy

### Including EYFS, Before and After School Care

St Hilary's 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. We actively promote democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. These are fundamental British Values which underpin all that we offer, as does our School Moto 'Not for oneself but for all.'

In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, St Hilary's School will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate, details of the Complaints Procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding year. This policy is available on the school's website and by request via the school office. The Register of Complaints is kept in the Head's Study and maintained for 3 years. The procedure includes complaints arising in EYFS and those participating in before and after school activities.

#### **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 is unhappy and seeks action by the school is written within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

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) raise in good faith.

#### **The Three Stage Complaints Procedure**

##### **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint or concern they should normally contact their son/daughter's Class /Form teacher. In many cases the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Class /Form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Department, a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the Deputy Head or Headmistress.
- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, Deputy Head or Headmistress will usually be referred to the relevant Class / Form teacher unless the Head of Department, Senior Leadership



Team, Deputy Head or Headmistress deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.

- The Class /Form teacher concerned will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received on the School management System. Should the matter not be resolved within a reasonable period not exceeding 5 working days, or in the event that the relevant Class / Form teacher and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this procedure.
- If the complaint is against the Head, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors at [chairofgovernors@sthilarysschool.com](mailto:chairofgovernors@sthilarysschool.com).

### **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. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In accordance with EYFS legislation the school will resolve any formal complaints regarding pupils in the EYFS setting within 28 days of having received the complaint and will inform the complainants of the outcome.
- In most cases the Head will communicate with the parents concerned, normally within 5 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 to carry out further investigations.
- The Head will keep written records of all meeting 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 this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for his/her decision.
- If the complaint is against the Head, the Chair of Governors will call for a full report from the Head and for the relevant documents. The Chair may also call for a briefing from members of staff and will, in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chair will give his / her reasons for his / her 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 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Head 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 3 persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members will be appointed by the Chair of Governors. The Head, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place within 10 working days.



- 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 working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may attend the hearing and 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 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 make findings and may make recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, within 5 working days of the hearing (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the hearing). The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of Governors and the Head. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair of Governors and the Head.

### Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within 5 working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

It is in everyone's interests to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 20 working days.

Please note, that for purposes of this procedure, 'working day' refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time.

### Recording Complaints

Following the 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 body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

St Hilary's will provide ISI / OFSTED, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during a 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 3 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 at:  
Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M21 2WD or on  
Tel: 0300 1234 234 or by  
email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

ISI may be contacted at:  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London. EC1A 9HA or on  
Tel: 0207 600 0100 or by  
email: [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)

*St Hilary's School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the School's Equal Opportunity Policy document.*

Between September 2014 and September 2015 the number of complaints made under the formal complaints procedure is: 0  
Between September 2015 and September 2016 the number of complaints is: 2. Both of these complaints were resolved at the Informal Stage.  
Between September 2016 and September 2017 the number of complaints is: 2. Both of these complaints were resolved at the Informal Stage.  
Between September 2017 and September 2018 the number of complaints is: 6. These were resolved at the Informal Resolution. The number of complaints escalated to Stage 2: 1. This was resolved by Formal Resolution.

This document is reviewed and ratified annually by the Governing Body or as events or legislation change requires.

AUTHOR: Headmistress  
READ & APPROVED BY: Governors and SLT  
READ & SHARED: staff of the school  
Reviewed: January 2016 Ratified by Governors: Full Board February 2016  
Review date: Sept 2016 Ratified by the Education Governors Committee: Sept 2016  
Review date: Sept 2017 Ratified by the Governors: September 2017  
Review date: Sept 2018 to be ratified by the Governors Oct 2018