



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Date: Jan-2019

Review: Date: Jun-2019

INTRODUCTION

The whole School, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 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.

Sarum Hall School makes its Complaints Procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the School's website and in the School office during the school day, and Sarum Hall School will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and of the form in which it is published or available. This procedure is not, however, available for use by prospective parents – it may only be used by parents of current pupils.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Sarum Hall 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 school year.

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 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 raises in good faith.

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 the Headmistress. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction.

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

There will be a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within five working days or the parents

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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, however, the complaint is against the Head, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of the Governors.

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 Headmistress. The Headmistress will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Headmistress will meet the parents concerned, normally within five days of receiving the written complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. There may be circumstances that delay this process, for example school holidays.

It may be necessary for the Headmistress to carry out further investigations.

The Headmistress will keep written records of all meetings 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 in writing. The Headmistress will also give reasons for her decision.

If the complaint is against the Head, the Chair of Governors will call for a full report from the Head and for all 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 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 Governors.

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,

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one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Board of Governors shall appoint each of the panel members. The 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 10 working days. There may be circumstances that delay this process, for example school holidays.

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 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 the 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 10 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, if any, recommendations 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 any 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 interest 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. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 20 working days.

Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, working days refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time, excluding bank holidays.

RECORDING COMPLAINTS

Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all complaints, whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing and any

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action taken by the School as a result of those complaints (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 as confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act, requests access to them.

Sarum Hall School will provide ISI/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 3 years.

Parents may complain directly to Ofsted or to ISI if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Schools must make available details of how to contact Ofsted and/or the ISI:

Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 1234 234 or by email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

ISI may be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: concerns@isi.net

Linked guidance, policies and procedures:

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\) statutory guidance](#)

[Working together to safeguard children.pdf](#)

Relevant school policies:

Keeping Children Safe in Education, Child protection Policy and Code of Conduct.
Policy to promote good behaviour and set out sanctions
Policy to prevent bullying
PSHCE (personal, social, health and citizenship education)

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SRE (sex and relationships education)

Health and safety

Confidentiality

Whistle blowing

Equality

SEN/LDD/G&T



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Appendix: Complaints Procedure – Independent Member of the Panel.

THIS APPENDIX DOES NOT FORM PART OF THE ACTUAL MODEL PROCEDURE

The DfE has supplied the following guidance in a letter to the ISC General Secretary.

Whilst we do not intend to be prescriptive our general view is that suitable people would be those who have held positions of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments/points. It would add credibility if independent panel members has some standing in the community. In this connection serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background – perhaps retired members of the Police Force – might be considered suitable by schools. Schools will have their own views and may well have other suitable suggestions to make.

You asked if it would be acceptable to appoint former governors or staff of the school as the independent panel member. The regulations do not preclude this since the stipulation is that the person must be independent of the management and running of the school. Clearly former governors or staff would not have any such involvement. However, schools should bear in mind that they may be the subject to criticism that such people would remain too close to the school and would not be truly independent.

There have been no complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Parents can make a complaint to the ISI if they wish. Parents of children in the Early Years Foundation stage can also complain to Ofsted if they feel that the EYFS requirements are not met.

ISI

Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9 - 12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA

Telephone 020 7600 0100

Fax 020 7776 8849

Ofsted

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

General helpline 0300 123 1231; text phone number 0161 618 8524

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(8.00am to 6.00pm)

To write to us

Ofsted,
Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street,
Manchester
M1 2WD