



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Date: Sept-2020

Review: Date: Sept-2021

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 received in writing 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 Head in writing. 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 concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. This is kept electronically in the form of a 'Complaints Log'. Should the matter not be resolved within five working days or the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then

Complaints Policy

This policy applies to EYFS



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Date: Sept-2020

Review: Date: Sept-2021

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

In most cases, the Head 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 Head to carry out further investigations.

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 this decision in writing. The Head 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

Should the Parents wish to invoke Stage 3 of this Procedure, they must write to the Head (or Chair of Governors if the complaint is about the Head) informing the School of their intention to do so within 7 days of receipt by them of the decision referred to in stage 2 above.

Within 14 days of the decision referred to in the previous clause, the Parents must also submit a written request (“the Request”) addressed to the Bursar and Clerk to the Governors for the complaint to proceed to Stage 3. As part of the Request, the Parents must also submit at the same time:

- i) A full written statement of their claim,

Complaints Policy

This policy applies to EYFS



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Date: Sept-2020

Review: Date: Sept-2021

- ii) Details of any witnesses they wish to attend the hearing, and
- iii) Copies of any documents then available on which they wish to rely.

The Clerk to the Governors will write to the Parents (with a copy to the Head, or Chair of Governors if the complaint is about the Head) to acknowledge receipt of the Request.

Following receipt of the Request by the Clerk to the Governors, the procedures set out below will be followed:

- 1) The Clerk to the Governors will convene a Complaints Panel ('the Panel') for this purpose in accordance with the following requirements: The Panel shall consist of three people, including not less than one independent member, with the remainder consisting of one or two Governors nominated from among members of the governing body of the School. The independent member(s) of the Panel will be selected along the guidelines issued by the Department of Education. This means suitable people will be those who have held positions of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence, facts and documents and listening to and putting forward balanced arguments. In this connection, serving or retired professional or business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools and people with a legal background may be considered suitable. The person chosen must be independent of the management and running of the school and not involved in matters related to the complaint. In convening the Panel, the Clerk to the Governors and the governing body shall be sensitive to issues of race, ethnic origin, gender and religious affiliation. The members of the governing body nominated to the Panel shall be Governors who have had no prior involvement with the complaint. The Panel shall be chaired by a member of the governing body. The Panel will ensure that minutes are kept of all its proceedings. In the event that a member of the Panel becomes ill, indisposed or otherwise incapable of continuing to serve on the Panel, then the Panel will be entitled to co-opt another member of the governing body or another independent member as may be required.
- 2) The Clerk to the Governors shall submit to members of the Panel and to the Head copies of the Parents' Request and of any supporting documents without delay after receipt. The Head shall be invited by the Clerk to The Governors to submit a written Report to the Panel in response to the Parents' Request. The Head may invite members of staff directly involved in matters raised by the Parents to respond in writing to the complaint set out in the Request.
- 3) If the Parents' Request contains matters which have not been raised previously or which set out a claim that is substantially different from that which was investigated under Stage 1 or Stage 2 of this Complaints Procedure, then the Head can request that the Stage 2 procedure be repeated. If such request is made, the Stage 3 procedure will be suspended until the repeated Stage 2 procedure has been concluded. In the event that there is a dispute as to whether the Stage 2 procedure should be repeated, the decision of the Chair of the Panel shall be final.
- 4) As soon as possible after the Request has been received, the Clerk to the Governors will write to inform the Parents, the Head and the members of the Panel of the date, time and

Complaints Policy

This policy applies to EYFS



Sarum Hall School

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Date: Sept-2020

Review: Date: Sept-2021

place of the Panel Meeting, which should, if practicable, be conducted within 10 working days after the receipt of all documents referred to above.

- 5) Copies of any further documents on which the Parents wish to rely at the Panel Meeting (and which were not provided earlier) must be submitted to the Clerk to the Governors as soon as possible but in any event not later than 5 working days before the Panel meeting.

The following rules shall apply to the Panel Meeting:

1. Both the Parents and the Head have the right to be accompanied at the hearing by one representative, friend or interpreter whose identity has been notified to the Clerk to the Governors not less than 4 working days before the Panel Meeting. All parties shall be informed of such notification. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
2. The report of the Head and any supporting documentation shall be submitted to the Clerk to the Governors no later than 5 working days before the Panel Meeting.
3. The Clerk to the Governors shall supply copies of any further documents submitted by the Parents, the Head's report and any supporting documentation to the Panel and to the other party as soon as the same are received by him or her. He or she will also notify the Panel, the Parents and the Head of the identity of everyone attending the Panel Meeting.
4. The Panel Meeting will be conducted in two separate parts. The Panel will first hear from the Parents and/or any representative. The Panel will then hear from the Head and/or any representative, The Panel will hold both parts of the Meeting on the same day. Each party will only be present at their own hearing.
5. At the Panel Meeting, the Panel shall be free to question the Parents, the Head and any persons in attendance but may also, at its discretion, request that other persons with relevant knowledge attend as well in order to assist the Panel. (In the event that the complaint involves or relates to a teacher, then the teacher concerned will be kept fully informed of the procedure being adopted in relation to the management of the complaint and will be provided with copies of all the documentation. He or she will also have the right to make representations to the Panel and to be accompanied by a friend or representative.)
6. The Panel shall issue a decision within 5 working days of the Panel Meeting. The decision will then be sent to the Clerk to the Governors who shall send it to the Head, the Parents and the Chair of Governors. The decision will either be a final decision or an interim decision and will be expressed as such. The Panel will issue an interim report where it considers that it requires additional documentation or additional evidence from other persons to enable it to reach a final conclusion. The interim report will confirm what more the Panel requires. Any additional documentation requested in the interim report shall be supplied to the Clerk to the Governors within 5 working days after receipt of the interim report by the party called upon to produce additional documentation. Copies will be provided to the Parents and to the Head.



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Date: Sept-2020

Review: Date: Sept-2021

6.1 In the event that the Panel wishes to hear from any other person or persons, it shall say so and arrangements will be made as soon as is practicable. If it is not possible for such persons to attend on the day of the Panel Meeting, the Panel will be re-convened and every effort will be made to ensure minimum delay. The Parents and the Head will have the right to hear the evidence given by such other persons and will be notified by the Clerk to the Governors of when the Panel will re-convene.

6.2 In the event that an interim report has been issued under 6, the Panel will issue its final report within 7 working days after the additional documentation requested has been submitted to it or after any re-convened Panel Meeting.

The role of the Panel is to determine issues of fact only and its findings and recommendations, if any, will be sent in writing or by electronic communication to the Parents, the Head, the Chair of Governors and, where relevant and at the discretion of the Panel, the person complained of.

The decision of the Panel shall be final and will conclude the process under this Complaints Procedure.

The Panel hearing will go ahead as planned in the event that the complainants fail to attend.

A written record will be kept of all complaints and the stage at which they are resolved. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. A copy of the findings and recommendations will be made available for inspection at the School only to the Chair of Governors and the Head. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except as is required of the School by paragraph (k) of Schedule 1 of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 or where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended, requests access to them or where any other legal obligation prevails.

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. The time frame for Stage 3 is outlined above.

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 action taken by the School as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether the

Complaints Policy

This policy applies to EYFS



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Date: Sept-2020

Review: Date: Sept-2021

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)

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.

For the academic year 2019-2020 the School received one formal complaint.

Parents may complain directly to Ofsted or to ISI if they believe the School is not meeting the EYFS requirements:

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)

SRE (sex and relationships education)

Health and safety

Confidentiality

Whistle blowing

Equality

SEN/LDD/G&T

Complaints Policy

This policy applies to EYFS