

St Anne's Preparatory School



Fortiter, Fideliter, Feliciter

St Anne's Preparatory School

Complaints Policy & Procedures

For Review September 2022

ST. ANNE'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL
Complaints Policy and Procedures
This policy also applies to EYFS

To be updated annually – last reviewed March 2022

Introduction

This policy applies to the parents of all pupils at St. Anne's, including those in EYFS (although the Panel stage is not applicable to EYFS), and to parents of past pupils if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered at the school. The procedure does not apply to parents of prospective pupils. The policy is available to download from the school website <http://www.stannesprep.essex.sch.uk> or it can be found in the parents' file held in the school office. This policy is reviewed at least annually and is included in St. Anne's policy review cycle.

Comments

Parents and others may wish to make a comment on an aspect of school life. It may also be a suggestion on any matter of school policy. The school encourages comment, as this can help to improve the quality of education and care that is offered to our pupils. Comments can be forwarded to the Headteacher or the School Proprietor.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction, which needs a response.

We wish to ensure that:

- Parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so
- We endeavour to respond to complaints in a courteous and efficient way
- Parents realise that we listen and take complaints seriously
- We act where appropriate and, where necessary, review our policies and procedures.

Stage 1 - Informal Complaints

We hope that most parental concerns can be resolved quickly and informally.

“How should I complain?”

You can talk directly to a member of staff, write a note, email or telephone. Be as clear as possible about what is bothering you.

Any member of staff will be happy to help. It may be best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue – for example, to raise class matters with the Year Teacher, sports concerns with the Games staff. They may be able to sort things out quickly, with the minimum of fuss. However, you may prefer to take the matter to the Deputy Head or the Head Teacher.

“I don’t want to complain as such, but there is something bothering me”

If you raise something face-to-face or by telephone, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction. Otherwise the member of staff will contact you to discuss a timeframe for resolution which will be five working days (during term time).

The member of staff dealing with your complaint will record the date and the nature of your meeting in their diary or class planner. If the problem concerns a child they will also complete a pastoral care form which will be put on file. A record of written complaints dealt with by the Headteacher will be kept in the complaints file in her office along with any action taken. If after five working days, or should the member of staff and parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, they will be advised to make their complaint formal and proceed to stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 Formal Complaints

If you feel that the issue has not been dealt with satisfactorily at the informal stage of the procedure or if you feel that the issue is of a more serious nature, please contact the Headteacher in writing and we will escalate the matter to a Formal complaint. We will contact you within five working days, to respond to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed. This will normally be a meeting with the parents called by the head. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. If you are not satisfied, the Head will discuss the matter with the Proprietor and the matter will be examined thoroughly before responding. You will be given a date by which time you will receive a response. If a detailed exploration of the issues is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you within 28 working days. This will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

“What happens about confidentiality?”

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Head and those directly involved. It is the school’s policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would be likely to happen where, for example, a child’s safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police. You would be fully informed.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file for three years we would point out that anonymous complaints may not be pursued.

Action which needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints would be handled confidentially within the school.

“What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?”

We hope you will be satisfied with the outcome of the Formal procedure, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered, however if parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they will be advised by the head to proceed to stage 3 of the procedure.

Stage 3 Panel Hearing

If formal process does not bring about a resolution, a panel hearing will take place unless the parent later indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further. The Parent(s) concerned should place their request in writing to the Proprietor srobson@stannesprep.essex.sch.uk (should be titled as Official Complaint), who will acknowledge receipt within 3 working days. The matter would be referred to a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor consisting of three people who are not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one independent adjudicator suggested as Mrs. Fiona Pirrie a retired Head Teacher, who has no direct involvement with the management and running of the school. It is their task to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner.

The panel will invite the parent to a hearing, as soon as is practicable (the school aims to schedule this within fourteen days of receipt of written submission from the parent(s) alongside notifying the parent with good notice of the hearing date. It should be noted that these days may be extended to accommodate any school holiday periods). Parent(s) will be asked if there are any papers/additional written representations that they would like to have circulated beforehand (these must be received at least 3 days before the hearing to allow sufficient time for the panel to review otherwise these could be inadmissible) and Parents will be invited to bring a friend with them. The panel hearing will still take place even if the parent(s) subsequently decide not to attend. If necessary, the panel should consider the parent's complaint in his/her absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion.

A copy of findings and recommendations made by the panel will be sent to the Parent(s) and where relevant to the person complained about. A copy will be retained on the school premises for inspection by the Proprietor and Head Teacher. A written record will be kept at all stages detailing whether the complaint is resolved following a formal procedure or proceeds to a panel hearing along with the action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether it is upheld). A copy will be given to all parties concerned and will be kept for at least three years. The Decision of the panel is final.

All correspondence, statements and records relating to the individual complaints 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, as amended, requests access to them.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In addition to the above, the following applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Written complaints will be investigated by the Headteacher using the above procedures outlined to Stage 2. The record of the complaint will be kept confidential (as above) but will be made available to Ofsted, DfE and Independent School Inspectorate (ISI) on request. All EYFS complaints must be addressed within 28 days maximum.

If a parent believes the school is not meeting the EYFS requirements, they are welcome to contact ISI or Ofsted at the following addresses:

ISI

Cap House,
9-12 Long Lane,
London,
EC1A 9HA
Tel: 0207 600 0100

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street,
Manchester,
M1 2WD
Helpline: 0300 123 1231
Phone: 0161 618 8524

Complaints 2018– 2019

The number of formal complaints registered at Stage 2 was 1.
The number of formal complaints registered at Stage 3 was 0.

Complaints 2019-2020

The number of formal complaints registered at Stage 2 was 1.
The number of formal complaints registered at Stage 3 was 1.

Complaints 2020-2021

The number of formal complaints registered at Stage 2 was 0.
The number of formal complaints registered at Stage 3 was 0.

Complaints 2021 - 2022

The number of formal complaints registered at Stage 2 was 0.
The number of formal complaints registered at Stage 3 was 0.