



ST FRANCIS SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS (B13)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 St Francis School (incorporating Little Saints Nursery) takes very seriously 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.

St Francis School makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on its school website.

In accordance with paragraph 25(3)(g) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, St Francis 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 the ISI for the purposes of section 162A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (as subsequently amended), details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

1.2 **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. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Furthermore, a pupil will not be penalised for a complaint that they or their parents raise in good faith.

1.3 **Timeframe for dealing with Complaints**

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's targets to complete the handling of complaints lodged during term-time are detailed below. If the complaint is lodged during holiday periods the matter will be handled as soon as is practicable.

1.4 **Recording of Complaints**

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

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by paragraph 25(3)(g) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required by the ISI under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended), or under other legal authority.

2. Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- 2.1 It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

- 2.2 If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's Class Teacher/Form Tutor (or Key Person in Nursery). In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Class Teacher/Form Tutor (or Key Person in Nursery) cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult with one or more of the following: the Nursery Manager or Room Leader, the Head of Pre-Prep, or another member of the Senior Leadership Team, who may in turn consult the Head.
- 2.3 Complaints made directly to the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant Class Teacher/Form Tutor (or Key Person in Nursery) or the Nursery Manager, Head of Pre-Prep, or the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team unless the Headmaster deems it appropriate for him to deal with the matter personally.
- 2.4 The Class Teacher/Form Tutor (or Key Person in Nursery) will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved either within five working days from receipt or in the event that the Class Teacher/Form Tutor (or Key Person in Nursery) 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.
- 2.5 If the complaint is against the Head, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors. Such a complaint should be sent to the Chair, care of the School Office.

3. Stage 2: Formal Resolution

- 3.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head, who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- 3.2 In most cases, the Head will meet with/speak to the parents concerned, within five working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- 3.3 It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations. If this is the case, he will contact the parent(s) concerned again having investigated the matter further.
- 3.4 The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- 3.5 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 decision.
- 3.6 If the parent(s) are still not satisfied with the outcome, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.
- 3.7 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 documentation. 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 Chair's decision in writing. The Chair will give reasons for the decision.

4. Stage 3: Panel Hearing

- 4.1 If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they should contact the Chair of Governors, care of the School Office. At this point they will be referred to a member of the governing body, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- 4.2 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 Chair of the Appeals panel. The Chair of the Appeals Panel, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and within ten working days.
- 4.3 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 five working days prior to the hearing.
- 4.4 The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Formal legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- 4.5 If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. However, 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 reach a decision and may make recommendations.
- 4.6 The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it within five 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.

5. Early Years Foundation Stage

- 5.1 Complaints received in respect of the EYFS are recorded by the Nursery Manager or EYFS Co-ordinator, who is required to maintain a record of: the date, the source of complaint, the nature of complaint, brief details of the complaint, how it was dealt with and the actions and outcomes that resulted. The Nursery Manager or EYFS Co-ordinator is required to notify complainants of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.
- 5.2 The Nursery Manager or EYFS Co-ordinator must provide OFSTED and (and ISI) 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.
- 5.3 Records of EYFS complaints must be kept for a minimum of 3 years. All other complaints are kept for a minimum of 2 years. The stage at which a complaint is resolved should be recorded in the written record of complaints.

- 5.4 Regarding written complaints relating to the requirements under the statutory framework for the EYFS, St Francis School will provide 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 three years.
- 5.5 Complaints to Ofsted regarding EYFS service providers: parents may also complain directly to Ofsted if they wish. Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 1234 234 or by email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

6. Please note that the following information applies to this procedure:

- 6.1 Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.
- 6.2 Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph [Part 7, Para 25 (k)] of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2010; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.
- 6.3 Disclosure may be required in the course of the school's inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails.
- 6.4 Parents may make a complaint to Ofsted and/or the Independent Schools Inspectorate should they so wish. Contact details for these organisations are as follows:
Ofsted: Telephone 0300 1234 234 or enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
The Independent Schools Inspectorate: Telephone 0207 600 0100 or concerns@isi.net

7. Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

- 7.1 All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within five 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.

8. Recording Complaints

- 8.1 Following 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).
- 8.2 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)

9. Record of number of Formal Complaints in Academic Year 2023-2024

9.1 To comply with the Regulatory Requirements as published by the ISI, Part 7, Para 33, the school is required to declare the number of formal complaints registered under the formal procedure in the preceding academic year.

The number of formal complaints registered under the formal procedure in the previous academic year (2023-2024) is: one.

Compiled by: NJB	Date: March 2012	Responsibility: Headmaster
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