



## Complaints Procedure

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|---|-----------------|
| <b>Person responsible</b>               | Head            |
| <b>Last update</b>                      | January 2025    |
| <b>Frequency of Review</b>              | Biennial        |
| <b>Date of next review by Governors</b> | January<br>2027 |

## Purpose:

To offer parents a means of communication to raise concerns and complaints. The School aims to have an effective complaints procedure that can diffuse problems and provide valuable feedback. It is hoped that most matters can be resolved at an informal level, but this procedure offers a formal structure, the stages of which are outlined below.

It is stressed that parents should not in any way feel awkward about raising concerns or complaints. It is a necessary part of parent/teacher communication and will under no circumstances affect the position of the child. Any complaint will be treated in complete confidence. Parents must feel that they are welcome to discuss the progress of their complaint at any stage.

This document is intended as an outline for parents and applies to children who are registered with, or attending, the school at present. The Head has recourse to separate procedures for handling issues raised by members of staff and for staff performance issues not arising from parents' complaints.

## Stage 1: Informal

Initially, parents should talk to the class teacher. It is best to make an appointment either before or after school. If the complaint does not relate to the class teacher, the matter will be referred to the relevant member of staff, and an opportunity to meet with this member of staff will be provided.

In certain cases, parents may wish to go straight to the Head. However, the Head might not be able to respond until they have consulted the member of staff concerned.

After these initial discussions with the class teacher and, if appropriate, a specialist subject teacher, if parents are still concerned and not satisfied with the outcome, they should arrange to have a meeting with the Head. The member of staff will be informed of the meeting, and if thought appropriate, may be asked to join the meeting at some point. Before the meeting, the Head should make every effort to do the necessary research to grasp the nature of the problem. Points raised by all parties and the action to be taken should be noted by the Head and shared with the parents.

## Stage 2: Formal

If the concern cannot be resolved on an informal basis with the School, then the parents should put a complaint in writing to the Head of St Dunstan's College. The Head of St Dunstan's College will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Head of St Dunstan's College will meet the parents concerned, normally within 5 school 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 of St Dunstan's College to carry out further investigations. The Head of St Dunstan's College will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. These records will state whether the complaint is resolved following a formal procedure, or if it proceeds to a panel hearing.

Once the Head of St Dunstan's College 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, normally within 15 school days of receiving the complaint. The Head of St Dunstan's College will also give reasons for their decision.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure by writing to the Clerk to the Governors, within 15 school days of receiving the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation, as presented by the Head.

## 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 Clerk to the Governors, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel ("the Panel"). Stage 3 Complaints must be raised within a timely manner (such time period to be in ISI 33a – Complaints Procedure the reasonable discretion of the Panel) and by no later than 15 school days after the notification date of the Stage 2 resolution, following the outcome of the previous Stage 2, to ensure that a panel is able to communicate with all the relevant people involved.

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 College. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Governing Body. The Clerk to the Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and within 21 school days of receipt of the Stage 3 complaint. Where several parental complaints arise from a common issue, it is feasible that the common point could be heard jointly by the Panel. 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 10 school 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 complaint of the parents 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 facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 10 school days of the Hearing.

The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations, will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head of St Dunstan's College, the Head of St Christopher's, all members of the Governing Body and, where relevant, the person complained of.

These findings and recommendations will be available on the school premises for purposes of inspection. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them or where any other legal obligation prevails. A written record is kept of all complaints at Stage 2 and Stage 3 of this procedure including details of the complaints, the steps that were taken and whether or not they were resolved following a formal procedure, including whether or not they proceeded to a panel hearing, and the action that was taken by the College as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld)

## EYFS

Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 school days. Although the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is responsible for inspecting the Early Years setting, parents should be aware that if they are

dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint concerning our Early Years provision, they are entitled to make a complaint directly to Ofsted. They can download the Ofsted leaflet: "Complaints to Ofsted about Schools: Guidance for Parents" reference 080113 from [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). Written records of complaints made are retained

## Anonymous Complaints

If an anonymous complaint is received by the School, it will be recorded in the log. It is hoped that parents will not feel the need to make such a complaint. It is to be left to the Head of St Christopher's the Hall's discretion as to what action is to be taken.

## Links with other policies

Policies dealing with other forms of complaints include:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures
- Admissions policy
- Pupil behaviour and exclusion policy
- Staff behaviour (Code of Conduct) policy
- Staff handbook
- Whistleblowing policy
- Low level concerns
- SEN policy and information report
- Privacy notices

## Formal Complaints documentation

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| For the year 2022/2023 there were: | 0 formal complaint |
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