



ST TERESA'S SCHOOL COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

The purpose and requirement of this policy is that it deals with complaints.

The DfE guidelines are that a 'concern' may be treated as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'. A complaint may be generally recognised as 'an expression or statement of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

This policy is published on the school web site. It applies only to current parents and not to the parents of prospective pupils. It only applies to former parents in cases where a complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered at St Teresa's. It does not cover exclusions.

We take all informal concerns and complaints seriously and we aim to resolve them at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to follow formal procedures.

If a large volume of complaints is received all based on the same subject, then these may be responded to with a template response to all complainants or a single response on the school's website.

Three stage process

The school uses a three-stage process and clearly defined timescales to deal with complaints, as detailed herein. The complainant will be asked, at the earliest stage, what they think might resolve the issue. When responding to a complaint, we will advise the complainant of any escalation option at each stage of the procedure.

Stage One (Informal)

All complaints – however reported and including whether they are initially made in writing – can be considered initially on an informal basis. It is expected that most complaints and concerns will be resolved at this Stage. Details of complaints at this stage will be recorded in a log by the Joint Head Teachers.

If parents have a complaint, they should ordinarily contact their son/daughter's Class Teacher in the first instance. In most cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway to the parents' satisfaction. If the Class Teacher cannot resolve the matter, it may be necessary for him/her to consult one of the

Joint Head Teachers. (If the Class Teacher is unavailable then the complaint may be made to a senior member of staff.)

Complaints made directly to one of the Joint Head Teachers may initially be referred to another member of staff unless the Joint Head Teachers deem it appropriate for them to deal with the matter from the outset.

All Stage One complaints are to be resolved within 14 days (during term time) of being reported.

If parents are not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage Two (Formal) below.

Stage Two (Formal)

Formal complaints must be made in writing (either via letter or email to the Joint Head Teachers). An informal complaint that has moved to Stage Two must be set out in writing by the complainant. The Joint Head Teachers must direct the complainant to this policy on the school web site and ask the complainant to make their complaint in writing.

Complaints will usually only progress to Stage Two after first being considered at Stage One. Although all formal complaints must be made in writing, this does not mean that Stage Two is automatically triggered whenever a concern is expressed in writing.

Upon receiving the complaint in writing, the Joint Head Teachers will consider the complaint and determine the most appropriate course of action. They will arrange for the matter to be investigated as necessary and written records will be kept. In most cases, one of the Joint Head Teachers will either meet with or speak to the complainant within 14 days (during term time) of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached.

If a resolution is not reached following a meeting or other response (for example a telephone conversation, email or letter from either of the Joint Head Teachers to the complainant), the Joint Head Teachers will continue to manage the complaint and investigate further as necessary. A course of action will be determined, and the parents informed of this. All Stage Two complainants will be notified of the outcome within 28 days (during term time) of receipt of the complaint.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage Three (Panel Hearing) below.

Stage Three (Panel Hearing)

Where the complainant is not satisfied with the response made at Stage Two, the school makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One such panel member must be independentⁱ of the management and running of the school. The parent has the right to attend and be accompanied at the panel hearing. The panel can make findings and recommendations. A copy of those findings and recommendations is -

- (i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
- (ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Joint Head Teachers.

In order to invoke Stage Three and following the failure to resolve the complaint at stages One and Two, the complainant should address their complaint in writing (via letter) to the Chair of Governors

(who can be contacted [via the School Office](#)). They should state that they wish to invoke Stage Three of the Complaints Policy.

The Chair of Governors will appoint a panel and arrange for it to convene within 14 days (during term time).

If possible, the panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the panel will direct how this should be carried out and by whom. If one subsequent hearing is required following further investigation, this should take place within 14 days (during term time) of the initial convening of the panel.

After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the panel will reach a conclusion within seven days (during term time) of its most recent hearing.

EYFS

Additional requirements apply for EYFS settings beyond those which apply to the main school. In the case of written complaints about the fulfilment of EYFS requirements, the matter will be investigated, and the complainant notified of the outcome within 28 days. The school will inform parents about an inspection once we are notified, and the final report will be supplied to parents of children who attend the setting regularly. Details of how to contact ISI and OFSTED are displayed outside EYFS classrooms and are included in Appendix Two herein.

Written record of complaints

The school keeps a written record of complaints. It also includes details of actions taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

Confidentiality

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 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Complaints about school staff

Complaints against school staff are dealt with by one or other of the Joint Head Teachers at Stage One or Two. Complaints against either of the Joint Head Teachers should be addressed to the Chair of Governors. Complaints against the Chair of Governors, or any individual governors, are to be made to the clerk to the governors, who should then determine the most appropriate course of action, which will depend on the nature of the complaint.

APPENDIX ONE – RECORD OF NUMBERS OF FORMAL (STAGE TWO) COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

There were no Formal (Stage Two) complaints received in the academic year 2016-17.

The number of Formal (Stage Two) complaints received in the academic year 2017-18 was two, these were successfully resolved.

There were no Formal (Stage Two) complaints received in the academic year 2018-19.

APPENDIX TWO – DETAILS OF HOW TO CONTACT ISI AND OFSTED

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

Telephone 020 7600 0100

Email concerns@isi.net

www.isi.net/contact

Office for Standards in Education, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

Telephone 0300 123 1231 (general enquiries); 0300 123 4234 (about schools); 0300 123 4666 (about concerns)

Email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

<https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/contact-form>

ⁱ The DfE has given the following guidance on the identity of an independent panel member.

“Our general view is that people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to scrutinising evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, Head Teachers or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force might be considered.”