



COMPLAINTS POLICY

St Edmund's Girls' School encourages all those who interact with the school to raise any concerns they may have with us. In this way we believe that misunderstandings can be rectified and problems can be addressed.

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 or another person believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do so something that it should have done or acted unfairly. Parents and carers can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. You can be assured that your daughter will not be penalised for a complaint that you [or your daughter] raises in good faith.

This procedure covers all complaints against the school by external persons/parties which do not have an alternative statutory avenue of appeal or complaint, i.e. admissions, exclusions, delivery of National Curriculum, some safeguarding of children issues and SEN assessments.

Purpose

This document outlines the way in which complaints made against the school will be handled, whether made by 'phone, letter or in person. Any complaints made are likely to be from parents, pupils or members of the public, and would probably be about the conduct of staff, the management of the school, the curriculum, internally assessed coursework or the behaviour of pupils. Complaints will always be taken seriously.

Complaints relating to safeguarding will be dealt with according to the procedures outlined in the Child Protection policy.

Process

Stage 1

- Any complaint should initially be directed towards the member of staff concerned, such as the subject teacher or tutor.
- If the above is not appropriate, the complaint should be referred to the line manager, who may be the Pastoral Leader, Subject Leader, Deputy Head or Headteacher. Only if the complaint is about the Headteacher should it be referred directly to the Chair of Governors.

- Complaints made directly to the Headteacher or a Deputy will be acknowledged, but may well be passed on to the appropriate member of staff to investigate and respond.

Stage 2

- If the response by the appropriate member of staff is considered by the complainant to be unsatisfactory, the complainant should refer the matter in writing to the Headteacher. Written complaints should be acknowledged as soon as possible (within 2 working days) and a full response after investigation (within 2 school weeks).
- If still unsatisfied, the complainant should proceed to Stage 3.

Stage 3

- If the complainant seeks to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) the matter will then be referred to a Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will be appointed by the Governing Body and will consist of 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 (i.e. not a governor of St Edmund's School). The Clerk, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 school days.
- 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 normally not later than 7 school days prior to the hearing.
- The complainant may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the person's complaint 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 make findings and may make recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the complainant informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 7 school days of 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 complainant, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of governors and the Headteacher.

Where a complainant seeks to reopen a matter the same as, or similar to, a matter previously considered under the procedure the Chair of Governors has the right to inform him/her that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is closed.

If not satisfied with the outcome from the Complaints Panel, the complainant can refer the matter to the Minister for Schools at the Department for Education (DfE) via the Education Funding Agency (EFA) that handles all complaints about academies.

Details of how to complain can be found on

<https://www.education.gov.uk/form/school-complaints-form>

Anonymous Complaints

It is not possible for the school to deal with anonymous or second hand complaints, notwithstanding our duty of care. If a parent or governor receives a complaint from someone else they must encourage them to contact the school directly, so that the complaint can be dealt with properly.

Responses to complaints

The member of staff dealing with a complaint will investigate it as fully as possible and decide on what action, if any, needs to be taken. The member of staff will inform the complainant in writing, by telephone or in person of the outcome of the investigation. It is the school's intention to respond in a way which demonstrates that we have taken the complaint seriously. It must be recognised that this action may not always be the outcome hoped for by the complainant, and that the school must act within the law, be that criminal, civil, employment or educational statute.

Date of Approval

This policy was approved at the Governors' Student & Community Committee meeting held on 28th January 2015.

Date of Review

This policy is statutory and will be reviewed in Spring 2018.