

# St Christopher's School

A Brighton College School



## Complaints Policy

This policy applies to EYFS

### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

St Christopher's School has long prided itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, it will be dealt with by the school in accordance with this procedure, which is available upon request to all parents of pupils.

#### Stage 1 Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally (normally within 15 working days).

If a parent ('the complainant') has a complaint they should contact the child's Form Tutor or the relevant Section Head in the first instance, who will seek to resolve the matter to the complainant's satisfaction within five working days. The Form Tutor/relevant Section Head may wish to consult a Head of Department, the Bursar, a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) or the Headmaster. Complaints addressed directly to a Head of Department, a member of the Senior Management Team or the Headmaster will be referred, where appropriate, to the relevant member of staff who will seek to resolve the matter to the complainant's satisfaction within five working days.

If a resolution is not reached within five working days, or within a longer timescale agreed with the complainant, it will then be handled by a member of the SMT, who will keep a record of such complaints, including the date on which it was received. The Headmaster will be copied as appropriate. If no significant progress towards a resolution has been made within a further ten working days, the complainant may determine to proceed with their complaint formally in accordance with Stage 2 of the procedure.

The complainant may invoke the formal part of this policy at any point.

#### Stage 2: Formal Resolution with the Headmaster:

If the matter is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction under Stage 1, they may invoke the formal part of this Complaints Policy by putting the complaint in writing to the Headmaster, who will decide the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Headmaster will meet or speak to the complainant concerned to discuss the matter within ten school working days of receiving the complaint. It is hoped a resolution will be reached at this stage.

If the Headmaster, within ten school working days of receiving the complaint, then considers it necessary to carry out further investigations, he will notify the complainant that an investigation is being carried out which will take up to five working days, or longer if agreed by the complainant. He may appoint a senior member of staff who has had no prior involvement in the matter to carry out the investigation.

Once the Headmaster is satisfied, so far as is practicable, that all of the relevant facts have been established in the course of the investigation, he will make a decision based on the report. The complainant will be informed in writing of this decision and the reasons for it.

The Headmaster and senior staff will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

If the Headmaster feels that further investigation is warranted in order to reach a decision, he should inform the complainant and discuss with them a suitable time-frame within which to carry out this further investigation.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision, or if the Headmaster has been unable to reach a decision owing to insufficient evidence, but the complainant is not willing to grant additional time in which further information can be gathered, the complainant can choose to request a Panel procedure, Stage 3 of the procedure.

### **Stage 3 Panel Hearing**

If (following failure to reach a resolution under Stage 2) the complainant seeks to request a Panel hearing, they will be referred to the Chairman of Governors who calls hearings of the Complaints Panel. The complainant may send written notice of their complaint addressed to 'The Chairman of Governors, St Christopher's School, 33 New Church Road, Hove, East Sussex BN3 4AD'. When doing so the complainant should a) give reasonable particulars of their complaint and b) specify the outcome they feel is fair.

The Chairman of Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and within twenty-one school working days of receipt of the complaint.

The Panel will consist of at least three persons who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One of these shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Governors, who will nominate one of the Panel members to chair 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 five school working days before the hearing.

The complainant has the right to attend and be accompanied at a hearing if they wish. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

The Complaints Panel will consider the matter and if the Panel feels it can resolve the complaint immediately, it will do so. Alternatively the Panel may consider that further investigation is needed.

Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out and the timescale for such an investigation, up to a maximum of 20 school working days, or longer if agreed by the complainant. After due consideration of the facts and the results of the investigation, within five working school days of the hearing, the Panel will make known findings and recommendations; these findings and recommendations will be final.

The panel's findings and recommendations will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. A copy of the recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Governors and the Headmaster.

The above procedures also apply to parents of pupils in our Reception form. All written complaints relating to fulfilment of EYFS requirements will be investigated.

### **Recording**

A written record will be kept of all formal complaints, including whether they are resolved, following a formal procedure or proceeding to a Panel hearing. This record will also outline the action taken by the school as a result of the complaint, regardless of whether the complaint is upheld.

Parents can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously. The complaint and any associated correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Education and Skills Act requests access to them.

The Headmaster is responsible for the effective implementation of the Complaints Procedure.

### **Complaints 2017-18**

During the academic year 2017-2018 there were no complaints formally presented to the Headmaster.

### **Chairman of Governors**

All current and prospective parents may contact the Chairman of Governors, Mr Andrew Symonds, in writing via the School Office. Letters should be marked 'Confidential' and will be passed on unopened.

### **Contacting ISI**

The School is inspected by ISI, an independent organisation which reports to the Government on schools. Parents and pupils have the right to contact an inspector if they have a complaint concerning a pupil's welfare.

ISI will usually expect parents or pupils to have followed the School's formal complaints procedure before contacting them.

However, you can report your concerns to ISI at: Independent Schools Inspectorate CAP House 9 - 12 Long Lane London EC1A 9HA Telephone 020 7600 0100 Fax 020 7776 8849 [info@isi.net](mailto:info@isi.net)

Last reviewed: October 2018

Next Review: October 2019

**J A Withers**  
**Headmaster**