

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

*Rooted in Christ and Catholic tradition and under the guidance of its patron, St Edmund's aims to realise the God-given potential, in body, mind and spirit, of all members of its community through service and leadership.*

*Avita Pro Fide!*

St Edmund's is committed to ensuring the welfare and protection of children in their care and this commitment is a fundamental part of the role of every employee.

**This document is available to all parents whose children are joining, or currently attending St Edmund's College, and can be found on the St Edmund's College & Prep School website. The policy applies to all areas of St Edmund's including St Edmund's College and its boarding community, St Edmund's Prep School, the Early Years Foundation Stage and the after-school provision.**

St Edmund's has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its students. However, if parents do have a complaint or concern, they can expect it to be treated by St Edmund's in accordance with this procedure. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously, confidentially and in a timely manner.

Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the College is within the scope of this procedure.

### Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that the most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughters Form Teacher, Head of House, Head of Elements, Co-Directors of Rhetoric or EYFS Manager, as appropriate. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the above cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Assistant Heads, Deputy Heads or Head of St Edmund's Prep School to help in a resolution.
- Complaints made directly to the Deputy Heads or the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant Head of House unless the Deputy Heads or the Headmaster deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- It is expected that an informal resolution should be achieved normally within five working days.
- In the event that a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of the Procedure.

### Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the matter cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet with or 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.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations. The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as 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 ten working days of the date he receives the written complaint. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his/her decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

### **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 Deputy Chairman of the Governing Body, or failing that the Chair of the Academic Sub-Committee, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints panel for consideration. The panel will consist of at least three persons who were not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. Each of the panel shall be appointed by the Governing body. The Deputy Chairman of the Governing Body on behalf of the panel will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within ten working 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 not later than three 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 parents' complaints immediately without the need for further investigation.
- The panel may make findings and recommendations and a copy of the findings and recommendations will be
  - (i) Provided to the complainant and, where appropriate, the person complained about, and
  - (ii) Available for inspection on the school premises by Governors and the Headmaster.
- It is expected that this process should be concluded normally within five working days of the panel hearing.

### **Boarding**

This policy includes the boarding community and boarders and their parents/guardians who have an unresolved complaint are able to contact the contact addresses and number given below.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

As an integral part of St Edmund's, the Early Years Foundation Stage is governed by St Edmund's Complaints procedure and any complaints or concerns about Early Years Foundation Stage should be referred initially to the Form Teacher, before seeking further discussion with the EYFS Manager, The Head of St Edmund's Prep School will then be referred to if the matter is still unresolved as part of Stage One of the procedure. The matter is referred to the Headmaster of the College for Stage Two of the procedure if a satisfactory conclusion has not been reached.

All concerns raised by parents are recorded on the Parent discussion form, shown to relevant staff and then filed in the child's records for at least three years. Parents may see these records at any time by making an appointment to do so, (except in exceptional cases where data protection laws stipulate it is against the best interests of the child so to do). Written complaints will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome within 28 days of the complaint being received.

### **Unresolved Complaints**

Any unresolved complaints can be referred to:

The Independent Schools Inspectorate, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA  
(Tel: 0207 600 0100 / Email: [info@isi.net](mailto:info@isi.net))

The Office of the Children's Commissioner, Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street,  
London, SW1P 3BT  
(Tel: 0207 783 8330 / Email: [info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk))

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD  
(Tel: 0300 123 1231 / Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk))

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act requests access to them.

Findings of complaints and recommendations will be made available to the complainant and, where relevant, the persons complained about and will be available for inspection on the school premises by Governors and the Headmaster.

### **Written Records**

A written record of all complaints will be kept. This will include whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage, formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing. It will also include any action taken by the College as a result of these complaints. The complaints records will be reviewed by a Governor from time to time.

The number of complaints recorded under formal procedure is available to parents upon request from the Headmasters PA.

Frequency of review: Annual

Policy last reviewed: Trinity 2018

Next review date: Trinity 2019

## St Edmund's College and St Edmund's Prep School Flow chart of procedure for dealing with complaints

