



# Complaints Policy

Date: March 2019

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Linked with other policies: All School Policies

Signed: *S. Day*

Registered address: All Saints School (Lessingham) Limited. Company no: 10323174

White House Farm, Limes Road, Catfield, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, NR29 5DG

At All Saints School, our aim is for all our students to be healthy, happy and safe which will enable them to achieve. We recognise that parents and carers play an important part in making this happen. Co-operation between school, parents and carers leads to a shared sense of purpose and a calm and productive atmosphere in the school.

All Saints School encourages students, parents and carers to raise concerns that they have, or if they are not satisfied in any way with the service we provide. We seek to improve all the activities and facilities at All Saints on a regular basis. We can only do this if we are informed when something is not right. It is very important for us to receive feedback, suggested improvements or concerns, as soon as possible.

If we know what these concerns are, and they are reported in good time, it helps us to investigate the problems so that we can:

- Put things right if we have made mistakes
- Make sure that All Saints School is a safe and effective environment
- Make sure that your concerns or complaints have been listened to and resolved to your satisfaction
- Improve our processes, if necessary, to ensure that similar problems don't happen again
- Apologise if mistakes have been made, and learn from them

Every concern will be investigated with due urgency and thoroughness. The school will not investigate anonymous complaints or allegations, but confidentiality will be respected and the identity of informants will be protected whenever necessary.

#### **Definition of complaint:**

The majority of concerns raised by parents and carers are about their children's education, behaviour or the actions of others. Such matters will be dealt with promptly and thoroughly. Most parents do not regard such enquiries as 'complaints' in the formal sense. However, if matters raised as concerns are not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, the dissatisfied party may wish to use the formal complaint system.

Each level of the complaints procedure, set out below, offers the opportunity for concerns and complaints to be resolved as quickly as possible.

## Level 1 – informal complaint to the Class Teacher

Parents, or carers should in the first instance, make an appointment to speak to the class teacher to discuss the concern. It is best to resolve issues at this point. In most cases, you should be happy with the outcome and will be asked if you want a note making of your complaint. This will record the date, time and place, what your concern was, and who was involved. If you are happy with the outcome, this will be treated as an **informal complaint** and no further action will take place.

## Level 2 – informal complaint to the Headteacher

Parents or carers who are dissatisfied with the result of the discussion with the class teacher should ask for an appointment to meet with the Headteacher, accompanied by a friend or representative if you wish. If a resolution to the issue is proving difficult to find, the Headteacher can speak to the school directors, who may be willing to offer informal intervention. However, there is no obligation on them to become involved at this level so that, if it is necessary for the Directors and Independent Mediator to hold a formal hearing of your complaint, they will not be prejudiced in advance.

It is in everyone's interest, particularly the student or students, for concerns to be sorted out quickly and smoothly. It is hoped that the discussion ends on a positive note with the problem resolved and no misgivings or bad feelings. The Headteacher will write a letter to parents or carers summarising what has been agreed regarding the issue.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher it should be put in writing and sent to Mrs Gardiner, Director, at the school address, marking the envelope 'urgent and confidential.'

## Level 3 – formal complaint by letter to the Headteacher

If you are still not satisfied with the way your concern has been dealt with at level 1 and 2, you have the right to make a **formal complaint** by letter to the Headteacher.

The letter will need to clearly set out the issues which have previously been discussed and why the parent or carer considers the issue to be unresolved.

**What happens if you make a formal complaint?** Making a formal complaint means that:

- Your complaint is recorded and thoroughly investigated by the Headteacher
- Your complaint is dealt with quickly by the Headteacher.
- You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within **five working days**
- The Headteacher will conduct a thorough investigation, the results of which will be put in writing. This will include a plan outlining actions which will be put in place in order to ensure that the problem does not happen again in the future.
- You will receive a final written reply within **20 working days**.
- You will receive a written apology from the Headteacher if your complaint is upheld.

If the complainant feels that the complaint has not been satisfactorily been resolved he/she may proceed to Level 4.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher and the complainant feels that the complaint has not been satisfactorily been resolved by Mrs Gardiner, he/she should proceed to Level 4.

## **Level 4**

As an Independent School, All Saints has a Board of Directors and an Independent Mediator, Rev. N. Paterson, who can intervene at this point.

Complainants wishing to move to level 4 of the formal complaints procedure will need to do the following:-

- Write a letter to the Directors and Independent Mediator. This formal complaint letter needs to be received by the Directors and Independent Mediator within 10 working days of the last meeting with the Headteacher (or Mrs Gardiner if it is about the Headteacher).
- The complainant should write to the Directors and Independent Mediator at the school address (**All Saints School, School Road, Lessingham, Norfolk NR12 0DJ**), marking the envelope 'urgent and confidential.'
- The letter will need to set out the complaint that has previously been formally discussed with the Headteacher (or Mrs Gardiner) and show why the matter is not resolved.
- The Headteacher should be given a copy of the complainant's letter by the Board of Directors.
- School documentation, (including actions taken as a result of the complaint), will be sent to the Directors and Independent Mediator.
- The Directors will acknowledge the complainant's letter in writing within 5 working days of receipt.
- As explained above, should have no prior knowledge of the case and will thus be able to make a fresh, unbiased assessment. You will be invited to attend the Panel meeting, accompanied by a friend or representative if you wish, to discuss the matter.

## **Guidance on the role of the Complaints Panel**

- The Complainant, accompanied by a friend or representative if you wish, and the Headteacher will be invited to attend a Complaints Panel meeting to discuss the complaint. The meeting will be attended by the School Directors and Mediator, the School Secretary who will record the meeting. The Complaints Panel may invite other Independent Advisers to attend the meeting. Although this is a formal meeting, every effort will be made to make the atmosphere as informal as possible.
- The Complainant will be asked to give a verbal statement to support the written letter of complaint and why they feel that the issue has not been resolved. The Complaints Panel can ask questions to make sure they understand the issue from the Complainant's point of view.

- The Headteacher will be given the opportunity to give a verbal statement in support of their documentation and the steps taken to resolve the issue. The Complaints Panel can ask questions to make sure that they understand the issue from the Headteacher's point of view.
- The Complaints Panel may ask further questions to clarify any points that are still not clear to them.
- The Complainant and the Headteacher will be asked if they are satisfied that they have provided all the information they wanted or if there is something they wish to add and if they feel they have had a fair hearing. When this is confirmed, the Complainant and the Headteacher will leave the meeting.
- The Complaints Panel will then discuss the issues in private and the Secretary remains to record the decision. They will need to consider the information, come to a decision and suggest a way to resolve the issue, taking into account the best interests of the student or students.
- When they have reached a decision, they will inform everyone concerned as soon as possible, but in any event, in writing within 10 working days of the panel meeting.
- If the complaint relates to the Headteacher the above protocol is to be followed with the exception that Mrs Gardiner may not sit on the Complaints Panel having had prior involvement.

The decision of the Complaints Panel is final.

**Once a Complaints Panel has heard a complaint, and it is clear that correct procedures have been followed, that specific complaint cannot be reopened. If a request is received in this respect, the Directors should inform the complainant that the matter is closed.**

Parent views can now be placed about any school any time online at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)