



Saint Martin's

# Complaints Policy

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Nicola Smillie</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Date of Approval</b>	<b>January 2019</b>
<b>Review Date</b>	<b>January 2020</b>

## Parental Complaints Procedure

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Saint Martin's School (the school) is committed to providing excellent education and pastoral care for its pupils. The school recognises the right of parents to raise concerns and the importance of dealing consistently and effectively with those concerns. This Policy sets out the manner in which complaints are handled when received from parents of pupils of the school including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

A hard copy of this Policy (including the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year) is made available to parents of pupils on request. The Policy is also available on the school's website. Details of how to request the Complaints Policy are also in the Information Booklet given to all prospective parents when requesting information about the school. The Policy applies to current pupils and past pupils so long as the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered. It does not cover exclusions.

It is our policy to be open. All concerns and complaints are handled seriously and received in a positive manner.

### **1. What constitutes a concern or complaint?**

A complaint or concern is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be expressed either informally or formally in writing, be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or an individual member of staff or another pupil. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

### **2. What the school will do if a parent has a concern or complaint**

All members of staff will deal with parental concerns which lie within their area of responsibility.

If approached about a matter which lies outside their remit, staff will refer it to the appropriate person and inform the parents of that action.

Matters incapable of resolution at a particular level should be referred to the appropriate senior person, with parents kept informed of the action being taken. This covers, for example, a concern made to a relatively junior member of staff about a more senior colleague.

Senior staff will recognise when issues need to go straight to the Head, with whom the responsibility ultimately lies.

Certain parents may wish to go straight to the Head with their concerns, and this is respected. The Head may not be able to respond until she has consulted the staff who can help.

If the complaint is against the Head, parents should make their complaint to the Chair of the Governing Body, via the Clerk to the Governing Body by letter to the school, email to [kmerrick@saintmartins-school.com](mailto:kmerrick@saintmartins-school.com) or by phone.

The Head, and Governors if required, will follow the procedures as stated below.

#### **2.1. Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their daughter's form or class teacher / Head of Year or Head of Section, as appropriate. In many cases the matter will be resolved

straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult with other staff within the school.

The teacher will make written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received.

It is the school's aim that any complaint is acknowledged within 2 working days and addressed within 10 working days. Working Days means Monday to Friday, when the school is open during term time. The dates of the terms are published on the school's website.

Should the matter not be resolved within 10 working days, or in the event that the member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

## **2.2. Stage 2 - Formal Resolution**

If the matter is not resolved or if the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint under informal resolution, then for a formal procedure to begin the complaint should be made in writing. This correspondence should be addressed to the Head. The Head will aim to address the complaint in writing as soon as possible and normally within 10 working days. The Head will deal with the matter as soon as practicable during school holidays and keep the parents informed of timescales.

The Head will deal with the complaint in an appropriate manner which may include inviting parents to a meeting to discuss the matter. The Head can decide whether to invite other members of staff.

If the Head has dealt with the complaint at Stage 1, then the Chair of the Governing Body will deal with the complaint at Stage 2.

## **2.3. Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

If parents are dissatisfied with the decision at Stage 2, they should put in writing their reasons for this to the Head and/or the Chair of the Governing Body. This should be done within 10 days of receipt of the decision at Stage 2.

The Chair of the Governing Body will acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days and endeavour to set up a panel hearing as soon as practicable and normally within 15 working days of receiving the complaint in writing. Consideration will be given to the parents' availability.

A panel will then be appointed by or on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body and consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint or investigating the complaint. The panel hearing the complaint will consist of one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school. That person would have held/hold a position of responsibility and be used to scrutinising evidence and putting forward balance arguments eg senior staff at another school, lawyers, police officers, business people or civil servants. The other two members of the panel will be Governors.

The panel will be sent copies of all records in relation to the investigation and the attempted resolution of the complaint. The complainant will also receive copies of these records at least 5 working days before the hearing unless the Chair of the Governing Body decides it is inappropriate. This may be because the information may be considered sensitive.

The person appointed Chair of the Panel shall decide the timetable and procedure which will be adopted prior to and at the panel hearing.

If the complaint is made against a member of staff, the particulars of the complaint will be made available to the member of staff, and that member of staff will have the right to attend

the panel hearing and be accompanied. Legal representation will only be permitted if the Chair considers it appropriate.

The complainant may be accompanied by one other person e.g. a relative or friend. Legal representation will only be permitted if the Chair considers it appropriate.

The Panel Hearing will proceed in a parent's absence unless the parent has indicated that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed.

The panel will hear the complaint and any representations the parties may wish to make. If possible, the panel will resolve the complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it should be carried out. The panel will make their findings and recommendations known to the complainant, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Head and where relevant the person complained about, in writing as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within 10 working days of the panel hearing.

The decision of the panel will be final.

A written record of these proceedings will be kept by the Clerk to the Governing Body and a copy of the findings and recommendations will be made available for inspection by the Governing Body and Head.

### **3. Applying to all Complaints**

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

The school will maintain and keep a written record of all complaints that are made including the outcome and –

- whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
- action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld);

All 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.

### **4. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

#### **Written complaints relating to the requirements under the Statutory Framework for EYFS**

Further to the above, for any complaint received about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements then:

- (i) the complaint must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of the complaints will be made available to Ofsted and the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) on request.
- (ii) parents can make a complaint to Ofsted and/or ISI should they so wish.

The contact details for these two organisations can be found on the following websites:-

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)

## 5. Number of Complaints at Stage 3

2014/15	0
2015/16	0
2016/17	0
2017/18	0
2018/19	0 (to date of policy)

**Head Teacher; Nicola Smillie**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chair of the Governing Body; Carol McNidder**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date to be reviewed; February 2018**

### Summary of changes

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Summary of Changes</b>
6.2.17	2	2.2. Clarity on Head's actions at Stage 2 (Formal Resolution) 2.3. Parents' availability to be taken into account at Stage 3 (Panel Hearing) 2.3. Panel Hearing to proceed if parent does not attend. 5. Number of complaints added
14.11.17	3	3 Record keeping clarified 5 Zero complaints added for 2016/17 Appendix Revised
28.1.19	4	5 Zero complaints added for 2017/18 and to date

# Appendix 1

## Saint Martin's



Saint Martin's

Central record of complaints 2018/19

Area of School:

W/c:

Name of Pupil	Form	Date r'cvd	Source of Complaint. key: Ph = phone L = Letter E = email P = in person	Is bullying alleged?  Y/N	Investigated by:	Action Taken	Date responded to parents	Where information stored	Complaint resolved at:			Date complaint moved from Stage 1 to Stage 2 and reason
									Informal Stage 1	Formal Stage 2	Panel Hearing Stage 3	