St. Helen's College

Complaints & Concerns Policy

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Person(s) responsible for review and role:

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Safeguarding Lead: Mrs M Gilbert

Table of Contents

Aim of policy: 1
Related Guidance and School Policies 1
The Complaints Process 2
Stage 1 – Informal Resolution 2
Stage 2 – Formal Resolution 2
Stage 3 – Complaints Panel 2
EYFS-Specific Complaints 2

Aim of policy:

The aim of this policy is to set out how the School manages concerns and complaints. The purpose is to ensure that every matter brought to the School's attention is dealt with in a fair, transparent manner and at the appropriate level. Through this policy, the School seeks to reassure parents, pupils and members of the wider school community that their concerns will be listened to, taken seriously, investigated thoroughly and used constructively to improve the provision.

Related Guidance and School Policies

This policy outlines the process for raising a concern or formal complaint with the school but is not exhaustive in its scope and should be used in conjunction with the following policies, statutory guidance and advice:

Policies:

- *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*
- *Behaviour & Sanction Policy*
- *Admissions Policy*
- *Parent Code of Conduct*

Statutory & Regulatory Guidance:

- *The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014*
- *Data Protection Act 2018*
- *Early years foundation stage statutory framework*
- *Equality Act 2010*

Complaints & Concerns

At St Helen's College, we believe that open, honest communication builds trust and helps us grow together as a school community. This policy explains how we manage complaints from parents and guardians of current pupils, including those in our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), with the aim of resolving issues quickly, fairly, and with empathy.

The Complaints Process

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Most concerns can be addressed by speaking to your child's teacher or form tutor. If the matter needs further attention, it may be passed to a senior staff member or the Head. We aim to acknowledge concerns within 2 working days and to resolve them within 10 working days. It should be noted "Working days" means school term-time weekdays, excluding holidays and weekends.

If your concern relates to the Head, you may raise it directly with them. If a satisfactory outcome is not reached, you may move to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

If the issue remains unresolved, a formal written complaint should be submitted to the Head within 7 working days of the informal outcome. Please include key details, the nature of your concern, and the resolution you are seeking. We will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days. An investigation will be carried out either by a senior staff member or the Head who may invite you to a meeting. A full response will follow within 28 working days.

If the complaint involves the Head, it should be addressed to Fiona Carter: fnc@forfareducation.co.uk, following the same steps.

Stage 3 – Complaints Panel

If you remain dissatisfied, you may request a panel hearing via Fiona Carter - Forfar Education. A panel of three people (including one independent member) will review the process followed in Stage 2. New concerns cannot be raised at this stage. The panel will meet within 28 working days of the request. Their final decision, with any recommendations, will be shared in writing within 10 working days.

EYFS-Specific Complaints

Complaints about EYFS provision will be addressed within 28 days. Following the formal reply or resolution, if concerns remain, parents may contact:

- Ofsted: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk | 0300 123 4666
- ISI: complaints@isi.net | 020 7600 010

We retain EYFS complaint records for a minimum of three years.

All complaints are recorded and securely stored, including outcomes and actions taken. These records are retained for at least three years and are treated confidentially, unless legal disclosure is required.

We treat all concerns with respect. In rare cases, complaints that are repetitive, aggressive, or unreasonable may lead us to restrict contact methods, limit visits, or if necessary, seek police guidance. We will always try to resolve matters constructively before taking such steps.

This policy is available to all parents and guardians via the website.

For the academic year 2025 / 2026 St Helen's College dealt with 1 complaint at Stage 2 or above.