



## **Parental Complaints Policy**

**This policy applies to all pupils in the school including those in the EYFS.**

St Hugh's School is committed to providing the best teaching and pastoral care it can for its pupils. It is hoped that any worries or complaints can be dealt with informally through the pastoral framework but, if not, the school has a formal complaints procedure. Formal complaints are extremely rare, reflecting the good relationships between pupils, parents and the school which enables most matters to be resolved informally.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that a concern or complaint by a parent is managed sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level and resolved as soon as possible. Doing so is good practice, it is fair to those concerned and it helps to promote parents' and pupils' confidence in our ability to safeguard and promote welfare. We will try to resolve every concern or complaint in a positive way with the aim of putting right a matter which may have gone wrong and, where necessary, reviewing our systems and procedures in the light of circumstances.

Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is a complaint and will be dealt with by the school, as explained in this policy.

We need to know as soon as possible if there is any cause for dissatisfaction. We recognise that a difficulty which is not resolved quickly and fairly can soon become a cause of resentment, which could be damaging to relationships and also to our school culture. We intend that parents and pupils should never feel – or be made to feel – that a complaint will be taken amiss or will adversely affect a pupil or his/her opportunities at school.

Copies of this policy are available on the school web site <http://www.st-hughs.lincs.sch.uk> or from the school office.

**Pastoral Framework**

If pupils have worries or complaints then they should talk to their Form Tutor, the House Parents, a Matron, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Headmaster, or any member of staff they feel they can trust. If the complaint is of a child protection nature then it should be passed to the DSL. There may be a time when pupils feel that they cannot talk with a member of staff – this is perfectly natural. They should talk, telephone, email or write to their parents or Mrs. Wendy Trotter, our independent listener, or Childline. If the matter cannot be easily settled to their satisfaction then they may make a formal complaint. St Hugh's School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, and takes seriously complaints and concerns they may raise. This document will show you how to use our complaints system. The School ensures that this procedure complies with Standard 18 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

### **STANDARD 18 – Complaints**

**18. The school has, and follows, an appropriate policy on responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory standards. A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine concern which needs a response.**

Parents may request the number of formal complaints made in the preceding academic year. This should be done in writing via the Headmaster. Parents can also request access to the schools' academic performance during the preceding school year.

### **Recording Complaints**

In all cases, the adult in question will make a written record of all complaints and the date in which they were received. This detail must include the action taken by the school as a result of the complaint, regardless of whether it was upheld. This record must indicate whether the parents of the pupil were a day or boarder.

### **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

- It is our intention that we respond to most complaints quickly (within 48 hours) and informally and to the benefit of the pupils.
- Education or social issues may be addressed to the pupil's Form Teacher, Subject Teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead or Director of Studies.
- Boarding issues may be addressed to the House Parent.
- In the Pre-Prep or EYFS, all matters of concern can be addressed by the appropriate Class Teacher with the assistance, if necessary of the Head of EYFS.

- If parents are unsure as to whom to contact, the School Secretary may be able to advise.
- In many cases, the matter will be resolved to the parents' satisfaction.
- Should the matter not be resolved within 5 working days of it being made known, the member of staff involved will inform the Headmaster of the concern. The Headmaster will make himself available to discuss the complaint informally with the parents.
- In the event that the Headmaster and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution within 10 working days then the Headmaster will advise the parents to make a formal complaint in writing and to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of the procedure.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

- The Headmaster will meet and speak with the parents concerned within a reasonable amount of time to discuss the matter. This will always be within 14 days from receiving a written complaint.
- The Headmaster will carry out further investigations as required. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- 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 is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision. This will be carried out within 7 days.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- When the parents are not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with stage two they will move to stage three and a panel hearing should take place unless the parent indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further. A panel hearing should, therefore, proceed notwithstanding that the parent may subsequently decide not to attend. If necessary, the panel should consider the parent's complaints in his/her absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint thereby bringing the

matter to a conclusion. The requirement for the panel to proceed does not prevent the school from accommodating parental availability for dates or considering comments concerning panel composition.

- The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background or retired members of the Police force. They must have held a position of responsibility, be used to scrutinising evidence and putting forward balanced arguments.
- This hearing will be scheduled to take place within 14 working days of the request.
- Parents will be allowed to attend and be accompanied at the panel hearing.
- Provision for the panel to make findings and recommendations will be made and a copy of these findings and recommendations will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about within 7 days of the conclusion having been reached. A copy of the findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair of Governors or Headmaster.

Written records will be kept of all complaints. A record of whether the complaints are resolved following a formal procedure or whether they proceed to a panel hearing will also be kept. The record of complaints will also include any action taken by the school as a result of any complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). In the Early Years Foundation Stage, records of complaints will be kept for at least three years. 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 request access to them.

- **Complaints about boarding**

As stated in the procedures, issues concerning Boarders will be addressed by the House Parent at the informal stage but if a satisfactory resolution is not reached then parents should follow the subsequent stages as set out in the procedures. If pupils have worries or complaints they should talk to the Boarding House Parent or Graduate assistants. If the complaint is of a child protection nature then it should be passed to the DSL. There may be a time when pupils feel that they cannot talk with a member of staff – this is perfectly natural. They should talk, telephone, email or write to their parents or Mrs. Wendy Trotter, our independent listener, or Childline. If the matter cannot be easily settled to their satisfaction then they may make a formal complaint.

Ofsted - To make a formal complaint write to:

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD.

General helpline: 0300 123 1231. Textphone number: 0161 618 8524.

email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

Staff on the helpdesk will discuss your concerns with you, advise you about whether to put your complaint in writing to us or suggest other ways to deal with your concerns. Or you can fill in an online complaints form at: <http://live.ofsted.gov.uk/onlinecomplaints>.

Boarders and their parents also may wish to complain directly to ISI:

Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House , 9 - 12 Long Lane London , EC1A 9HA Telephone: 020 7600 0100

**NO FORMAL COMPLAINTS WERE RECEIVED DURING THE 2016-17 ACADEMIC YEAR**

Staff Responsible	Headmaster
Last reviewed	Spring 2018
Date of next review	Spring 2019

Reviewed by Full Governing Body – 13<sup>th</sup> March 2017

