



REIGATE ST MARY'S
PREPARATORY AND CHOIR SCHOOL

Parents Complaints Policy (to include Early Years Foundation Stage)

| UPDATED | REVIEW DATE |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 18 September 2021 | 17 September 2022 |
| Marcus Culverwell, Headmaster | |

This document is available to parents on the school website and on request.

We hope that your son's or daughter's career at Reigate St Mary's School will proceed without any problems. However, if you have a complaint, please follow this procedure.

Please tell us of your complaint as soon as possible. The definition of a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, by a parent or carer with legitimate interest in the school. It is difficult for us to investigate properly an incident or problem which has happened some time ago. Please state your problem or complaint courteously: it does not help staff to resolve issues if intemperate or aggressive language is used, either in writing or in person.

The school will always keep complaints confidential. It is always easier if parents also keep communications confidential to allow a balanced and unbiased discussion.

If the School becomes aware that we are to be inspected by ISI or Ofsted we will notify parents. Once the final inspection report has been provided, it will be supplied to parents of children who attend the School.

The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure for the year 2020 – 21 was one.

Child Protection

Complaints regarding Child Protection are outside the scope of this procedure. If you have a concern regarding Child Protection, please contact one of the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Mrs Andrea Gower, the Early Years DSL Mrs Sam Selkirk, or one of the Deputy DSLs (Mrs Sarah Page, Mrs Sarah Woodcock, Mrs Barbara Hopkins) directly by telephoning the School Office (01737 244880).

Stage 1 (Informal)

- 1.1 It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved quickly and informally. Often there is a misunderstanding which can be easily resolved. If not, we will give you a chance to explain your complaint and will try to resolve it. Of course, this does not mean that in every case we will come round to your point of view but it will help both you and the school to understand both sides of the question. It may also help to prevent a similar problem arising again. You will receive a response within 24 hours during term time.
- 1.2 The person best placed to deal with any concern or complaint will usually be your child's Form Teacher; however, you may wish to contact the relevant senior member of staff. Parental concerns or complaints regarding Special Education Needs or Disability provision should be directed to the SENCO in the first instance. If you are not sure who to contact, please contact the School Office (office@reigatestmarys.org). If you wish to discuss the problem face to face, the Form Teacher, SENCO or senior member of staff will usually be able to see you one day before or after school. Please contact them by note in the diary, letter or email/call the School Office in advance to make an appointment. Please do not simply turn up at school and expect to see someone, as they may not be available. A meeting to discuss your complaint will be arranged within one working week during term time.
- 1.3 If necessary, the Form Teacher or SENCO will speak to any other relevant staff in order to investigate your concern.
- 1.4 The Form Teacher or relevant member of staff will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received and take notes from your meeting. These records will be kept for future reference.
- 1.5 If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, or if you have a serious complaint which you feel cannot be dealt with by the Form Teacher or relevant member of staff, you should then proceed to Stage 2 of this procedure.

We will always try to resolve any complaints as soon as possible and always within 10 working days of them being raised, except where they are raised in school holidays, in which case we will try to resolve them within 10 working days of the start of the new school term. *The exception to this is where an informal complaint (Stage 1) becomes a formal, written complaint (Stage 2), in which case we will try to resolve it within a further 10 days.*

Stage 2 (Formal)

- 2.1 If you believe that your complaint is sufficiently serious, or if the matter has not been resolved at Stage 1 above, you can make a formal complaint directly to the Headmaster. **This must be made in writing, stating that you are making a formal complaint.** The Headmaster will acknowledge receipt of your complaint, within 24 hours during term time week days.
- 2.2 The Headmaster will usually delegate responsibility for undertaking investigation of the complaint to a member of the senior leadership team as appropriate. He (or a member of the senior leadership team) may ask to meet you for a discussion of the problem. You can take a friend or relation to this appointment with you if you wish. The Head or member of the senior leadership team will then conduct a full investigation of the complaint and may interview any members of staff or pupils involved. A written record will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. This will be undertaken within 10 working days during term time.
- 2.3 Following the investigation, the Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. You will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmaster or member of the senior leadership team may also ask to meet with you to explain the decision.
- 2.4 If your complaint is about an action of the Headmaster personally, then you can refer it to the Chairman of Governors. You can contact him by writing to him c/o the Bursar at Reigate Grammar School or by email to the Bursar's Secretary (saw@reigategrammar.org), stating clearly that you are making a complaint.

Stage 3 (Panel Hearing)

- 3.1. If the matter is still not resolved to your satisfaction, you may wish to proceed to Stage 3, and ask for your complaint to be referred to a Complaints Panel. **The appeal must be made in writing, stating that you are making a request for a Panel Hearing.**
- 3.2 Your appeal should be addressed to the Chairman of Governors and sent to him c/o the Bursar or by email to the Bursar's Secretary (saw@reigategrammar.org). The Bursar will acknowledge receipt of your complaint, within 24 hours.
- 3.3 You must lodge your appeal within 10 working days of the date of the School's decision made in accordance with the Stage 2 Procedure. You should provide a list of your complaint(s) made against the school and which you believe not to have been resolved satisfactorily by the Stage 2 Procedure, along with the remedies sought in respect of each. You should also state whether you wish to attend the hearing, or whether the panel may deal with the matter based only on written submissions.
- 3.4 The Chairman of Governors will then convene a panel consisting of three individuals, two governors and one independent member not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, *who will be independent of the management and running of the school*, and who must have no previous knowledge of the problem and so will be able to give it a fresh assessment. The panel will convene as soon as possible, and where possible within 10 working days of the receipt of your appeal.
- 3.5 If you have requested to attend the hearing, you will be invited to attend and speak to the panel; you may bring a friend or relative with you, but legal representation will not normally be permitted. The Headmaster will normally also attend the hearing, and may bring a colleague (normally the member of the senior leadership team who has investigated the matter under Stage 2 above).
- 3.6 After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the panel will reach a decision, and may have findings and make recommendations, which it shall complete within 10 working days of the hearing. The decision reached by the Complaints Panel is final. The panel's findings and

recommendations will be sent in writing or email to the parents, the Headmaster, the Chairman of Governors and, where relevant, the person complained about. The letter will state any reasons for the decision reached and recommendations (if any) made by the Complaints Panel must be kept confidential when received but available to any school inspection team.

A copy of the findings and recommendations:

- (i) Will be made available to the complainant and where relevant the person complained about
- (ii) Be made available for inspections on the school premises by the proprietor and Head Teacher.
- (iii) All 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 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

A written record of all formal complaints and their outcome, *including the action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they were upheld)*, will be kept by the Headmaster, including whether they have been resolved at Stage 2 or proceeded to a panel hearing. Such records will be kept for future reference.

Confidentiality

Parents can be assured that all complaints and expressions of concern, whether raised informally or formally, will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will remain confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection requests access to them, or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. The record of complaints must be made available to Ofsted and ISI on request.

In the case of parents with pupils in the EYFS setting; if parents feel that the EYFS requirements have not been met in full, parents are also free to make a complaint to ISI or OFSTED if they so wish. Relevant contact details are set out below

Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9 – 12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA

Telephone: 0207 776 8849
Email: info@isi.net

OFSTED
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M21 2WD

Telephone 0300 123 1231
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk