

STANBRIDGE EARLS SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction:

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints. Stanbridge Earls School is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaints, you may wish to be asked to follow the school's formal complaints procedure. For the school to be able to investigate a complaint, it needs to be made within one year of the incident occurring. If a complaint is older than a year it will not be investigated.

The prime aim of Stanbridge Earls School's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by the school.

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

The Stanbridge Earls School Policy has four main stages.

In summary they are as follows:-

- Stage 1 – A concern is raised informally with a staff member.
- Stage 2 – Formal complaint is heard by the complaints coordinator or an appropriate member of staff.
- Stage 3 – Complaint is heard by Headmaster.
- Stage 4 – Complaint is heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel.

Stage 1 – Raising a concern.

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. The school requests that parents make their first contact with their Housemaster/mistress. On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within a day or two. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at Stage 1, please write to or call the school within 10 school working days and state what you would like to school to do. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 2 – Complaint heard by the complaints co-ordinator or by an appropriate staff member.

Formal complaints shall be put in writing and addressed to The Headmaster, Stanbridge Earls School. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The school will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 school working days of receiving it. In many cases this response will also report on the action the school has taken to resolve the issue. Alternatively, a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. This meeting will normally take place within 10 school working days. The aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 2 please write to or call the school within 10 school working days of receiving our response. You will need to tell the school why you are still not satisfied and what you would like the school to do.

Stage 3 – Complaint heard by the Headmaster.

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2, the Headmaster will arrange for a further investigation. Following the investigation, the Headmaster will normally give a written response within 10 school working days. If you are dissatisfied with the result at Stage 3, you will need to let the school know within 10 school working days of receiving the response. You will need to tell the school why you are still not satisfied and what you would like the school to do.

Stage 4 – Complaint heard by the Governing Body’s Complaints Appeal Panel.

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 3, then you will need to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint. The Chair or a nominated Governor will convene a complaints panel consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint. One person on the panel will be an independent person. Parents may be accompanied at the panel hearing if they wish. The hearing will normally take place within 10 school working days of receipt of the written request for Stage 4 investigation.

The aim of the Appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Panel’s decision in writing within 5 school working days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further. A copy of those findings and recommendations is:

1. Sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about;
2. Available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher;

N.B. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the Headmaster, the Headmaster and Chair of Governors will be informed of the complaint. The Chair of Governors will arrange for the matter to be investigated.

- (a) This complaints procedure is available not only to parents but also to all staff and boarders via the school website;
- (b) Boarders and their parents are informed by the school how they can contact Ofsted regarding any complaints concerning boarding welfare;

- (c) A written record is kept of serious complaints and their outcomes for regular review by the head or a senior member of staff; the number of complaints for the previous year can be made available upon request from the Headmaster's Personal Assistant.
- (d) Complaints are resolved either to the complainant's satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils;
- (e) Pupils are not penalised for making a complaint in good faith.

All correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an investigation under section 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them.

PJAT/AEC
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