

St Joseph's College

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Date of Latest Review:	September 2016
Next Review Date:	September 2020
Policy Available for Staff at:	Media drive – Staff Policies
Policy Available for Parents at:	Website
Headteacher:	Ms M Roberts

This policy applies to any matter (other than matters relating to admissions and exclusions which have their own processes) which has been raised with St Joseph's College as a matter of concern but which has not been capable of resolution informally and which the complainant or St Joseph's College should be dealt with on a formal basis.

Informal Procedure

It is a precondition to the operation of this policy that the complainant shall have made reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution and shall have acted in relation to the matter in a reasonable and measured way.

Generally, it is expected that where the matter relates to a student it will have been raised with the student's Form Tutor and Head of Year before a request is made to deal with it under this policy.

The Chair of Governors shall have a discretion, which will be exercised reasonably, not to allow a complaint to be pursued where this precondition has not been met.

Where this precondition has been met but the complaint has not been resolved, the formal procedure will be instigated.

Formal Procedure

The first stage of the formal procedure will be as follows:-

1. The complainant must put the complaint in writing, addressed to the Headteacher, setting out briefly the facts and stating what it is that the complainant considers should have been done or where St Joseph's College has not met reasonable expectations.
2. An investigation will be carried out by a member of the Senior Leadership Team - made up of the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteachers and the Assistant Headteachers - who will offer the complainant a meeting and who will speak to others involved. Whenever reasonably possible, the meeting with the complainant will take place within 15 school days of the written complaint being received
3. The investigator will put her/his findings in writing and will indicate what, if any, steps should be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 15 school days of the meeting with the complainant.

Any complaint relating to the Headteacher must be raised in the first instance with the Chair of Governors (or a Vice-chair in the absence of the Chair) who will, if an informal resolution cannot be reached, designate a Governor to investigate in the same way as in the first stage of the formal process outlined above.

Any complaint relating to a Governor must be raised in the first instance with the Chair of Governors (or a Vice-chair in the absence of the Chair) who will, if an informal resolution cannot be reached, designate a Governor to investigate in the same way as in the first stage of the formal process outlined above.

Any complaint relating to the Chair of Governors must be raised in the first instance with the Province Leader, who will, if an informal resolution cannot be reached, designate a Trustee or a representative of the Trustees to investigate in the same way as in the first stage of the formal process outlined above.

The second stage of the formal procedure (if required) will be as follows:-

1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the investigator, she/he may request that the complaint be considered by the Complaints Panel of the Governing Body which will comprise at least 3 people and which will include one person who is independent of the management and running of St Joseph's College. That request:
 - (a) must be in writing;
 - (b) addressed to the Clerk to the Governors at St Joseph's College;
 - (c) sent within 10 school days of the response being sent to the complainant; and
 - (d) must set out briefly the reasons why the complainant is dissatisfied with the response.

2. The Clerk will invite St Joseph's College to put in writing its response to the complainant's reasons. St Joseph's College will do this within 15 school days.

At the end of that period (whether or not St Joseph's College has responded) the Clerk will convene a meeting of the Complaints Panel of the Governing Body. That meeting will be held as quickly as practicable given the need to find a date that is reasonably convenient for the complainant, St Joseph's College and the members of the Panel. Whenever possible, the meeting will be held within 15 school days of the end of the Academy's (St Joseph's College) response time. At any meeting, the complainant and/or those complained of will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend but legal representation will not be allowed.

3. The meeting is not a court case and will be as informal as circumstances allow. The complainant will have the opportunity to put her/his reasons for dissatisfaction and to enlarge on them but may not introduce reasons that were not previously put in writing. St Joseph's College will have the opportunity to put its side of things and each side, as well as the Panel members, will be able to ask questions. The complainant will have the opportunity to make final comments to the Panel.

4. The Panel may make findings and recommendations and a copy of those findings and recommendations will be

(i) Sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about;

(ii) Available for inspection on St Joseph's College premises by the Academy Trust and the Headteacher

5. The Panel will formulate its response as quickly as reasonably possible, aiming to do so within 10 school days, and the Clerk to the Governors will notify all concerned of the outcome.

(i) When the panel have reached a decision the Clerk will inform everyone concerned in writing in any event, within ten working days of the panel meeting.

(ii) The letter will also contain what the complainant needs to do, should they wish to take the matter further, although it should be noted that if the correct procedure has been followed, the decision of the Governor's Complaints Panel is final.

(iii) A record should be kept of the outcome of the hearing.

6. A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing, which will be reported on an annual basis to Governors.

7. 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 162A of the Education Act 2002 requests access to them.

Vexatious Complaints

If properly followed, a good complaints procedure will limit the number of complaints that become protracted. However, there will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Chair of the Governing Body is able to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.