



# EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS POLICY

**Policy Approval Date:** October 2025

**Review Cycle:** Biennial

**Next Review Date:** October 2027

## General Statement

At Saint Andrew's International High School, we undertake to provide a friendly and safe environment in which students will be helped to achieve their potential, both academically and socially. We recognise that sometimes things can go wrong, and parents, guardians and members of the public may need to make a complaint or raise concerns they have with the school.

## Rationale

Most complaints or issues can be resolved informally and quickly by discussion with the member of staff concerned and a member of the Senior Leadership Team or the Headteacher. Alternatively, parents can write to a member of the school leadership team and outline the issue clearly.

## Aims & Objectives

- To outline a clear and appropriate procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints in a timely manner
- To allow all involved to know their rights
- To deal with concerns raised quickly and effectively
- To develop positive relationship with parents and the wider community

## Procedures

Initial concerns should be raised with the child's Head of Year or passed to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Any complaint will be passed to the most appropriate member of staff.

### Stage 1 - Informal Stage

Any complaint/issue that is put in writing should be written clearly outlining all the issues and what the preferred outcome should be. All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 3 – 5 working days.

Parents should make an appointment to discuss their concerns with an appropriate member of staff who knows about the issue or incident. If the complaint relates to a student, ideally the member of staff concerned should be directly involved with the student, for example, class teacher or form teacher.

The member of staff, Deputy Head or Head Teacher, should write notes during the meeting. Parents or complainant may ask for a copy of these notes.

### Stage 2

If parties are still dissatisfied after the informal stage, they can refer the matter to the Headteacher. This should be done in writing to state clearly the reasons for the escalation.

The Headteacher will offer a meeting with the parent or other complainant at a mutually convenient time. The Headteacher may delegate this responsibility to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. At the meeting, and through discussion, the member of staff chairing the meeting will clarify what the issues are. The hopes of what

the parent is trying to achieve will also be discussed. Together all parties will agree an acceptable outcome. These should be minuted and agreed by all parties.

### Stage 3

If the issue is complex the Headteacher may need to speak to other staff and pupils to investigate the concerns. This should happen within 10 school days. If this timescale cannot be met the Headteacher should inform the parent that this will take longer, explain the reasons for this and give a timescale for when the investigation will be completed.

The complaint will be investigated by observation, discussion, questioning and other appropriate means with the complainant, the member of staff involved, and other parties who may be able to offer valid information.

A report will be written by the member of staff carrying out the investigation.

Possible actions may include some or all of the following:

- Written reply to parents
- Meeting with relevant parties
- Lesson Observations or Learning Walks, following an action plan of improvement
- Professional guidance and assistance e.g. coaching, intervention plan by Line Manager
- Member of staff placed on a Support Plan
- Verbal or written warning to the member of staff involved

A written record of the action taken should be filed for all complaints. The action taken will be decided by the Headteacher and reported to the staff involved. The Head Teacher will include any such actions in their written reports to the Board of Governors.

### Stage 4

Following Stage 3, if the complaint is still not resolved to parties' satisfaction, the complaint can be referred to the Chair of Governors. This can either be in writing to the Chair at the school address, or alternatively the school can ask the Chair of Governors to contact the parent directly. The Headteacher can also refer the complaint to the Chair of Governors.

If the Headteacher is the subject of the complaint, the complaint should go straight to the Chair of Governors and miss out Stage 3. The Chair of Governors may ask for the complaint to be put in writing, if this has not already happened. The Chair of Governors will offer to meet with the parent or other complainant, at a mutually convenient time. The Chair of Governors should have 15 school days to investigate the complaint.

If it cannot be resolved within this time, the Chair should inform the complainant and explain why it is taking longer. The Chair should inform the complainant when it is expected that the investigation should be completed.

### Stage 5

If the complaint is still not resolved to the parties' satisfaction, or the Chair of Governors feels that it is necessary, they can set up a Complaints Committee to consider the complaint.

The Chair of Governors can appoint an investigating officer from the existing Board of Governors to gather evidence and conduct preliminary interviews on the Chair's behalf. The investigating officer will provide a detailed report of their investigation of the complaint. Parents/carers should be given a copy of this report. It is important that the investigating officer is seen as impartial. So, whilst the investigating officer is another governor, they cannot be a member of the associated Complaints Committee.

The Complaints Committee should be made up of three members of the school's governing body.

The Complaints Committee should meet at a time convenient to all parties. The complainant, the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors and any member of staff the complaint is about will be invited to the meeting. Any person invited can bring a friend or supporter if they wish. The Complaints Committee will consider any written material and give the person making the complaint and the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and staff an opportunity to state their case and to question others present. The Committee will ensure that all present are treated fairly. The meeting will be minuted by the HR and everyone present will be given a copy of the minutes.

The Committee should give its decision, in writing, within five school days after the meeting, along with the reasons for their decision.

At any of the above stages an appeal can be made within 10 working days.

**Notes:**

If a complaint is not from a parent of a student attending the school, for example being a member of the public, the complaint should initially be given to the Headteacher, preferably in writing.

All complaints will be recorded formally by the school in a central log.

