



# **St. Joseph's Convent School**

## **Complaints Policy**

Reviewed January 2019

**MISSION STATEMENT**  
**We are a Mercy School**  
**We will live and work together as Jesus taught us,**  
**spreading his loving friendship to everyone we meet.**

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 St. Joseph's Convent School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the services that it provides. An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

1.2 To enable a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than three months after the event, being complained of, will not be considered. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this procedure. The school will treat any matter which has been raised as a concern with a high degree of confidentiality and ask that the complainant will do the same.

1.2.1 The Complaints Policy and Procedures applies to all parents/carers of the school including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (known as EYFS). This policy is available to all parents upon request.

## **2.0 Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

2.0.1 It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

2.1 If parents have a complaint they should contact their daughter's class teacher. This may be by letter, telephone or in person or by appointment requested via the school office. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway to the parents' satisfaction by simple clarification or the provision of information. It is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage. However, if the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for the class teacher to consult with the Headteacher.

2.2 Complaints made directly to the Headteacher will usually be referred to the relevant class teacher unless the Headteacher deems it appropriate for her to deal with the matter personally.

2.3 The class teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within twenty days or in the event that the class teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then the parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

2.4 In the case of serious concerns it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Headteacher (or to the Chair of the Governors, if the complaint is about the Headteacher)

2.5 If you are uncertain about who to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the Governors.

## **3.0 Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

- 3.1 If your concern or complaint is not resolved at the informal stage you may choose to put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Headteacher, who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. If the complaint is about the Headteacher, your complaint should be passed to the Clerk to the Governors, for the attention of the Chair of the Governors.
- 3.1.1 A Complaint Form will be provided to assist you.
- 3.2 You should include details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of relevant documents.
- 3.3 It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like the school to take to resolve your concern. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.
- 3.4 Please pass the completed form, in a sealed envelope to the school office. The envelope should be addressed to the Headteacher, or to the Clerk to the Governors, as appropriate.
- 3.5 The Headteacher (or Chair of Governors) will invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to explore the possibility of an informal resolution. You may be accompanied by a friend, if you wish, to assist you in explaining the nature of your concerns. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- 3.6 It is possible that your complaint will be resolved through a meeting with the Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors). If not, arrangements will be made for the matter to be fully investigated, using the appropriate procedure. In any case you should learn in writing, usually with five working days of the school receiving your formal complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. The complaint will be resolved within the anticipated time scale which will be twenty-eight working days.
- 3.7 Any investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, you will be informed in writing of its conclusion.
- 3.8 A written record of all complaints will be kept in school whether they were resolved at the preliminary or formal resolution stage and whether they have been upheld. Exceptions to the general confidentiality of the statements and records of individual complaints are:
- (a) The Secretary of State (in practice the Department for Education) and
  - (b) A body conducting an inspection under Section 108 and 109 of 2008 Act
- 3.9 If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the complaint has been followed and the decision, you may request that the Governors review the complaint and process followed by the school. Any such request must be made in writing to the Clerk to the Governors, within ten school days of receiving notice of the outcome, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure. The procedure described below will be followed. A Review Request form will be provided for your convenience.

#### **4.0 Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- 4.1 Any review of the complaint will be conducted by a panel 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 (Appendix 1). Complain Panel members are appointed by or on behalf of the Chair of Governors. This will take place within twenty working days of receipt of your request. An acknowledgement of receipt will be sent within 48 hours.
- 4.2 The panel will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests to make oral representations will be considered sympathetically.  
This will take place within twenty working days of receipt of your request. You may be accompanied by a friend, if you wish, to assist you in explaining the nature of your concerns. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- 4.3 The panel may also have access to the records kept of the process which has been followed and if the panel deems it necessary, it may require further particulars of the complaint or any related matter.
- 4.4 Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- 4.5 The complainant and all involved will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation, findings and recommendations and this will be expressively limited to twenty days. This will be sent not only to the complainant but all involved.
- 4.6 The decision of the panel will be final and the matter will then be closed as far as the school is concerned. However, the findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher.
- 4.7 A written record of all complaints will be kept in school whether they were resolved at the preliminary, formal or have proceeded to a panel stage. Exceptions to the general confidentiality of the statements and records of individual complaints are:  
(a) The Secretary of State (in practice the Department for Education) and  
(b) A body conducting an inspection under Section 108 and 109 Of 2008 Act.

#### **5.0 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

Parents may make a complaint to Ofsted and/or ISI in respect of the school should they wish to do so.

**Ofsted**                      Ofsted National Business Centre  
Piccadilly Gate  
Manchester M1 2WD  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
030 0123 1231

**ISI**                              0207 600 0100

5.0.1 A record of any complaint in respect of the EYFS will be kept for at least 3 years. All records of complaints are available to Ofsted on request.

## **6.0 Further Information**

### **6.0.1 Panel**

Appointed by the Chair of Governors

2 Governors

1 independent member appointed by the Board of Governors

No formal complaints were recorded in the academic year 2017 to 2018.

## ***Appendix 1: Complaints Procedure - Independent Member of the Panel***

The DfES has supplied the following guidance in a letter of the ISC General Secretary:

Whilst we do not intend to be prescriptive our general view is that suitable people would be those who have held positions of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments/points. It would add credibility if independent panel members had some standing in the local community. In this connection serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background - perhaps retired members of the Policy Force - might be considered suitable by schools. Schools will have their own views and may well have other suitable suggestions to make.

You asked if it would be acceptable to appoint former governors or staff of the school as the independent panel member. The regulations do not preclude this since the stipulation is that the person must be independent of the management and running of the school. Clearly former governors or staff would not have any such involvement. However, schools should bear in mind that they may be subject to criticism that such people would remain too close to the school and would not be truly independent.