



Complaints procedure

Independent school standards	Paragraphs 32(3), 33 and 34.
Number of complaints registered and resolved under the formal complaints procedure during the preceding year (2025 to 2026)	0
Last updated by senior leaders	September 2026
Last reviewed by advisory board	September 2026
Next review due	September 2027

Introduction

- At St. John's, we strive to provide an excellent education for all our pupils. Senior leaders and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents and carers. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents of pupils currently enrolled at St. John's. The following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases.
- Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints, and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding, as it is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. In all cases, we put the interests of the pupil above all else. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.
- We deal with all complaints in accordance with the procedure laid down below, which pays regard to Part 7 (Paragraph 33) of the independent school standards.
- This procedure is only for the use of parents of pupils currently enrolled at St. John's Preparatory and Senior School.

The Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – Informal

- If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with the child's form teacher. In our experience most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each pupil is happy at school and is making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects his or her progress. After an initial meeting, the issues will be logged and, if this initial meeting has not facilitated a resolution, a date will be set to meet again to resolve the matter.
- If the complaint is about the conduct of another pupil, and it seems that the conduct complained about amounts to bullying, then the matter will be dealt with under the school's anti-bullying strategy. However, if the complaint relates to another pupil in the class being disruptive, then the teacher concerned will investigate the matter and deal with it under the guidelines set down in the school's behaviour policy.
- If the complaint is about a staff member, the complaint should initially be made again on an informal basis by meeting with the person concerned and/or the form teacher, head of year, or a senior leader, in order that the situation can be clarified and resolved as quickly as possible.
- In some cases, time may be needed to investigate the complaint. If the matter cannot be resolved immediately then we nevertheless aim to respond within five school days.

Stage 2 – Formal – Complaint to a Senior Leader

- Ultimately, we hope that all complaints can be dealt with quickly and efficiently at the informal stage. However, where parents feel that a situation has not been resolved, or that the complaint is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should put their complaint in writing and/or make an appointment to discuss it with a relevant senior leader (unless the complaint is about the Headteacher or the Principal, when Stage 3 will apply).
- A senior leader, the Headteacher or the Principal will consider any such complaint and will acknowledge the complaint orally through a meeting with the parents, or in writing and will aim to resolve the matter within 10 school days of the complaint being made. If this proves unrealistic, a letter will be sent explaining the reason for the delay and giving a revised target date.
- Each case will be investigated thoroughly and, if applicable, witnesses will be interviewed, and statements taken from those involved. We keep accurate written records of all meetings. Once the relevant facts have been established, they will give a response to the parent either orally or in writing if a meeting is not possible. Any written response will include a full explanation of the decision and the reason for it, including where appropriate, any action that the school will take.
- The complainant will also be informed that, should he or she wish to take the complaint further, he or she should make a Stage 3 formal complaint in writing within two weeks.

Stage 3 – Formal – Complaint to the Advisory Board

- Only if Stages 1 and 2 have been exhausted and the complaint remains unresolved (or the complaint concerns the Headteacher or the Principal) should a formal complaint be made at Stage 3 to the School's Advisory Board.
- A Stage 3 complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint, and, if applicable, how the school has handled it so far at Stages 1 and 2. The parent should send this complaint, marked clearly as a 'Stage 3 Formal Complaint' to complaints@stjohnsprepandsenior.co.uk.
- An advisory board member will consider any such complaint and will acknowledge the complaint orally through a meeting with the parents, or in writing, and will aim to resolve the matter within 10 school days of the complaint being made. If this proves unrealistic, a letter will be sent explaining the reason for the delay and giving a revised target date.
- Each case will be investigated thoroughly and, if applicable, witnesses will be interviewed, and statements will be taken from those involved. Once the relevant facts have been established, the advisory board member will respond to the parent either orally or in writing if a meeting is not possible. Any written response will include a full explanation of the decision and the reason for it, including where appropriate, any action that the school will take.

Stage 4 – Formal – Complaint to the Complaints Panel

- Only if Stages 1, 2 and 3 have been exhausted and the complaint remains unresolved should a formal complaint be made at Stage 4 to the School's Complaints Panel.
- A Stage 4 complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint, and how the school has handled it so far at Stages 1, 2 and 3. The parent should send this complaint, marked clearly as a 'Stage 4 Formal Complaint' to complaints@stjohnsprepandsenior.co.uk.
- The Panel will usually comprise three members, two of whom will be members of the school's advisory board. The third member will be entirely independent of the management, governance and running of the school. No members will have had prior involvement in the complaint put before them.
- The Panel will consider and fully investigate all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. It will ordinarily arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and will invite the person making it to attend the meeting, with a third party if they so wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. The Panel will give the complainant at least five working days' notice of the date of the meeting.
- After hearing all the evidence, the Panel will consider their decision and inform the parent about it in writing. The members of the Panel will do all they can to resolve the complaint in a fair manner. The Panel will make findings and recommendations, which will be final. The complainant, Principal, Headteacher and where relevant the person/s complained about, will receive a copy of the findings and recommendations within five working days.

Records and confidentiality

- As per the requirements of 33(j), an online log of formal complaints is maintained, recording the stage of resolution and any action taken as a result.
- As per the requirements of 33(k), the school ensures that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.