

Jack & Jill Family of Schools: Complaints Policy

Legal Status:

This policy details the manner in which complaints are handled and is produced in accordance with:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Early Years Foundation Stage statutory requirements
<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/a0068102/early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs>
- The Equality Act 2010
- The General Data Protection Regulation
- The Data Protection Act 2018

Applies to:

- Jack and Jill School Twickenham;
- Nightingale House Pre-Preparatory School; and,
- Clarence House Preparatory School.

Related Documents and Policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Staff Grievance Procedure
- Complaints Record Form

Available From:

- School Office
- SharePoint
- Website

References:

- “Parents” refers to parents, guardians and carers;
- “Staff” includes employees, volunteers, peripatetic staff, external providers (Springboard Swimmers) or specialist staff provided by an external provider;
- The “School” refers to the Jack & Jill Family of Schools (Jack and Jill School Twickenham, Nightingale House Pre-Preparatory School and Clarence House Preparatory School (CHPS));
- “EYFS” refers to The Early Years Foundation Stage which is the curriculum for children from birth to aged 5, including the Reception year group;
- “Strategic Leadership Team” refers to the team managing the School, currently including the Deputy Principal, Headteacher of Clarence House, Pre-Preparatory Lead Teacher and Digital Learning Lead.

Reviewer: Strategic Leadership Team (June 2021)

Effective: June 2021

Next review: November 2021 (complaints data to be updated in August 2021)

Principal’s Signature:



The Jack & Jill Family of Schools is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils achieve their potential.

The Jack & Jill Family of Schools promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We ensure that every child is included and not disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability. We promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our School.

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Section One: Policy

1. Introduction

The School is committed to addressing concerns or complaints in an appropriate and professional manner. Of prime importance is the need to deal fully and properly with any concerns within a reasonable period and in a courteous and efficient way.

Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to the School about any provision of facilities or services provided.

2. Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision or service provided by the School with additional reference to complaints procedures for specific areas as listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions	See Admissions Policy.
Special Educational Needs	See SEND Policy.
Matters relating to or likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	See Safeguarding Policy.
Whistleblowing	We have an internal Whistleblowing Policy for our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. Further information on how to complain can also be found at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the School's complaints procedure.
Staff grievance	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the School's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the School's internal disciplinary procedures.

The School prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils and it is our intention at all times to provide good education and quality care to all children and establish positive relationships with parents; however, if parents do have cause to complain, they can expect this to be dealt with in accordance with the procedures detailed in this policy.

3. The School aims:

- to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint;
- to consider all concerns or complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible;
- to resolve any concerns or complaints through dialogue and mutual understanding;
- in all cases, to put the interests of the child above all other issues and ensure that all future interactions with a pupil are never affected by a parental complaint; and
- to provide enough opportunity for any concern or complaint to be fully discussed and resolved informally.

Section Two: The Complaints Process

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is acknowledged that there is a difference between a concern and a complaint and that taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will not only reduce the number that develop into formal complaints but also alleviate any stress or anxiety for the child, parent or member of staff.
- As it is the School's express aim that all concerns are resolved quickly and informally it is the class teacher, individual delivering the service for extended care or member of the school central services team who will generally receive the first approach and therefore their response is crucial.
- In order to resolve issues on the spot as far as is possible, staff do so by discussion of the facts aiming to understand the nature of the anxiety and means by which the matter can be resolved, including when necessary an apology or explanation as applicable. The complainant should leave the discussion happy with an agreed course of action and understanding the means by which they can follow up on the issue.
- The member of staff dealing with the matter may make a written record of the **concern** or **complaint** on the Complaints Record Form depending on the nature of the complaint.
- Should the matter remain unresolved, or the complainant is dissatisfied with the response to the concern, the complainant will be advised to proceed with their complaint using the formal process detailed below.

Stage 2 – Formal Procedure:

Involvement of a member of the Strategic Leadership Team

When initial attempts to resolve any concern with the class teacher or member of staff providing the service are unsuccessful and the person raising the issue wishes to escalate matters the complainant should contact any senior member of staff on the SLT as listed above.

- Complainants should detail their concern/s in writing addressed to the appropriate member of the Strategic Leadership Team.
- A member of the Strategic Leadership Team will acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint immediately and within 5 working days of receipt will have clarified the issue/s raised, explaining the appropriate course of action to be taken and including suggested times for a discussion about the matter.
- The member of the SLT will carry out a full investigation, if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish and keeping written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision/proposal will be made, and the complainant will be informed of this in writing together with reasons for the decision. Any action already taken or proposed as a result of the investigations will also be detailed.

We hope that most problems can be resolved by these processes. However, where a complainant is dissatisfied with the response made in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure, provision will be made to refer the matter for consideration by an independent panel. This request should be made in writing and addressed to the Principal.

Stage 3 – Formal Resolution:

Panel Hearing

- The Panel will consist 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. All members of the Panel will be appointed by or on behalf of the Principal. A Chair will be appointed and will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing.

- The date for the hearing will be arranged as soon as possible at a mutually convenient time and ideally no later than two weeks after receipt of the letter advising continued dissatisfaction with the handling of the initial complaint.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such shall be supplied to all parties no later than five working days prior to the hearing.
- The complainant has the right to be accompanied at the hearing by an adult of their choice, other than a legal representative and should inform the Chair of the identity of the person chosen to support during the process no less than 48 hours prior to the hearing.
- After due consideration of all facts considered relevant, the nature of the complaint and action taken to date, the panel will make findings and recommendations, which it shall complete normally within fourteen working days of the hearing.
- A copy of the panel's findings, and/or any recommendations and the reasons for them will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. This will be sent by email, or otherwise given to the complainant and to the Principal and members of the Strategic Leadership Team.
- The decision of the Panel is final.
- The process of dealing with a complaint under formal resolution from the moment that it is received to resolution will normally take no more than twenty-eight working days.
- At any stage a complainant can refer their issue to Ofsted (via the contact details below) but it is recommended that the School's complaints procedure, as detailed above, is followed to its conclusion:

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester. M1 2WD Telephone: 0300 123 1231

www.ofsted.gov.uk Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or via www.education.gov.uk/contactus

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed regularly by the Strategic Leadership Team along with an annual review of any complaints received for the purposes of monitoring and changes to procedures if applicable.

The School maintains a schedule of all complaints made in accordance with Stages 2 & 3 of this policy, including:

- Whether the complaint was resolved following a formal procedure, or proceeded to a panel hearing; and
- The person making the complaint, the date of the complaint, the nature of the complaint, any action taken and the outcome of the complaint.

The number of formal complaints, as detailed in Stage 3, received in the preceding academic year, is made available to parents in the Parent Handbook for each School.

A written record of all complaints and at which stage they resolved is kept for a minimum of three years.

Complaints 2019-20: 0 complaints resolved at Stage 2; 0 complaints resolved at Stage 3.
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Confidentiality

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential but made available when the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 162A The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Section Three: Roles and Responsibilities

4. Role of the Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if he/she:

- explains the complaint in full as early as possible;
- co-operates with the School in seeking a solution to the complaint;
- responds promptly to requests for information, meetings or agreeing details of the complaint;
- asks for assistance as needed;
- treats all involved in the complaint with respect; and
- refrains from publicising details of the complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

5. Role of the Investigator:

Members of the SLT - Deputy Principal / Clarence House Headteacher / Nightingale House Lead Teachers

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
 - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved;
 - interviewing staff and children / young people and other people relevant to the complaint;
 - consideration of records and other relevant information analysing information; and
 - liaising with the complainant and the Principal as appropriate to clarify what could be done to resolve matters.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting;
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely, pending possible progression to a panel hearing;
- be mindful of the timescales set out for response;
- prepare a comprehensive report for the Principal or complaints Panel that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends action to resolve the complaint; and
- ensure that the complainant is fully updated and informed throughout.

The Panel will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

6. The Role of the Principal

- to ensure the smooth running of the complaint's procedure;
- Manage issues relating to:
 - sharing third party information; and
 - Providing additional support. This may be needed by a complainant and could include an interpreter or adult support if the complainant is a child or young person.

7. Role of the Panel Chair

The Chair is the contact point for the complainant and the Panel and should:

- ensure all involved are aware of their rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Data Protection Act (the "DPA") 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (the "GDPR");
- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all invited to attend and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
- collate all written material relevant to the complaint (for example; stage 1 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting;

- ensure all parties are asked for any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting;
- ensure the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy;
- ensure complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child / young person;
- ensure the remit of the Panel is explained to the complainant;
- ensure written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR; if a new issue arises give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it which may require an adjournment of the meeting;
- ensure both the complainant and the School representatives are given opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally during the meeting itself;
- ensure the issues are addressed;
- ensure key findings of fact are made;
- ensure the Panel is open-minded and acts independently, that no member of the Panel has an interest in the outcome of the proceedings or had any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
- record the proceeding and circulate the minutes of the meeting; and
- notify all parties of the Panel's decision.

8. Role of the Panel Members

Panel members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so;
- no individual may sit on the Panel if he/she had prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it;
- the aim of the meeting is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the School and the complainant; and
- the complainant may be dissatisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.

Complainants may feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue affecting their child. Extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child / young person who is present during all or part of the meeting. Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child / young person does not feel intimidated.

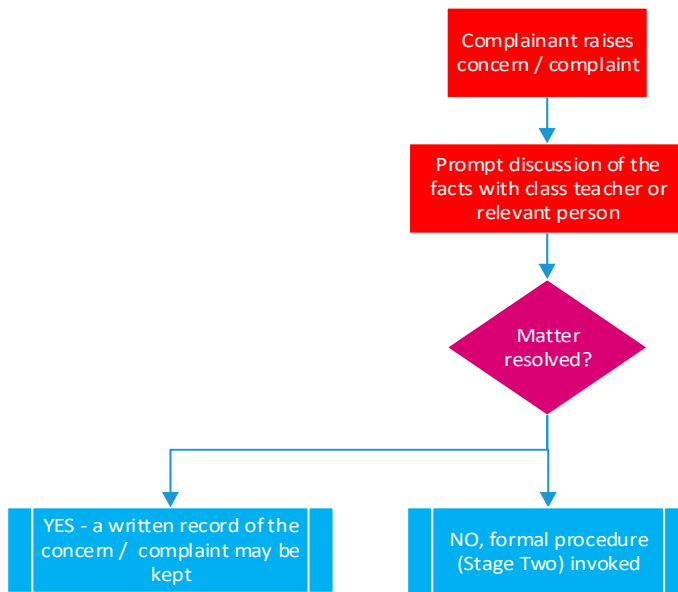
The Panel should respect the views of the child / young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.

If the child / young person is the complainant, the Panel should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child / young person's parent is the complainant, the Panel should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child / young person might attend.

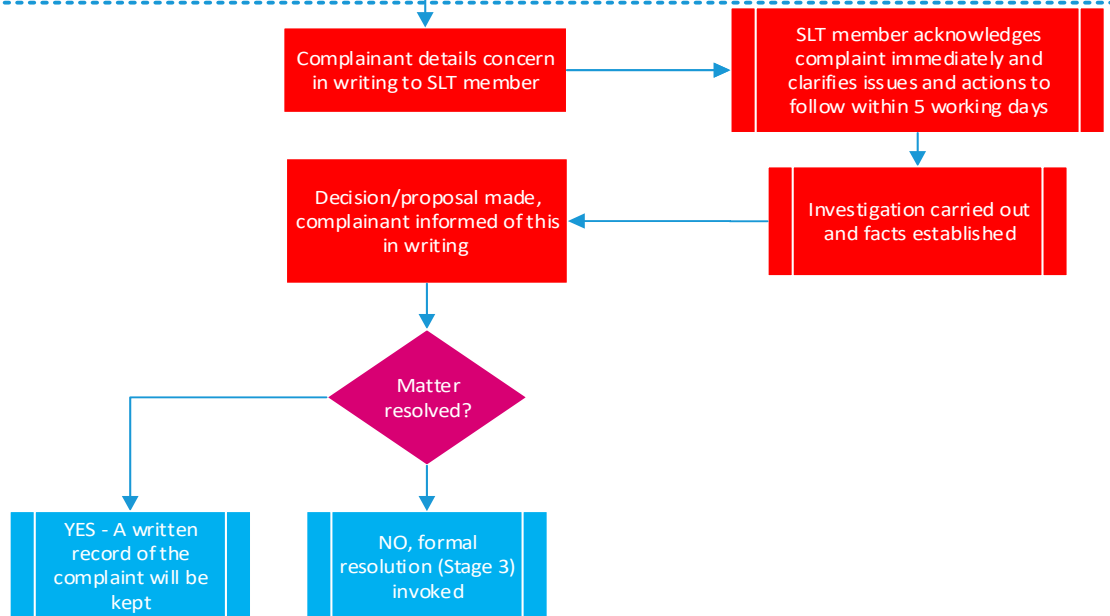
However, the parent should be advised that attendance may not always be possible if the Chair of the Panel considers this not in the child / young person's best interests. The welfare of the child / young person is paramount.

Process Flowchart

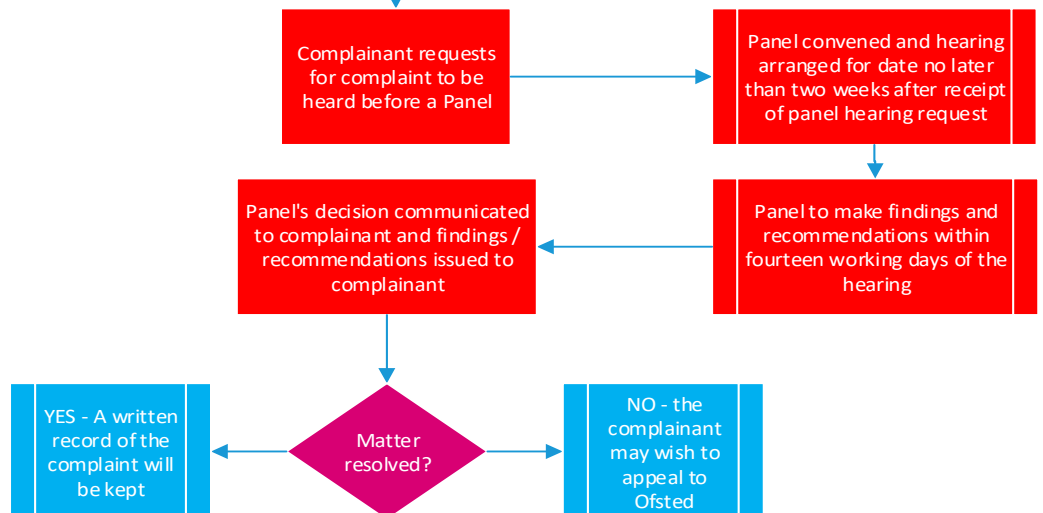
STAGE 1 - Informal Resolution



STAGE 2 - Formal Procedure



STAGE 3 - Formal Resolution





Appendix One: Complaints Record Form

Complaints Record Form – to be completed by complainant or member of staff receiving complaint

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address:
Postcode:
Daytime telephone number:
Evening telephone number:
Details of the complaint, including any prior discussion about this with representatives of the school.
Possible Resolution?



Is any paperwork attached? If so, please name and list documents below.

Signature:

Date:

Informal /Formal/Panel hearing stage

Action and date, including whether acknowledgement sent to complainant:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: