



COMPLAINTS POLICY

General Statement

St Martin's School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. We strive to provide excellent education in an enriching environment and to develop the talents and abilities of each individual pupil. The relationship we have with parents is very important to us and we realise that it is essential for us to work together positively to support the children that attend the school.

At St Martin's, we work hard to maintain an effective partnership between the school and parents. We endeavour to communicate frequently with parents and this is done on an ongoing basis over the course of the year: we send out a regular newsletter to keep parents abreast of activities and relevant issues; we use the school website and Facebook for further updates; reports are issued twice each year, in the autumn and summer terms; parents' consultation evenings are held in the autumn and spring terms.

In addition, if parents have any queries on a day-to-day basis, they are encouraged to have an informal word with the class teacher or a relevant staff member at the end of the day or set up an appointment if required. Parents are able to contact the Headteacher or any other member of staff with more serious concerns.

St Martin's School aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. Careful consideration will be given to all complaints, and they should be dealt with as swiftly as possible. St Martin's has the intention to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding. In all cases, the interests of the child are put above all else. St Martin's School aims to provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

Records of complaints and confidentiality.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003, where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection, or where any other legal obligation prevails.

The Complaints Process

The School recognises the importance of having procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents or guardians. The following policy sets out the procedures that should be followed in such cases:

Stage 1 (Informal Resolution)

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. If any parents or guardians have any concerns relating to the school, or their child's involvement at school; they are encouraged to talk to the child's class teacher or a relevant staff member (a particular subject teacher may be more applicable) as soon as is possible. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child 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 the child's progress. The teacher and parent will discuss the issue and may solve it then and there, or they will decide on a way forward by agreeing on follow-up action, making arrangements for a follow-up meeting, or where appropriate, a meeting with the Headteacher. The follow up meeting will be arranged for a time that is agreed as appropriate between the parent and teacher.

Teachers are expected to inform the Headteacher about any concerns raised by parents, and concerns will be noted in the pupil file.

The teacher dealing with the issue 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 fourteen days, or in the event that the Form Teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents are advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

Stage 2 (Address the Headteacher)

Where parents feel that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should contact the Headteacher. The Headteacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take and will respond to the parents within ten working days. The Headteacher will consider any complaint seriously, and will investigate each case thoroughly.

In most cases, the Headteacher will meet the parents concerned, normally within ten working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage, although it may be necessary for the Headteacher to carry out further investigations.

The Headteacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Headteacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision. The Headteacher will also give reasons for this decision. Most complaints are usually resolved by this stage, however, if parents are not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 (Formal Written Complaint)

Any parents who remain dissatisfied at this point, should issue a formal written complaint. If there is a complaint against the Headteacher, the complaint should be addressed to the Proprietors who will investigate the complaint and will respond within ten working days of receiving the complaint.

Stage 4 (Panel Hearing)

If the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in writing, then there will be a panel hearing of the complaint. The panel will be appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One panel member will be independent of the management and running of the school. The parent can attend and be accompanied to the hearing if they wish. The panel will report on their findings and recommendations and copies will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about, and be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher.

Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)

ISI inspectorate responsible for the inspection of St Martin's School. Parent's may contact ISI through the website:
www.isi.net

Monitoring and review

The Headteacher monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. Written records are kept of all complaints received by the school, and they record how they were resolved, including whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or whether there has been a Hearing.

The policy is made available to all parents on the website, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints procedure.