



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

(ISI Policy 33a)

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This policy applies to the whole school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and boarding

Introduction

Sandroyd School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents or pupils do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school with care and in accordance with this policy. The Complaints Policy is available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the school's website.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 2014, Sandroyd will also make available, on request, to the Department for Education (DfE) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), details of this Complaints Procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

This Procedure applies to the whole school including The Walled Garden (Early Years Foundation Stage). It is publicly available on the School website www.Sandroyd.com and on request a copy may be obtained from the School Office Email: office@sandroyd.com.

Scope: The purpose of this complaints procedure is to deal with complaints from the parents of current pupils. This complaints procedure does not apply to parents of prospective or past pupils and it does not cover exclusions and required removals which are dealt with via the [school's exclusion policy](#).

This policy covers complaints from parents and pupils

Legal Status: This procedure incorporates the manner in which complaints are to be managed in accordance with The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations currently in force and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) regulations.

Timescale: The process of dealing with a complaint in writing from the moment that it is received by the school to resolution should take no more than twenty-eight (28) working days, except in circumstances in which the normal timescales are affected by issues that delay resolution; namely school holidays and other factors.

Monitoring and Review: The Head monitors the complaints procedure, to ensure that all complaints are handled properly and also undertakes a formal annual review of this procedure, for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

Complaints log: The Head logs all complaints received by the school and records at which stage and how they were resolved. The record includes, at least: 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 in the last academic year can be made available on request from the School Bursar or through the Head's PA.

Confidentiality: Complaints will be managed with strict confidentiality and in accordance with legal requirements. Disclosure of formal complaints will be limited to the Head and relevant parties, unless mandated by our safeguarding procedures, law or regulatory inspections. The school aims to protect pupils from any repercussions arising from parental complaints.

In certain circumstances, such as safeguarding concerns or legal obligations, external authorities may be notified, potentially revealing the identities of involved parties. Affected individuals will be duly informed. Records pertaining to complaints will be securely retained. Any disciplinary actions against staff resulting from complaints will also remain confidential within Sandroyd. Anonymous complaints will generally not be pursued.

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS

What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong or failed to do something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Parents and pupils are assured that a parent and/or pupil will not be penalised for a complaint that is raised in good faith.

What Constitutes a Formal Complaint as Opposed to a Concern?

- If parents seek a formal meeting with the Head, or raise issues through a formal letter, which may require a written response from the school, this will normally be regarded as a formal complaint, even if it has not been referred to as such in the letter.
- If a concern about a more minor matter is repeated and the parent is clearly not satisfied with the school's original response, it should be regarded as a complaint.

Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within five working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 28 days if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 28 days, if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a concern, they should normally contact their son or daughter's form teacher, tutor or Houseparent. There will be scenarios where other staff are more appropriate to contact. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' or pupils' satisfaction.
- Complaints will usually be referred to the Head unless the member of staff deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Head 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 7 days or in the event that the Housemaster/Housemistress and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this procedure.
- If, however, the complaint is against the Head, or their spouse, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors.

"What will happen next?" If you raise something face to face or by telephone it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction. If you have made an informal complaint in writing or via e-mail, we will respond to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed. In many circumstances, the person you contact will need to discuss the matter with a colleague and consider it further before responding. You will be given an indication of when you will receive a response. If a detailed exploration of the issues is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible and usually within 7 school days. This will tell you the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it and any action taken or proposed.

“What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?” We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered. Should the matter not be resolved to your satisfaction within seven (7) school days, then parents are to advance to the formal complaints stage of this procedure.

Stage 2 - Formal Resolution (References to the number of working days refer to term-time only)

- If parents make a formal complaint initially, or they seek to make a formal complaint after their initial concern has failed to reach a suitable resolution at the Informal Stage, then they should write or email in the first instance to the Head. The Head will either meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within three (3) school days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. The Head will establish what has happened so far and who has been involved; clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved and what the parents feels would resolve the issue. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations. Written records will be kept by the Head of all meetings and interviews regarding the complaint. Once all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made by the Head and parents will be informed of this decision in writing or by email within fourteen (14) days. The reasons for the decision will also be given.
- Should a parent or guardian have a complaint about the Head or the Head's spouse, the person making the complaint should inform Mr. Rhodri Thomas, chair of the Governors, via the clerk to the Governors – Mr Rupert Burnell-Nugent (rburnell-nugent@sandroyd.com)
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Chair of Governors who has the responsibility to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. The Chair of Governors may appoint another Governor to chair the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The independent panel member must not be an employee of a wider group or anyone who has a financial relationship with Sandroyd, such as a consultant.
- The Chair of the Panel, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.
- 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 particulars shall be supplied to all parties normally not later than 7 days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- After due consideration of all facts that they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 7 days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of Governors and the Head.

During Holiday Periods

The complaint will normally be resolved within twenty-eight (28) days of the lodging of the complaint to its resolution whenever possible. Allowable exceptions to this rule are for instances when persons involved in the complaint are unavailable during holiday periods. In this case the parents will be kept informed. However, as far as possible, the meeting should not be delayed if the referral comes at the end of term, especially at the end of the Summer Term. Since the aim of the procedure is to resolve the issue and effect reconciliation if necessary, it will be best if the matter can come to the Panel as quickly as possible, especially if the parents will already have been engaged over a longer period in attempts to put things right.

Child Protection

For any complaint that involves a potential child protection issue, this must be reported immediately to the Head (See our safeguarding policy for details of the procedure).

EYFS

Parents of EYFS children should follow the three stages of this Complaints Procedure. If parents remain dissatisfied and their complaint is about the School's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, then parents may take their complaint to the ISI or Ofsted. Parents will be notified by ISI or Ofsted of the outcome of the investigation into their complaint within 28 days of the complaint being received.

ISI/Ofsted

Sandroyd will provide ISI/Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept in accordance with its Privacy Notice and Retention of Records Policy.

Parents may complain directly to Ofsted or to ISI if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Schools must make available details of how to contact Ofsted and/ or the ISI:

Ofsted can be contacted on 0300 123 1231 or by email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Ofsted,
Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street,
Manchester
M1 2WD

ISI can be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: concerns@isi.net
ISI,
CAP House,
9-12 Long Lane,
London
EC1A 9HA

Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved at Stage 1 (informal stage), the formal stage (Stage 2) or proceed to a Panel hearing (Stage 3) and any action taken by the School as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld).

The School processes data in accordance with its Privacy Notice (available on the Sandroyd website). When dealing with complaints the School (including any Panel member appointed under the Stage 3 process) may process a range of information, which is likely to include the following:

1. Date when the issue was raised
2. Name of parent

3. Name of pupil
4. Description of the issue
5. Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
6. Witness statements (if appropriate)
7. Name and contact details of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
8. Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)
9. Notes/minutes of the hearing, and
10. The Panel's written decision

This may include 'special category personal data' (as further detailed in the School's Privacy Notice, but potentially including, for instance, information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint. This data will be processed in accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy.

The School will keep records of formal complaints and Complaints Panel hearings, as required by regulation. It will do so in accordance with its Privacy Notice, Data Protection Policy and Retention of Records Policy.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

The school recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to complain and we are committed to work with you in the best interests of the children in our care.

Unreasonable Complainants

Sandroyd is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school.

However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening. Sandroyd defines unreasonable complainants as 'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'. A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:-

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;

- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.
- A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:-
 - maliciously;
 - aggressively;
 - using threats, intimidation or violence;
 - using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
 - knowing it to be false;
 - using falsified information;
 - publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached. Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues the Head or Chair of Governors will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from the School premises. Although fulfilling a public function, Sandroyd is a private place and the public has no automatic right of entry. Sandroyd will therefore act to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of their community.

If a parent's behaviour is a cause for concern, a school can ask him/her to leave school premises. In serious cases, the Headteacher or the local authority can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent may wish to make. Schools should always give the parent the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PUPILS

What happens if I want to make a complaint about something?

Sometimes you may feel that you haven't been treated fairly. If this happens to you, you don't have to put up with it. You can make a complaint so that the matter can be properly looked into.

The first thing you should do is to speak to a member of staff you trust - the list inside the back of the calendar suggests some people that may be able to help. You can take a friend with you if you wish – they may be able to help with the incident or they may just make you feel more confident.

Usually a member of staff will be able to sort out any misunderstandings so that everyone is happy again.

However, if you still aren't happy with the result you can make a formal complaint. It may be that a teacher you trust can help you follow these guidelines.

1. The first thing to do is to write to the Head or one of the senior members of staff telling them that you wish to make a formal complaint.
2. They will then write the complaint in the Complaints Book held by the Head.
3. You will be given a note by one of the Deputy Heads saying that they have seen your complaint and will look into it in the next two days.
4. You will then have the chance to talk the matter through with either one of the Deputy Heads or the Head. You can have someone with you if you want – this might be a friend, your tutor or any member of staff. This talk will take place within 4 days of you making your complaint.
5. If after this second chance to talk about your complaint, you still don't feel that things have been fairly sorted out, you may contact any of the people whose names are listed in the back of your calendar or whose names, addresses, and telephone numbers are listed below.

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO INFORM STAFF OR ANYONE ELSE THAT YOU ARE COMPLAINING ABOUT THEM. YOUR COMPLAINT WILL REMAIN PRIVATE UNLESS YOU AGREE THAT IT IS BEST FOR IT TO BE SHARED WITH SOME OTHER PEOPLE.

Whoever you contact will come and talk to you at school. You can have a friend or teacher with you to help you and they will help you to decide what is the best thing for you to do.

NAMES, ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE OUTSIDE SCHOOL YOU MAY WISH TO CONTACT:

Mrs Michelle Haskins, Children's Listener	01725 552052
Mr Thomas, Chairman of the Governors	07710 038283
Childline	0800 111111
OFSTED	08456 404040
Children's Rights Listener	0800 5280731

NSPCC HELPLINE

Young people and adults can contact the NSPCC helpline, Report Abuse in Education on 0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk

Parent Complaint Procedure Flow Chart

1. **Start**
2. **Informal Discussion with Staff:** Initially, try to resolve the issue informally by speaking with the relevant staff member.
3. **Satisfied?:** If you are satisfied with the resolution, the process ends. If not, proceed to:
4. **Formal Written Complaint:** Submit a formal written complaint to the school.
5. **Initial Investigation:** The school will conduct an initial investigation based on the formal complaint.
6. **Satisfied?:** If you are satisfied with the outcome, the process ends. If not, you can appeal.
7. **Appeal to Governing Body:** Submit an appeal to the school's governing body.
8. **Final Resolution:** The governing body will provide a final resolution.
9. **End:** The process is concluded.

