



## **PARENTAL COMPLAINTS POLICY**

This policy applies to the whole school, including the EYFS

### **Introduction**

St Piran's has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School with care and in accordance with this Complaints Procedure. The School makes its Complaints Procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the School's website and is available through the School office during the school day, and the School will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and of the form in which it is published or available. This procedure only applies to parents of current registered pupils.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, St Piran's will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate, details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. This is also reported in the annual Trustee's Report.

### **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, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the School has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The School is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you or your child raises in good faith.

The procedure is in three stages. The first stage is an informal stage in which parents should raise their concerns orally with a teacher or with the Head. The second stage is a more formal stage, in which parents may raise their complaint in writing with the Head. The third stage is intended for matters that cannot be resolved through the first two stages and is a reference to a Complaints Panel. These stages are described in more detail below.

### **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

St Piran's hopes that most complaints can and will be resolved quickly and informally.

If parents have a complaint they should normally raise it with their son or daughter's form teacher. If the teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, he or she may refer it to the Head of Phase Group. A

parent may raise the matter directly with the Headmaster if this seems appropriate (for example if the matter concerns the conduct of the form teacher).

Where a matter is referred to the Headmaster, he may ask a Deputy Head or another member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) to handle it.

The person handling the complaint on behalf of St Piran's will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were raised, the steps taken to resolve the concern or complaint and whether the parent accepts that the concern or complaint has been satisfactorily resolved. Should the matter not be resolved within seven working days or in the event that the person handling the complaint 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 the Complaints Procedure.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Reference to Head**

If a concern or complaint cannot be resolved informally within seven days, or if the way in which the concern or complaint is addressed is not satisfactory to the parents who raised it, then the parents may put their concern or complaint in writing to the Headmaster.

The Headmaster will decide, after considering the concern or complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases the Headmaster will speak to the parents. It is likely that the Headmaster will need to investigate the matter or to arrange for a Deputy Head or other member of SMT to conduct an investigation on his behalf. The nature of the concern or complaint, and of the investigation that is required, will determine when the Headmaster will speak to the parents and whether it is necessary to discuss the matter with them on more than one occasion.

Receipt of a formal reference of a concern or complaint to the Headmaster will be acknowledged immediately in writing. St Piran's will aim to complete Stage 2 referrals within fourteen days of their receipt whenever possible and will complete them within twenty eight days of receipt.

The Headmaster will keep, or arrange for the keeping of, written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to a Stage 2 referral.

The Headmaster's proposals for resolving the concern or complaint will be put in writing to the parents who raised the matter, with reasons for the proposals and will keep a written record of the action taken by the school as a result of the complaint regardless of whether it is upheld or not.

If the complaint is against the Headmaster, then the complaint should be addressed confidentially to the Chair of Governors via the school address. The Chair of Governors will call for a full report from the Headmaster and for all the relevant documents. The Chair of Governors may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair of Governors is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chairman will give reasons for his/her decision.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

### **Stage 3 – Reference to a Complaints Panel**

If a complaint cannot be resolved through the first two stages of this procedure, or if parents are dissatisfied with the proposals for resolving their complaint made through those stages, then they may apply in writing to the Headmaster for the matter to be referred to a Complaints Panel.

A Complaints Panel shall be appointed by, or on behalf of, the Chair of Governors within 10 days of receipt of the application for a referral to it, or as soon as is reasonably practicable and shall consist of a chair person who will be independent of the management and running of the school and at least two other people drawn from the governing body who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.

A Complaints Panel shall ensure that the parents bringing a complaint have the opportunity to meet the Panel on one or more occasions to present their complaint. The parents may be accompanied at such hearings by an advisor or friend of their choice. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

The proceedings of a Complaints Panel shall be recorded in writing.

A Complaints Panel may adopt such additional procedures and conduct such investigations as it sees fit for considering a complaint.

A Complaints Panel shall give a written copy of any findings and recommendations it makes and of its reasons for such recommendations to the parents bringing the complaint, the Chairman of Governors, the Headmaster, and, where relevant, the person complained about within six weeks of its establishment where practicable.

### **Confidentiality**

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential by St Piran's except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 163 of the Education Act 2002 requests access to them or where disclosure is necessary for the purpose of disciplinary or related proceedings in relation to staff of St Piran's or is otherwise necessary in the interests of pupils in the reasonable opinion of the Head or as required by law.

### **Further Records and Provision of Information**

In addition to the records referred to above, St Piran's will keep a written record of all complaints whether they are resolved at the informal stage, the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing and any action taken by the School as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld).

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.

St Piran's 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 for at least 3 years.

In relation to the Nursery and Reception (Early Years) specifically, 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 may be contacted on 0300 123424 or by e mail: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).
- ISI may be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)

**Reviewed by: SMT Date: January 2017 Next Review Date: January 2018**