

S. Anselm's School



S. Anselm's
Prep School
Peak District

Policy Title: Complaints Policy

Policy Category: Parental and External

Policy Number: PE1

Policy Owner / Author:	Head
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Contact for Queries:	Hannah Cunningham

✦ This document is controlled and reviewed as part of the School's policy management process. Please refer to the school's website or Teams to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version.

1. Purpose

S. Anselm's School, including Little Puddings Nursery, is committed to providing a high standard of education, pastoral care and service to pupils and their families.

We recognise that, from time to time, parents may have concerns or complaints. We want these to be raised openly and resolved fairly, sensitively and as quickly as possible.

A **concern** is an expression of worry or doubt about an issue for which reassurance or clarification is sought.

A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken, or a lack of action, by the School.

The School welcomes concerns being raised at an early stage. Raising a concern or complaint will not adversely affect a pupil or their family.

This procedure has three stages:

Stage 1 – Informal resolution

Stage 2 – Formal written complaint

Stage 3 – Panel hearing

The School will deal with complaints impartially, fairly and without unnecessary delay.

This procedure is drawn up in accordance with Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to complaints from parents of current pupils concerning the provision of education or other services by the School.

This may include concerns relating to:

- teaching and learning;
- pastoral care;
- behaviour and bullying;
- boarding;
- health and welfare;
- communication;
- school procedures; and
- other aspects of a pupil's experience at S. Anselm's.

Some matters are subject to separate statutory or School procedures. These include safeguarding and child protection, staff grievances and disciplinary matters, data protection, admissions decisions and matters for which another statutory appeal or regulatory process applies.

Where a complaint raises a safeguarding concern, the School will follow its **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** and, where appropriate, make a referral to the relevant statutory agency. The complaints procedure will not prevent the School from taking immediate safeguarding action.

Staff concerns are addressed through the School's Whistleblowing, Grievance and other relevant employment procedures.

Pupils have their own accessible arrangements for raising concerns and complaints, including access to trusted adults and, for boarders, an Independent Listener.

3. Stage 1 – Informal resolution

Most concerns can and should be resolved informally wherever possible.

Parents should normally raise a concern initially with the member of staff best placed to resolve it. This will usually be the pupil's Form Tutor, class teacher, subject teacher or, for boarding matters, the Head of Boarding or relevant boarding member of staff.

The member of staff will listen carefully to the concern and seek to understand and resolve it.

Where necessary, they may seek support from a senior member of staff.

A complaint made initially to the Head or another senior leader may be referred to the appropriate member of staff unless the nature or seriousness of the complaint makes it appropriate for the senior leader to deal with it directly.

Serious concerns and complaints raised at Stage 1 should be recorded appropriately.

The School will aim to resolve an informal complaint within **five school days**. Where this is not possible, the parent will be informed of the reason and the likely timescale.

If the parent remains dissatisfied following Stage 1, they may proceed to Stage 2.

4. Stage 2 – Formal written complaint

A parent wishing to make a formal complaint should write to the **Head**, clearly identifying that they are making a formal complaint under Stage 2 of this procedure.

The written complaint should explain:

- the nature of the complaint;
- relevant events and circumstances;
- any action already taken to resolve the matter; and
- the outcome the parent is seeking.

The Head will acknowledge the complaint as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within **two school days**.

The Head will determine the appropriate investigation. This may include meeting the parent, speaking to staff or pupils where appropriate, considering relevant documents and records, and seeking other information necessary to establish the facts.

The Head will keep appropriate written records of meetings and interviews undertaken as part of the investigation.

Parents will normally be invited to meet the Head within **five school days** of receipt of the formal complaint where a meeting would assist resolution.

Once the investigation is complete, the Head will provide the parent with a written response setting out the outcome and reasons.

The School will normally aim to conclude Stage 2 within **10 school days** of receipt of the formal complaint.

Where the complexity of the complaint means that this is not reasonably possible, the parent will be informed of the reason for the delay and provided with a revised timescale.

If the parent remains dissatisfied, they may request consideration of the complaint at Stage 3.

5. Complaints about the Head

Where the complaint concerns the Head, the complaint should be addressed in writing to the **Chair of Trustees**.

The Chair will acknowledge the complaint and arrange for it to be investigated by an appropriate person who has not previously been directly involved in the matter.

The same principles and timescales applying to Stage 2 will apply as far as reasonably practicable.

If the parent remains dissatisfied following the outcome of that investigation, they may request a Stage 3 panel hearing.

6. Complaints about the Chair of Trustees or Proprietor

Where a complaint concerns the Chair of Trustees, or where there would otherwise be a conflict of interest, it will be referred to an appropriately independent Trustee or other suitable person who has had no prior involvement in the matter.

Where a complaint concerns the proprietor or raises circumstances in which the normal arrangements cannot provide sufficient independence, the School will make alternative arrangements to ensure that the complaint is considered fairly and without conflict of interest.

No person who has been directly involved in the matters complained about will determine the complaint or sit on a subsequent Stage 3 panel.

7. Stage 3 – Panel hearing

If a parent remains dissatisfied following Stage 2, they may request that the complaint be considered by a Complaints Panel.

The request should normally be made in writing within **10 school days** of the Stage 2 decision.

The panel will be appointed by, or on behalf of, the proprietor.

It will consist of **at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.**

At least **one member of the panel will be independent of the management and running of the School.**

The School will acknowledge the request and arrange the hearing as soon as reasonably practicable. The hearing will normally take place within **15 school days** of receiving the request for Stage 3.

Parents will be given reasonable notice of the date, time and location of the hearing.

The parent may attend the panel hearing and may be **accompanied by another person** if they wish.

Legal representation will not normally be necessary or appropriate, but requests will be considered reasonably according to the circumstances of the case.

The panel may request relevant documents or further information in advance. Any documents to be considered by the panel should ordinarily be shared with the relevant parties sufficiently in advance of the hearing to allow them to be considered fairly.

The hearing will be conducted respectfully and with the aim of establishing the relevant facts and reaching a fair conclusion.

The panel may:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- reject the complaint in whole or in part;
- make findings;
- make recommendations; and
- recommend appropriate action by the School.

The panel will normally provide its written findings and any recommendations within **seven school days** of the hearing.

A copy will be provided to:

- the complainant;
- the proprietor;
- the Head; and
- where relevant, the person complained about.

A copy of the panel's findings and recommendations will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the proprietor and Head.

The panel's decision concludes the School's internal complaints procedure.

8. Early Years Foundation Stage

The complaints procedure applies to the School's EYFS provision, including Little Puddings, Pre-School and Reception, alongside the requirements of the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

Parents with a concern about Early Years provision should normally raise it initially with the child's key person, class teacher or relevant Early Years leader.

Written complaints relating to the School's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome **within 28 days of the complaint being received**.

The School will maintain the required record of such complaints and make it available to Ofsted and ISI where required.

Parents will be provided with information about how to contact Ofsted where they believe the School is not meeting the requirements of the EYFS.

The School will comply with the EYFS statutory framework in force at the time. The current framework took effect on **1 September 2026**.

9. Safeguarding concerns

A complaint which indicates that a child may have suffered, or may be at risk of suffering, harm will be treated first and foremost as a safeguarding matter.

Staff must immediately follow the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and refer the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.

The School will not delay safeguarding action in order to complete a stage of this complaints procedure.

Where appropriate, a complaint may subsequently continue under this procedure once any necessary safeguarding action has been taken.

10. Records

The School will keep a written record of all complaints made under **Stage 2** of this procedure and will record:

- the nature of the complaint;
- whether the complaint was resolved following the formal procedure or proceeded to a Stage 3 panel hearing; and
- any action taken by the School as a result of the complaint, regardless of whether the complaint was upheld.

Records will be retained in accordance with the School's records-retention arrangements.

The School will make complaint records available to the Secretary of State or an inspection body where required.

These arrangements reflect the specific record-keeping requirements in Part 7 of the Independent School Standards.

11. Confidentiality

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.**

Information will otherwise only be shared where necessary for the fair investigation and resolution of the complaint, safeguarding, compliance with the law or another legitimate purpose.

The existence of a complaint will not in itself adversely affect a pupil or their family.

12. Persistent or unreasonable communication

The School remains committed to considering genuine concerns fairly, including where a parent has previously made a complaint.

Where a complaint has completed all stages of this procedure, the School will not normally reconsider substantially the same matter unless significant new evidence or circumstances are presented.

The School may take proportionate steps to manage communication which becomes unreasonably frequent, abusive, threatening or otherwise interferes significantly with the effective operation of the School.

Any such arrangements will be reasonable, proportionate and communicated clearly to the individual concerned.

They will not prevent a parent from raising a genuinely new complaint or safeguarding concern.

13. Complaints received

In accordance with the Independent School Standards, the School makes available to parents the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Academic year 2025–26

Formal complaints considered at Stage 2: 0

Complaints proceeding to a Stage 3 panel hearing: 0

This information will be updated annually.

14. External bodies

Completion of the School's complaints procedure does not prevent a parent from contacting an appropriate external body where that body has jurisdiction.

For concerns about whether an independent school is meeting the Independent School Standards, information about raising concerns with the Department for Education is available through the government's guidance for independent schools. The DfE does not ordinarily investigate individual disputes between parents and independent schools, but it may consider information indicating that a school is failing to meet the Independent School Standards.

Parents of children within the EYFS may contact **Ofsted** where they believe the provider is not meeting the requirements of the EYFS.

The **Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)** may also receive information relevant to its regulatory inspection functions. ISI is not an appeals body for individual parental complaints.

Where a concern relates to the immediate safety of a child, the appropriate safeguarding agency or emergency service should be contacted without waiting for completion of this procedure.

15. Related policies

This policy should be read alongside the School's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Admissions Policy
- SEND Policy
- EYFS Policy
- Boarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection and Privacy Policies
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Staff Grievance Policy.

Policy responsibility and review

The **Chair of the Board of Trustees** is responsible for ensuring that this procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented.

The Head is responsible for its day-to-day operation.

The Board of Trustees will review the operation of the complaints procedure and relevant themes arising from complaints, while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where legislation, regulation or statutory guidance changes.