



# **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

## **Whole school policy including EYFS**

### **Introduction**

Port Regis 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.

Port Regis makes its Complaints Procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the School's website and a copy will be made available on request from the Bursary. Although this Procedure is made available to parents of prospective pupils, it is not available for use by them; it may only be used by parents of current pupils.

Complaints by parents of former pupils will be dealt with under this Complaints Procedure only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil to which the complaint relates was still registered as a pupil at the School.

"Parent(s)" means the holder(s) of parental responsibility for a current pupil about whom the complaint relates.

### **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 concerns and 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 Three-Stage Complaints Procedure**

#### **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

1. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
2. If parents have a complaint they should normally contact:

### ***Nursery and Pre-Prep***

The Head of Pre-Prep, for complaints relating to the Nursery and Pre-Prep.

### ***Prep School***

Their son/daughter's Houseparents for complaints relating to boarding matters.

Their son/daughter's Form Tutor for all other complaints relating to the Prep School.

3. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. In some cases, it may be necessary to consult other relevant members of staff before responding to the complaint.
4. Complaints made directly to another member of staff will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff (as listed above) as appropriate, unless the nature of the complaint means that the member of staff deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
5. In all cases, the staff member dealing with the complaint will seek to resolve the complaint to the parents' satisfaction as soon as reasonably practicable and within 12 working days of the complaint being raised. Should the matter not be resolved to the parents' satisfaction, parents should proceed with their complaint, within 18 working days of their complaint being made, in accordance with Stage 2 of this Complaints Procedure.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

6. If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
7. In most cases, the Headmaster will speak to (and meet where possible) the parents concerned, within 6 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
8. It may be necessary for the Headmaster, or their nominee, to carry out further investigations.
9. The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
10. Once the Headmaster 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 in writing. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision. In most cases, the Headmaster will make his decision and provide the parents with reasons within 18 working days of the complaint being put in writing.
11. If the complaint is against the Headmaster, the complaint should be made to the Chair of Governors. If the complaint also involves the Chair of Governors, the complaint should be made to the Vice Chair of Governors and subsequent references to the "Chair" in this procedure should be construed accordingly. Contact details for the Chair of Governors and Vice Chair of Governors are available on the School's website and from the Bursary on request.
12. The Chair of Governors or their nominee will call for a full report from the Headmaster and for all the relevant documents. The Chair of Governors or their nominee 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 or their nominee 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 Chair of Governors or their nominee will give reasons for his/her decision.

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

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

14. If the complaint cannot be resolved at stage 2, the parents should seek to invoke Stage 3. They should do so in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body within 12 working days of receiving the decision at Stage 2, setting out their grounds of appeal. Any supporting evidence which the parents wish to rely on should also be provided with their grounds of appeal.
15. The Clerk to the Governing Body, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel, will then refer the appeal to a Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, two Governors and one person who is independent of the management and running of the School. The Chair of Governors will appoint one of the Panel members to act as the Chair of the Panel. The Clerk to the Governing Body, on behalf of the Panel, will acknowledge the complaint within 6 working days and schedule a hearing to take place within 18 working days.
16. 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 or further investigation be carried out. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 6 working days prior to the hearing.
17. The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. The Headmaster shall also be entitled to be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation would not be appropriate for an internal procedure of this nature. The Panel will decide whether it would be helpful for witnesses to attend.
18. The manner in which the hearing is conducted shall be at the discretion of the Panel.
19. 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.
20. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings as to whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and accordingly decide whether to:
  - 20.1 dismiss the complaint(s) in whole or in part;
  - 20.2 uphold the complaint(s) in whole or in part; and
  - 20.3 make recommendations.
21. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, within 12 working days of the hearing (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following 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 Headmaster. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the Chair of Governors and the Headmaster.

### **Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints**

All complaints will be handled seriously, sensitively and within clear and reasonable timescales.

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible. The School's target is to complete the first stage of the procedure within 12 working days, the second stage of the procedure within 18 working days and the third stage within 30 working days.

Please note that for the purposes of this procedure, "working days" refers to School term days. The School's term dates are published on the School's website and in the School Calendar. This means that during School holidays it may take longer to resolve a complaint although the School will do what is reasonably practicable to avoid undue delay.

### **Recording Complaints and use of personal data**

The School will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved at 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, which is available on the School's website and from the Bursary. 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:

- Date when the issue was raised.
- Name of parent.
- Name of pupil.
- Description of the issue.
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate).
- Witness statements (if appropriate).
- Name and contact details of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage.
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails).
- Notes and minutes of the hearing.
- The Panel's written decision.

This may include 'special category personal data', 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.

## **Nursery and Pre-Prep (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.

Port Regis 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.

Ofsted can be contacted on 0300 123 1231 or by email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto:concerns@isi.net)

ISI, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA

## **Record of complaints**

Number of complaints in the whole school in the last year (September 2021-22):

Stage 1 – 22

Stage 2 – 2

Stage 3 - 0

Number of complaints in the Early Years Foundation stage in the last year (September 2021-22):

Stage 1 – 3

Stage 2 – 0

Stage 3 - 0

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