St Mary's Worcester

Complaints Policy and Procedures

Introduction

St Mary's Worcester 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 in accordance with this Procedure. St Mary's Worcester will make the complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the school's website and in the school office during the school day, and St Mary's Worcester will ensure that **parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and the form in which it is published or available.**

In accordance with paragraph 6(3)(f) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 (as subsequently amended), St Mary's Worcester will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or the ISI for the purposes of section 162A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (as subsequently amended), details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and **informally**.

- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their daughter's Form Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him or her to consult the Deputy Head.

- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, the Deputy Head or the Headmistress will usually be referred to the relevant Form Teacher unless the Head of Department, the Deputy Head or the Headmistress deem it appropriate for him or her to deal with the matter personally.

- The Form Teacher 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 **28 days** or in the event that the Form Teacher 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.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should **put their complaint in writing** to the Headmistress. The Headmistress will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

- In most cases, the Headmistress will meet the parents concerned, normally **within 14 days** of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.

- The Headmistress will **keep written record**s of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

- Once the Headmistress 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 Headmistress will also give reasons for her decision.

- **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 Miss Lynsey Breeze, Bursar and Company Secretary who has been appointed by the Trustees to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- **The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration**. The Panel will consist of **three Trustees who are not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and are independent of the running of the school.** Lynsey Breeze, on behalf of the Panel, will then 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 14 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 they consider relevant, **the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations.**

- **The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 14 days of the hearing**. The decision of the Panel will be final. **A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations will (if any) be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about, as well as the Board of Trustees and the Headmistress.**

- **A written record will be kept of all complaints and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a Panel hearing.**

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by paragraph 6(3)(f) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 (as subsequently amended), by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required by the ISI under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended), or under other legal authority.

Notes

WRITTEN COMPLAINTS RELATING TO THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE EYFS: The Stables at St Mary's Worcester will provide 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.

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SUMMARY / TIMESCALE

ALL complaints acknowledged with **5 working days.**

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Resolving Complaints

1. Informal Resolution

Within 28 days of acknowledgement of the complaint. However, If the complaint can not be resolved on an informal basis

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2. Formal Resolution

The Head will decide the appropriate course of action to take and will meet or speak with the parents within **14 working days** of receiving the complaint. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision they should proceed to Referral to the Company Secretary, Miss Lynsey Breeze.

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3. Panel Hearing

The meeting will take place within **14 working days** of receipt of the Referral.

Reviewed by	Catherine Jawaheer September 2011
Adopted by Trustees Meeting	29 September 2011