

Forres Sandle Manor (Non-Academic) Policy

Policy Title	Parents' Complaints Procedure
Policy Lead (Appointment (& Initials))	Head (MH)
Date of Last Review	September 2024
Date of Next Review	September 2025

PARENTS' COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

SCOPE

This Annex outlines the procedure to be followed in the event that a parent or guardian of a pupil wishes to make a complaint about procedures or anything that they may be unhappy about or about a member of staff, or because they are dissatisfied with decisions taken by FSM following a serious breach of the behavioural guidelines, as described in the FSM Pupil Behaviour Management Policy.

GRADUATED DISCIPLINARY RESPONSE

Parents will always be informed when a child's behaviour provokes a response at Level 4 or above in the Pupil Behaviour Management Policy (also available on FSM website).

SUSPENSION

The Head may suspend a child without consulting the Chairman of the Board of Directors but he will always consult the Chair before a decision to expel a child is taken. In the event of a child being suspended or expelled, FSM has the right to insist on suspension whilst any complaint is investigated.

POINT OF CONTACT

Parents are invited to discuss their concerns about any aspect of FSM's performance or attitude at any time with the Head or other senior member of staff. Their first point of contact may be the member of staff involved, but if the parent has deeper concerns he/she will usually contact a Deputy Head or the Head. At this stage, it is to be hoped that the matter may be resolved informally. However, if this is not the case, the parent may wish to make a formal complaint.

The process is as follows:

STAGE 1 INFORMAL COMPLAINT

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's Form Teacher or Boarding Staff. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the member of staff cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult a senior member of staff.
- Complaints made directly to a Head of Faculty/Senior Staff/the Head will usually be referred to the relevant Form Teacher or Boarding Staff unless the Head of Faculty/Senior Staff/the Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.

- The member of staff 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 member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised how to lodge their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this Procedure.

STAGE 2 FORMAL COMPLAINT

- The parent will describe their grievance in writing (this can be in the form of an e-mail communication) to the Head within five working days of the initial response. Although flexibility will be employed during School Holidays.
- The grievance letter should detail why the parent feels that the school's response to the issue taken is inappropriate, unfair or unacceptable. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- The Head (or in his absence, a Deputy Head) conducts an investigation.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- A written response to the grievance is sent within 2 working days of receipt of the grievance letter. The Head will also give reasons for their decision.
- For all EYFS written complaints, the school will notify complainants of the outcome of any investigation undertaken within 28 days of having received the complaint.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure. The written record will record whether the complaint has been resolved or proceeded to a panel hearing (see below).

STAGE 3 PANEL HEARING

- In the event that the parent does not feel that the grievance has been resolved, they have a right of appeal to the Chair of Governors.
- A letter outlining the grievance should be sent to the Chair of the Governors, c/o FSM and marked 'Urgent'.
- The parent should inform the Head that this step has been taken.
- The Chair of Governors will endeavour to make an initial response within 2 working days of receiving the letter.
- In the event that the parent remains dissatisfied, the Chair will convene a panel hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 working days, of not less than 3 persons who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of FSM. The parent(s) may attend the panel hearing, together with a friend but legal representation is not considered appropriate. However, should the complainant require legal representation then FSM should be given at least 7 working days' notice.
- The findings of this panel, together with a record of decisions and recommendations reached, will be made available. They will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and where relevant, the person complained about, and will be available for inspection at FSM by the Chair of Governors and the Head, within 7 working days.
- Those decisions are final and there shall be no further Right of Appeal.

Parents of boarders who feel that a complaint about the welfare of boarders has not been satisfactorily resolved by FSM, may contact **Hampshire Children's Services**

on 01329 600 4555 or **ISI** (Independent Schools Inspectorate) Telephone 0207 600 0100.

Email: concerns@isi.net

All parents, should they wish, can contact **Ofsted** (for EYFS) or **ISI** (Independent Schools Inspectorate) to make a complaint.

Contact details for ISI are:

Independent Schools Inspectorate
Ground Floor
CAP House
9-12 Long Lane
London EC1A 9HA

Telephone 0207 600 0100

Email: concerns@isi.net

EYFS: Contact details for Ofsted EYFS are telephone 0300 1231231

WRITTEN RECORDS

A written record of all formal complaints will be kept whether or not they are resolved following the formal procedure or went to a panel hearing. The written record will detail the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they were upheld) and will be kept for at least three years. In addition a written record is kept of serious complaints and their outcomes for regular review by the Head or a member of Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

The written records will also be scrutinised by a member of the Governing Body (usually the Chair of the Board of Directors) at least termly and a summary of this written log will be presented by them at each of the termly Directors meetings.

CONFIDENTIALITY

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 in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 33k of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014; where disclosure is required by the Secretary of State or in the course of the school's inspection under section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Appendix 1

School Year 2022-23

Numbers of formal complaints registered in the School Year 2022-23: 6

School Year 2023-24

Numbers of formal complaints registered in the School Year 2023-24: 7

