



# Sacred Heart School

Service Before Self

**Mission Statement:**

The Sacred Heart is a Community committed to the education of its pupils in a Catholic Christian ethos, where each person is invited to serve God and others in faith, hope and love.

**Aims:**

To foster spiritual growth in Christian faith and values  
To value, appreciate and enjoy learning  
To work for excellence  
To further curiosity and creativity  
To aspire to high ideals

*Pastoral*

## Complaints Policy (Parents)

The School values a good relationship with parents and we wish to know if parents have a concern about any part of their child's school life. We would prefer parents to contact us quickly rather than brood upon a matter which could perhaps be easily resolved. We will try to resolve any complaint quickly and, if possible, informally. Sacred Heart considers a formal complaint as one which is dealt with through the formal complaints procedure. In academic year 2014 - 2015 there were no formal complaints to the Sacred Heart School.

Throughout this document any reference to action taken by the Head teacher also refers to any action taken by another senior member of staff deputising for the Head.

A number of points in this document have been explicitly clarified in relation to the Independent School Standards Regulations

**The following procedure will be followed if a parent has a complaint:**

- Expression of a concern by parents
- Stage 1 – Informal resolution
- Stage 2 – Formal resolution
- Stage 3 – Panel meeting

**Stage 1: Informal Resolution:**

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is defined by the regulations as a complaint. Please note that the procedures in this document are not intended to limit the availability of the statutory complaints process. Our experience is that in almost every circumstance, parents far prefer an informal and less bureaucratic approach and it is in this spirit that our procedures operate.

**Referral to Form / Class Teacher or Subject teacher / Boarding House Mistress**

**Pastoral:** The best person to contact is the Form Tutor / Class Teacher / Boarding House Mistress by making an appointment

**Curriculum / subject complaint:** For a problem over a subject area then contacting the Subject teacher / Lower School Class Teacher is the best route

Teachers will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. We hope to respond to complaints within 5 working days but definitely within 28 days.

If the matter is unresolved then it should be referred to the Headteacher

**Stage 1a: Referral to the School's Independent Listener:**

The independent listener, Helen Howard, is empowered to make direct contact with any member of the School staff or Trustees to help resolve a problem on behalf of a parent or pupil, this includes the parents of boarding pupils. She will act solely for the complainant as someone familiar with the school staff and structure but independent of them. Parents and pupils may contact Helen Howard on 01362 696371. Please tell Helen that you wish to speak to her with regard to her role as independent

listener for the Sacred Heart School when contacting her. This is an additional optional stage which exists solely in the spirit of helpful conflict resolution. It is entirely the complainant's decision whether to pursue this route and is not a requirement of the complaints procedure.

### **Stage 2: Referral to the Headteacher**

If parents remain unhappy then please contact the Headteacher in writing who will decide the appropriate course of action to take.

If possible the problem will be resolved informally at this point. In most cases the Head will speak or write to the complainant, normally within 5 working days of receiving the complaint. Under the ISSR the Head will check with the complainant whether their communication is because they wish the Head to be aware, or to seek her view, or whether they wish to initiate the formal stage of the complaints' process.

Under formal processes the Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews relating to the complaint. The Headteacher will try to establish all the facts relating to the matter and once the Head is satisfied that, as far as possible all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made following consultation with the Chair of the Advisory Governing Body and/or Trustees and the complainant will be informed in writing. The Head will give reasons for the decision. This will be within 20 working days of the initial response.

Stage 2a:

(As at stage 1, and with the same reassurances about the spirit of the process, parents of day and/or boarding pupils are invited to contact Helen Howard if dissatisfied with the response to their complaint.)

### **Stage 3: Referral to Panel**

If the parent or complainant is unhappy with the decision reached then the Chair of the Advisory Governing Body, or his nominated designated Trustee, namely Sister Thomas More, should be contacted who will seek to find an informal solution in the first instance. In most cases the Chair of the Trustees will speak or write to the complainant, normally within 5 working days of receiving the complaint to discuss the matter. In any case a response will be made within 20 working days. If this is unsuccessful, the School Complaints Panel, consisting of at least three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, may be convened. One member of the panel will be independent of the management of the school and its Trustees/Advisory Governing Body. The members of the Panel will be appointed by the Chair of the Advisory Governing Body. One member of the Panel will be designated as the Convenor who will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practical but within 30 working days of the complainant contacting the Chair of the Advisory Governing Body. The convenor will act as the Chair of the Panel.

The Panel may feel that further details of the complaint need to be found. Such particulars should be supplied to all parties at least 4 working days prior to the hearing.

Parents may be accompanied by one other person but not usually a legal representative. If possible the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately.

The Panel may require further investigation. Records of meetings will be kept and state whether the matter was resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing.

The Panel will reach a decision within five working days of the hearing. They will write to the parents and the Headteacher with their findings and recommendations and, where relevant, to the person complained about. Their decision, the reasons for which will be explained, will be final.

A copy of the findings and recommendations will be kept on the school premises for inspection by the Chair of the Advisory Governing Body/Trustees and the Headteacher. Parents can be assured that concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential unless the Secretary of State of a body conducting an inspection under section 108, 109 of the 2008 Act requests them.

### **Complaints regarding the Headteacher**

Parents / guardians should write, meet with or speak directly to the Headteacher directly. Should there be dissatisfaction with the Headteacher's decision then they should proceed to Stage 3 of the complaints procedure, the referral to the Chair of Governors.

## **Financial Matters**

Should parents / guardians have any concern regarding payment of fees then the Bursar should be contacted in the first instance. Should the matter not be resolved then it will be passed to the Headteacher. In the event that it is still unresolved then concerns should be expressed in writing to the Advisory Board of Governors and/or Trustees. Complaints will be dealt with at the next scheduled Finance Committee Meeting following the receipt of the written complaint. The committee will respond within 5 working days of their decision.

Complaints made during a school holiday will be dealt with as soon as possible and will not follow the normal timescale.

### **\*Complaints about the fulfilment of EYFS requirements by Little Pedlars:**

Any written complaint about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. A record of such complaints will be reported to Ofsted and made available to ISI on request.

NB Parents of Little Pedlars (EYFS) may make complaints directly to OFSTED general helpline: 0300 1231231 or text phone: 0161 618 8524 Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M12WD or contact ISI (see details below)

### **Beyond the school:**

We hope that it will never be necessary, but parents of day or boarding pupils may contact the regulatory authorities regarding welfare complaints. For independent schools the regulatory body is the Independent Schools Inspectorate, who cover all aspects of independent schools. The web address is [www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net).

It is also possible to contact local authority welfare services by telephone on: 01603 223473

### **Monitoring and Review:**

(Prepared August 2008 DPW; Last reviewed Spring 2016)