St. John's Primary School



Comments, Complaints and Compliments Policy

"You should be protected from things that could harm you."

Article 36 United Nations Rights of the Child

Thinking
learning
Caring

St John's School is a caring learning community that is built upon positive relationships based on mutual respect and trust. We aim to work in partnership with our families and all those who are part of our school community to create a successful future for every child.

We believe that our school provides a good education for all our pupils, and that the Headteacher and all the staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all pupils, parents and members of our community. In this spirit, we actively and regularly encourage and arrange opportunities for pupils, parents and members of our community to provide feedback about the school and the education we provide for the children in our care.

This policy outlines some of the procedures in place to enable people to give us feedback in the form of comments, compliments or complaints about our organisation.

Aims and Objectives

We are always interested in hearing the views of pupils, parents, carers or other members of our community, as these comments help us to:

- Continue to improve successful aspects of our school.
- Find out more about what you need or would like the school to provide.
- Identify possible problems or areas of concern early, so that these can be addressed quickly and effectively, without the need for a complaint to be made.
- Investigate complaints or areas that you have found unsatisfactory and take appropriate action.

General Comments and Compliments

Suggestions, ideas, reflections and other comments are most welcome. If you are pleased with something we do or have done, we would also appreciate hearing from you.

You can make comments or compliments by speaking in person, emailing or writing to staff with whom you have direct contact, the Headteacher and/or the Director of Education.

Our pupils are always reminded to share any concerns or worries directly with their class teacher, a member of the leadership team or any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable to speak.

In addition, we arrange regular more formal opportunities to gain feedback, which include:

Pupils

- Class discussions/Circle Times
- School and Class Council Meetings
- Pupil Questionnaires

Parents and Carers

- Parent – teacher meetings
- Feedback slips after events like Open Classroom sessions, Parent Learning sessions, or on report reply slips
- Parent Questionnaires/Surveys

Complaints

Our aim is to get things right first time and to address any issues as soon as they arise. However, if you feel that something is unsatisfactory, we want you to let us know promptly, so that we can do something about it.

We aim to be fair, open and honest when dealing with complaints, giving due consideration to all the facts and dealing with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding, and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We will always provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved. We aim to report our findings and record the action/s we have taken or intend to take. If appropriate we will amend policies and procedures to prevent the issue from arising again in the future.

Our school procedure has been written following guidance from the Children, Young People, Education and Skills (CYPES) Department. It ensures that we as a Government of Jersey school follow and are in line with the Government of Jersey Customer Feedback Policy. The various steps of our school's complaints procedure outline the actions we will undertake to respond to concerns and complaints in line with Stage 1 of this government policy.

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to St John's School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

Concerns	Complaints
A concern may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'. These are normally dealt with by class teachers or support staff. We don't keep formal records of concerns.	A complaint may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or a lack of action'. These are normally dealt with by school leaders. We keep records of all complaints.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of our school complaints procedure. St John's School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, Mr Hazley will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, Mr Hazley will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, St John's School will initially attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the steps outlined within this complaints procedure.

Overview

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of the complainant, as long as they have the complainant's consent to do so.

Concerns should normally be raised with the class teacher or member of staff concerned. However sometimes you may feel it more appropriate to contact, the SENCo, The Key Stage Lead, the Wellbeing Lead, The School Business Manager or the Headteacher. Please contact the school to arrange a suitable time to meet them or give them a call. Our staff are often busy, but we will always seek to respond to any concerns received within 2-3 working days wherever we can.

If the issue remains unresolved after you have tried this approach, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office.

Complaints against school staff (except the headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to Mr Hazley via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential. You may wish also to refer to the CYPES Allegations Policy when doing this.

As a government provided primary school, we do not have a board of governors. Therefore, if your complaint is about, or involves, the headteacher, please contact the CYPES Department via education@gov.je or 01534 445504 who will forward your complaint to the senior adviser linked to the school.

In accordance with the discrimination (Jersey) Law 2013, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the headteacher will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Time scales

It is important that a complaint is made as soon as possible but generally a complaint should be made:

- within 12 months of the date when the service was provided or the event being complained about occurred

OR

- within 12 months of becoming aware of the event / subject matter

However, we will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if your complaint involves a disclosure of a safeguarding nature.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision or services by St John's School, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions to schools	If you've made a request for a school admission and had that request denied, you have the right to appeal. You can request an appeal by emailing education@gov.je or by writing to CYPES. For further details please see the admissions information on the Government website
Assessments of Special Educational Needs	Concerns or complaints about provision for your child should be addressed using our school complaints policy. However, if your child has a Record of Need and you wish to appeal the content of the assessment or the educational arrangements offered, you have 15 days in which to make a written appeal to the education minister. Please see the Government website for details.
School re-organisation proposals	Please contact the CYPES by emailing education@gov.je or in writing.
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact: • Dani Perrier, Designated Safeguarding Officer for CYPES (who has responsibility for safeguarding across Jersey schools) on 07797 924274 • or the Children and Families Hub on 01534 519000
Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusions can be found on the School exclusion pages of the Government website.

	** If your complaint is about the application of the school's behaviour policy you can do this through our school complaints procedure*
Whistleblowing	Please see the government of Jersey's Whistleblowing Policy
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's and government's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the Government of Jersey's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them directly.
Jersey Curriculum - content	Please contact the CYPES Department on education@gov.je

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, Jersey's safeguarding teams or tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against St John's School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Resolving complaints

As indicated in our flow chart above, at each step in the procedure, St John's School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Persistent complaints

Unreasonably persistent complaints

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore we will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:

- has made the same complaint before, and it's already been resolved by following the school's complaints procedure
- makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory or repetitive
- insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complaints procedure, beyond all reason
- pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner, e.g. refuses to articulate the complaint, refuses to co-operate with this complaints procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the timeframes it sets out
- makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on school time
- seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value.

Steps we will take

We will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns and give them a clear statement of our position and their options. We will maintain our role as an objective arbiter throughout the process, including when we meet with individuals. We will follow our complaints procedure as normal (as outlined above) wherever possible.

If the complainant continues to contact the school in a disruptive way, we may put communications strategies in place. We may:

- Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term
- Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf
- Put any other strategy in place as necessary.

Stopping responding

In rare occasions we may stop responding to the complainant when all of the following factors are met:

- we, in agreement with senior officers from CYPES, believe that the school and CYPES have taken all reasonable steps (as in this procedure and the Government of Jersey Customer Feedback Policy) to help address their concerns
- we have provided a clear statement of our position and their options
- the complainant contacts us repeatedly, and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience

Where we stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so. We will also explain that we will still consider any new complaints they make.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from our school site.

Duplicate complaints

If we have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that we hadn't previously considered, or any new information we need to take into account.

If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will:

- tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and that the local process is complete
- direct them to the DfE if they are dissatisfied with our original handling of the complaint

If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again.

Complaint campaigns

Should the school receive a large volume of complaints about the same topic or subject, especially if these come from complainants unconnected with the school, we will follow CYPES guidance. This means that the school may respond to these complaints by:

- Publishing a single response on the school website
- Sending a template response to all of the complainants

If complainants are not satisfied with the school's response, or wish to pursue the complaint further, the normal procedures will apply.

How to make a complaint

Stage 1

Formal complaints should be made via the online form found on the Government of Jersey website - Submit feedback to the Government of Jersey or by contacting the school office.

The system will record the date the complaint was received. We aim to respond to step 1 complaints at the point of service or as soon possible after receipt. This should be up to 5 school days from the date of receipt.

Within this response, the school will decide the appropriate leader to investigate your complaint and they will seek to contact you. They will want to:

- clarify the nature of your complaint,
- ask what remains unresolved
- ask what outcome you would like to see.

The school leader you are dealing with can then consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

During their investigation, the investigator will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

Some investigations may require more time than others depending on the nature of the complaint. If the investigator is unable to meet the 5 working days deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date. At the conclusion of their investigation, they will provide a formal written response.

The response will detail the actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions St. John's School will take to resolve the complaint.

The letter or email will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of School Step 1.

If the complaint is about the headteacher, the CYPES Department will appoint a senior officer to complete all the actions at School Step 1.

Stage 2

If a complaint is escalated to stage 2 then it will either be handled by a Senior Leader (stage 2a) or by the Head Teacher (stage 2b). If a complaint is handled by the Head Teacher. This may be done in person, in writing or by telephone to the school office.

Complaints handled by a Senior Leader

A senior leader will contact you to explore your reasons for wanting to take the matter further. They will then reconsider all or some of your complaint and all the evidence gathered by the investigator at School Step 1. They will then consider how effectively school policies and procedures have been followed and, if necessary, gather further evidence to review the judgement(s) made.

The senior leader can then:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the senior leader will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.

The senior leader will then contact you to detail their actions taken to re-consider the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. The letter or email they send you will advise you how to escalate your complaint should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of School Step 2.

Complaints handled by a Head Teacher

In certain cases it may be appropriate for the Head Teacher to handle a Stage 2 complaint. The Head Teacher will also review a complaint that has been handled by a Senior Leader at Stage 2.

The headteacher will arrange a time to contact you to discuss your reasons for wanting them to do this. This may be done in person, in writing or by telephone to the school office.

If appropriate, the headteacher may repeat some or all of the actions of School Step 2.

Having reconsidered the evidence gathered and processes followed, the headteacher will then contact you to share their findings. The letter or email they send you will:

- detail their actions and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it.
- explain whether your complaint has been upheld in part or in full
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future

- advise you of your right to escalate your complaint to the CYPES Department to consider under Stage 2 of the Government of Jersey Customer Feedback Policy should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of St. John's School internal complaints procedure.

Escalation to CYPES

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure, or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the CYPES Department. This should normally only be done after they have been through the school procedures outlined above.

If escalated in this way, the complaint will be considered in line with Stage 3 of the Government of Jersey Customer Feedback Policy. This means that it will be considered by a senior manager within the CYPES Department, or occasionally the headteacher of the school, whoever is deemed to be most appropriate for the case in question.

This stage of the complaints process is designed for issues that require further investigation or are complex, serious, high-risk, requires consent, or will take time to investigate.

The CYPES Department will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by schools who have followed their complaints procedures. They will consider whether the school has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

This level of complaint handling will allow for:

- assessment and investigation of the complaint and decision/s already made.
- facilitated resolution process by request of the complainant (where a person not connected with the complaint reviews the matter and attempts to find an outcome acceptable to the relevant parties.

Further details can be found online: Government of Jersey Customer Feedback Policy.

The complainant can refer their complaint to CYPES by:

- T 01534 445504
- F 01534 445524
- E education@gov.je

Monday to Friday, 8.45am to 4.30pm

Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department

PO Box 142

Highlands Campus

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JE4 8QJ

Learning lessons

The headteacher will review any underlying issues raised by complaints to determine whether there are any improvements that the school can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

Monitoring arrangements

The senior leadership team will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in making sure that complaints are handled properly. We will track the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues. The complaints records are logged on CFMS and managed by Mr Hazley- Headteacher.

This policy will be reviewed by every 3 years.

Change History

Version	Date Issued	Issued by	Reason for Change	Presented To	Approved by:	Date
0.2	December 2023	JHa	Updated from previous 2019 version	SLT		
0.3	September 2024	JHa	Inline with introduction of CFMS	SLT		
0.4	December 2025	JHa	Further CFMS Update			