



St. Anselm's College
Edmund Rice Academy Trust

Complaints Policy

Version 1.3

Mission Statement:

Our Catholic Community offers a learning environment for us to develop our God given talents and to recognize Christ amongst us. We respect the dignity of God's creation and, inspired by Gospel values, seek to serve one another.

Document Owner:	Headteacher
Committee:	FGB
Frequency of Review:	Annually
Date approved by Governors:	Autumn Term 2024

Policy statement on equality and diversity

The College will promote equality of opportunity for students and staff from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds and ensure freedom from discrimination on the basis of disability, gender, race, age, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

Equality and diversity are integral to the College's priorities and objectives. We will support inter-faith and inter-cultural understanding and engage all students in playing a full and active role in wider engagement with society.

Introduction: This policy sets out our procedures for dealing with complaints from parents of pupils at the College.

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints. The College is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing to resort to formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow the College's formal complaints procedure. For the College to be able to investigate a complaint, it needs to be made within one year of the incident occurring. If a complaint is older than a year it will not be investigated.

The prime aim of St Anselm's College's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by the College.

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

St Anselm's College Complaints Policy has four main stages.

In summary they are as follows:

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| Stage 1 | A concern is raised informally with a staff member. |
| Stage 2 | Formal complaint is heard by an appropriate member of staff, usually a member of the Senior Leadership Team. |
| Stage 3 | Complaint is heard by Headteacher. |
| Stage 4 | Complaint is heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel. |

Stage 1 – Raising a concern

Concerns can be raised with the College at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. The College requests that parents make their first contact with the relevant teacher or Head of Year. On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within a day or two. The majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at Stage 1, please write to or call the College within 10 term days. The College will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 2 – Complaint heard by the appropriate Senior Leader or member of staff.

Formal complaints shall be put in writing and addressed to **The Headteacher's Secretary** who will direct it to the appropriate Senior Leader. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The College will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 school working days of receiving it. In many cases this response will also report on the action the College has taken to resolve the issue. Alternatively, a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. This meeting will normally take place within 10 term days. The aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at Stage 2 please write to or

call the College within 10 term days of receiving our response. You will need to inform us why you are still not satisfied.

Stage 3 – Complaint heard by Headteacher

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2, the Headteacher will arrange further investigation. Following the investigation, the Headteacher may invite you to a meeting to discuss the matter and the investigations or provide a written response within 10 term days. If you are dissatisfied with the result at Stage 3, you should contact us within 10 term days of receiving the response.

Stage 4 – Complaint heard by the Governing Body’s Complaints Appeal Panel

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 3, then you should write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint. The Chair or a nominated Governor will convene a Complaints Panel which will consist of 3 members, one of whom is independent of the leadership and management of the College and none of whom were directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The hearing will normally take place within 10 term days of the receipt of the written request for Stage 4 investigation.

The aim of the Appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the College and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Panel’s decision in writing within 3 term days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also identify what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further. A parent is entitled to attend and be accompanied at the panel hearing if they wish. The panel can make findings and recommendations and a copy of those findings and recommendations will be made available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Headteacher.

A written record will be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with Stages 2-4 and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing, and of any action taken by the College as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

N.B. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the Headteacher, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors will be informed of the complaint. The Chair will arrange for the matter to be investigated. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of a member of the Governing Body the member will be informed of the complaint.

The Governors’ Appeal Panel is the final College-based stage of the complaints process.

In exceptional cases it may be possible to refer the problem to an outside body such as the Ombudsman or Director of Education. Parents and carers can receive independent advice from both the National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations and the Advisory Centre for Education, 1c Aberdeen Studios, 22 Highbury Grove, London N5 2DQ. Both organisations may offer advice but will not support individuals in pursuit of a complaint.

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 College 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
- Put any other strategy in place as necessary

Stopping responding

We may stop responding to the complainant when all of these factors are met:

- We believe we have taken all reasonable steps 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 had not 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.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

