Complaints Policy

Introduction

Jordanhill School is committed to providing high-quality services. We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services. If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. This document describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about our standards and what you can expect from us.

1. What is a complaint?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about any aspect of the school's services.

1.1 What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like

- Failure to provide a service
- Our standard of service
- Delays in responding to your enquiries and requests
- School policy
- Treatment by or attitude of a member of staff
- Our failure to follow proper procedure.

Any complaint linked to a Child Protection or Safeguarding concern would be handled following Child Protection Procedures. The Child Protection coordinator would assess the complaint and determine the best course of action.

1.2 What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints procedure. These include

- A routine, first-time request for a service
- A request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act or Data Protection Act
- Requests for compensation from the school
- Things that are covered by a right of appeal such as exclusions or a challenge to an academic judgement

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give information and advice to help you.

1.3 Who can complain?

Anyone can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service. Please also read the section on 'Getting help to make your complaint'.

If the complaint relates to something that has happened to, or relates to, a pupil who is below statutory leaving age, the complaint should normally be raised by their parent, or carer, and the subsequent correspondence will be with the parent or carer.

In cases where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the complaint should be raised by the pupil themselves, although the parent can act as a supporter. Where the parent is acting as a supporter, explicit permission must be obtained from the child that they are content for their parents to act on their behalf. Where a pupil-who is 16 years or over- makes a complaint, all correspondence will normally be with the pupil, and parents or carers will only receive copies of correspondence with the specific agreement of the pupil.

In assessing a complaint and how it may affect a child, senior leaders will follow the principles detailed in the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman guide to Child Friendly Complaints Principles: Child Friendly Complaints-handling Principles

1.4 How do I complain?

You can complain in person by speaking directly to a member of staff, by telephone, in writing or e-mail via our complaints form.

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the relevant person. They can then try to resolve any problems on the spot.

When complaining, tell us

- Your full name and relationship to any pupil attending the school
- As much as you can about the complaint
- What has gone wrong
- How you want us to resolve the matter.

We aim to resolve all complaints in a spirit of partnership with all complainants. To help us to do this we would request that you read, our "Policy on Unacceptable Actions" and adhere to its conditions.

While complaints may be addressed to the rector of Jordanhill School, who will acknowledge receipt, anyone making a complaint should know that a substantive reply will come from the member of staff whom the Rector has identified as being best placed to investigate and respond to your complaint.

1.5 How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within 3 months of the event you want to complain about or finding out that you have a reason to complain, but no longer than 6 months after the event itself.

1.6 Confidentiality

Complainants should understand that no undertaking can be given to keep a complaint confidential. Any complaint or concern will be treated in a sensitive and respectful manner. Knowledge of it will be limited to those directly involved and to such senior managers of the school as is necessary.

The school cannot rule out the need to make third parties aware of a complaint and possibly also of the identity of those involved. This would happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer the matter to the police.

It is the school's policy that complaints made by parents will result in no adverse effect on their children.

Where a complaint is made against a specific individual, then that person has a right to be made aware of the complaint and to respond appropriately to the person handling the complaint. Action which needs to be taken under the staff disciplinary policy as a result of a complaint will be handled confidentially by the school and the complainant will not be entitled to a notification of any decision on sanctions applied.

2. What happens when I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint. Our complaints procedure has two stages.

2.1 Stage 1 – Frontline Resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem.

We will give you our decision at Stage 1 in no more than 5 school days, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure you receive a satisfactory resolution to your complaint. However, should you remain dissatisfied, at the conclusion reached by the end of Stage 1 you will automatically be informed of your right to progress to Stage 2 and how this may be done. You may choose to do this immediately or within 3 months of you getting our initial decision.

2.2 Stage 2 – Investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation. In this latter case it will be made clear to you, in writing, that the complaint is being handled at Stage 2.

When using Stage 2 we will

- Acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 school days
- Discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for
- Give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 school days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 school days, we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

You are asked to note that the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) recognises that in a small organisation such as ours it is not always possible for complaints to be investigated or determined by a fully independent person. Wherever possible we will try to ensure as much independence as possible and we are totally committed to resolving al complaints with complete objectivity.

The investigation associated with this complaints procedure does not constitute a disciplinary process. It is possible that the resolution of a complaint may result in the use of the school's staff disciplinary policy. If this happens then a separate, new investigation must take place which may use evidence from a complaints investigation. The complainant will not be informed of the outcome of any disciplinary process, which remains confidential.

2.3 What happens if my complaint is about a senior member of staff or a member of the Board of Managers?

The procedures described up to this point relate to how complaints in relation to the general operation of the school. If your complaint relates to a senior staff member, or a member of the Board of Managers, then a special set of arrangements apply. You can obtain a copy of the appropriate procedure by applying to the bursar.

3. Mediation and Appeals

3.1 Mediation

Some complex complaints (where for example the complainant and/or other involved parties has become entrenched in their position) may benefit from a different approach. Using mediation can help both parties to understand what is driving the complaint and may be more likely to result in a mutually satisfactory conclusion being reached. While the school does not have a formal mediation service, parties wishing to consider alternatives to a complaint

investigation or an appeal to the Board should enquire about this with the investigating officer.

3.2 Appeals
The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) exists to investigate complaints against public bodies in Scotland. Jordanhill School is **not** a listed authority within the Act and does not fall within the terms of the legislation. The SPSO has confirmed that it **cannot** consider a complaint relating to Jordanhill School.

If, after we have fully investigated, you are still dissatisfied with our decision, or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can submit an appeal to the Board of Managers of the school.

The Board **cannot** normally consider

- A complaint that has not completed our complaints procedure (so please make sure it has done so before contacting the Board)
- Events that happened, or that you became aware of, more than 6 months before you first complained to the school.
- A matter that has been or is being considered in court or by the Children's Panel, is the subject of an ongoing Police or Social Work investigation, is a Child Protection issue, or which relates to issues covered by the terms of the Education (Additional Support for Learning Act)(Scotland) Act 2004, as amended (Please refer to our ASN policy for further information about ASN and our unique circumstances, and how we deal with concerns and complaints).
- Matters which are the subject of legal proceedings.

A statement of appeal must be submitted to the Convener of the Board of Managers (via the bursar) within ten working days of receipt of the decision from stage 2 explaining the reasons for continuing dissatisfaction.

A formal appeal hearing will be convened within 10 school days (or otherwise by mutual agreement) of receipt of the written statement of appeal. A sub-committee of the Board will consider the appeal. The composition of the appeal committee will be determined by the Convener, but will have a minimum of 3 members. Staff representatives on the Board will not normally participate in such hearings.

The appeal committee will aim to issue a determination immediately following the hearing but in any event will respond in writing to the complainant within 5 school days of the date of the hearing. The decision of the appeal committee is final.

In exceptional circumstances the school may seek the services of one or more suitably qualified individuals to consider the issues arising from a complaint which requires specific expertise or experience to advise the appeal committee. The timescale for consideration of any such appeal will be dependent upon the availability of individuals with the correct expertise or experience who will participate as a non-voting, additional, member to the appeals committee.

3.3 Improving our Services

All complaints are important. Our aim is to continually improve the services we offer. Your complaint and any related comments can help us to do this. We will therefore use your complaint to identify any necessary improvement actions. You will be informed what these are when you receive the outcome of your complaint.

Additionally, the Board of Managers will, at regular intervals, receive a summary of all complaints during the reporting period, including whether they were upheld or not, and what improvement actions resulted. No individual will be identifiable from this summary.

4. Getting help to make your complaint

We understand that you may be unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service.

We can take complaints from a friend, relative or advocate, if you have given them your consent to complain for you.

You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance.

- Tel: 0131 260 5380
- Visit: www.siaa.org.uk

Our contact details

- visit: www.jordanhill.glasgow.sch.uk/complaints
- e-mail: info@jordanhill.glasgow.sch.uk
- Telephone: 0141 576 2500
- Speak directly to a member of staff

Quick guide to our complaints procedure

Complaints procedure
You can make your complaint in person, by telephone, by e-mail or in writing.
We have **a two-stage complaints procedure**. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly, but if it is clear that the matter will need a detailed investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.

Stage 1: frontline resolution
We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within **5 school days** if we can.
If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at Stage 2.

Stage 2: investigation
We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at Stage 1. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they are complex or need detailed investigation. We will acknowledge your complaint within **5 school days**. We will give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **20 school days** *unless* there is a good reason for needing more time.

Appeals
If after we have fully investigated, you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint you can submit an appeal to the Board of Managers of the school. We will tell you how to do this when we send you our final decision.