



JAMES ALLEN'S GIRLS' SCHOOL (JAGS) (DfE Number 210/6002)

WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

JAGS (including JAPS) aims to be a listening and responsive school. We encourage pupils, parents and staff to inform us of their concerns while they are still minor ones which can more easily be resolved. It is hoped that most concerns and complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.

JAGS (Senior School) PUPILS

- Pupils who have concerns or complaints should talk to their subject teacher, form tutor or Head of Section in the first instance.
- If the resolution is more complex, issues may then be passed on to the Headmistress or her Deputy.
- A written record will be kept of all significant concerns and complaints, the date on which they were received and the details of the subsequent investigation.
- Pupils should always be kept informed, both of how the matter has been investigated and of the resolution.
- There should be an agreed resolution within 28 days*.
- If parents become formally involved the procedure described below will apply.

JAPS PUPILS

- Pupils who have concerns or complaints should in the first instance talk to their Class Teacher.
- If the resolution is more complex, issues may then be passed on to the Headteacher, Head of the Pre-Prep or their deputies.
- A written record will be kept of all significant concerns and complaints, the date on which they were received and the details of the subsequent investigation.
- Pupils should always be kept informed, both of how the matter has been investigated and of the resolution.
- There should be an agreed resolution within 28 days*.
- If parents become formally involved the procedure described below will apply.

PARENTS

In the following sections, the term 'Head' relates to either the Headteacher of the Preparatory School or the Headmistress of JAGS.

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- At JAGS, parents who have any concerns or complaints about their daughters' experience should normally contact the Head of Section in the first instance, either by letter or by telephone. Heads of Section will always liaise closely with the Headmistress when dealing with parental concerns and complaints. At JAPS, parents who have any concerns or complaints should normally contact the teacher concerned (if it is an academic matter) or the Class Teacher (if it is a pastoral matter) in the first instance, either by letter or by telephone or in person. Staff will always liaise closely with the Head of JAPS or Head of Pre-Prep when dealing with parental concerns and complaints. We will endeavour to

acknowledge such letters or telephone calls within 48 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) of their receipt and to inform parents of how we intend to investigate the matter.

- A written record will be kept of all concerns and complaints, the date on which they were received and the details of the subsequent investigation.
- A letter will always be written to parents as a “closure”, indicating how the issue has been dealt with and what the outcome is.
- In the event of a failure to reach a satisfactory resolution parents will be advised to pursue their complaint in accordance with the Stage 2 procedure set out below.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- Parents whose complaint has not been resolved by the Stage 1 process, should put their complaint formally in writing to the Head.
- The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- The Head will meet with the parents concerned to discuss the complaint within 7 days* of receiving it.
- The Head will then carry out any necessary further investigations.
- Written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint will be maintained.
- Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing, within 28 days* of receipt of the formal complaint. The Head will also give reasons for the decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Convenor, the *Clerk to the Governors*, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom is independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of Governors. The Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and within 21 days*.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 7 days* prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents’ complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 7 days* of the hearing.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel’s findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, the Board of Governors and, where relevant, the person about whom the complaint was made.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by Part 7, Paragraph 25, of The Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2010; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails. Records of all formal complaints (i.e. those which reach Stage 2) will be kept confidentially in a separate file for 3 years indicating whether they have been resolved and at what stage, as required by DfE regulations.

*NB Where numbers of days are specified, these do not include school holidays, as staff may not be available to process complaints and carry out investigations during those periods.

In accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage regulations, the School will provide Ofsted (and ISI), on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

Parents may contact Ofsted and/or ISI should they wish to, the relevant contact details are:

Independent Schools Inspectorate - CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA
Telephone 0207 600 1011 <http://www.isi.net>

Ofsted - Royal Exchange Buildings, St Anne's Square, Manchester M27LA Telephone 0845 6404045 www.ofsted.gov.uk

POLICY FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS FROM STAFF

JAGS, including JAPS, aims to be a listening and responsive school. We encourage staff to inform us of their concerns while they are still minor ones which can more easily be resolved. It is hoped that most concerns and complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.

- JAPS staff who have any complaint or cause for concern should speak to the Head of the Pre Preparatory Department, Deputy Head, Head or Bursar as appropriate. JAGS and all non-teaching staff who have any complaint or cause for concern should speak to their line manager (usually their Head of Department) in the first instance. If this is not appropriate they should bring the matter to the attention of one of the Senior Teachers, the Deputy Head, the Head of JAPS or the Bursar as appropriate. If this is not appropriate, they should speak to the Bursar & Clerk to the Governors.
- A written record will be kept of all concerns and complaints, the date on which they were received and the details of the subsequent investigation.
- All complaints will be investigated within 14 days* and a formal letter will always be written as a "closure", indicating how the issue has been dealt with and what the outcome is.
- When a member of staff is dissatisfied with the outcome and has discussed this with the Head of the Preparatory School, Headmistress or Bursar (in the case of non-teaching staff) the matter should be referred to the link Governor.
- In the case of a contractual employment grievance, the procedures outlined in staff contracts of employment should be followed.

Date: March 2009 (updated December 2010)

*Review arrangements: overview by Governors annually
full review by Management June 2011 (or earlier if major legislative change)*