



# Loreto Preparatory School

Sincerity Freedom Justice Truth Joy Excellence Internationality

## COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### Mission Statement

At Loreto Preparatory School  
We are eager and inspired to do our best,  
Meeting the challenges and opportunities of a changing world  
With love in our hearts.

We are called to be joyful and prayerful,  
Living the Gospel and the Catholic faith  
And celebrating the values of Mary Ward  
With our parents and the whole Loreto family.

*Women in time to come will do much.*  
*Mary Ward*

### Introduction

The person of Jesus Christ is at the heart of Loreto Preparatory School and Gospel values permeate the entire school experience. The school has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated sensitively and fairly by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

*This policy complies with the current Independent School Standards Regulations. It applies to the whole School, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and before and after school activities. It also applies to past pupils but only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was registered at the School and it does not cover exclusions. This policy can be obtained by parents from the School's website or from the School office on request.*

### Stage 1 Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. For clarity, any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is regarded as a complaint.

- If parents have a complaint they should ask to see the class teacher/ key person in EYFS, in the first instance. In most cases, we hope the matter will be resolved swiftly, normally within 2 working days, to the parents' satisfaction.
- If the class teacher/key person cannot resolve the matter alone within this time frame, it may be necessary for her/him to consult another member of staff or the Deputy Headteacher about the complaint, normally within 2 working days of it being referred to them with the aim of finding a resolution. Complaints made directly to the Head Teacher will usually be referred to the class teacher/key person unless the Head Teacher deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- The class teacher/key person will make a written record of all complaints in the "Blue Book" and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved or in the event that

neither the class teacher nor the Deputy Head and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution within 5 working days then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

## **Stage 2 Formal Resolution**

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

- In most cases the Head Teacher will meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within 5 working days of receiving the written complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head Teacher to carry out further investigations.
- The Head Teacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head Teacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing as soon as possible, normally within 7 working days of the interview with the parents. The Head Teacher will also give reasons for the decision.
- Where the parent is not satisfied with the school's response to their complaint and indicates a wish to continue to stage three, a panel hearing will take place unless the parent later indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further.

## **Stage 3 Panel Hearing**

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3, following a failure to reach an earlier resolution, they will be referred to Mr Andrew McHale, who has been appointed by the governors to convene 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 matter detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors.
- The panel members will be people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to scrutinising evidence and putting forward balanced arguments, such as retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force.
- Mr McHale, on behalf of the panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 15 working days of the request for an Appeal.
- 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 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person for support if they wish. This person 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.
- The panel hearing will proceed notwithstanding that the parent may subsequently decide not to attend. If necessary, the panel should consider the parent's complaint in his/her absence and issue findings on the substance of the complaint thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion. The requirement for the panel to proceed will not prevent the school from accommodating parental availability for dates or considering comments concerning panel composition.

- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 7 working 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/complainants, the Head Teacher, the Chair of Governors and, where relevant, the person complained about. The record of the panel's findings will be available for inspection on the premises by the Governors and the Head Teacher.

### **Confidentiality**

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously, sensitively and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school in (k) of the Independent Schools Standards Regulations paragraph 33 (ISSR, September 2014) where disclosure is required by the Secretary of State or in the course of a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act; or where other legal obligations prevail.

### **Record Keeping**

A record of all complaints made in writing under the formal part of the procedure and of whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing, together with the action taken by the School (regardless of whether they are upheld) will be kept. Records will be regularly examined and analysed by the Head Teacher and Deputy Head. Written records of informal complaints will also be kept to enable patterns of concern to be monitored for management purposes.

Records of all complaints, including those referring to EYFS will be kept for four years.

Additions to this policy in respect of the EYFS and After School Care and Activities:

- Written complaints by parents about the School's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days.
- The written record of complaints will be made available to Ofsted or ISI on request.
- Parents of children Early Years Foundation Stage can take their written complaint to OFSTED or/and to the Independent Schools Inspectorate(ISI):

Contact details:

Ofsted	ISI
Piccadilly Gate	CAP House
Store Street	9 – 12 Long Lane
Manchester	London
M21 2WD	EC1A 9HA
0300 123 1231	020 7600 0100
<a href="mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk">enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk</a>	<a href="mailto:info@isi.net">info@isi.net</a>

### **Monitoring and Review:**

This policy will be monitored by the Head Teacher and the Chair of Governors and updated as necessary in accordance with current ISI regulations and legal obligations. It will be reviewed every two years.

*Reviewed and ratified by Governors February 2018*

*Next review February 2020*

Number of Complaints using the Formal School Procedure:

2009/2010 0

2010/2011 0

2011/2012 0

2012/2013 0

2013/2014 0

2014/2015 0

2015/2016 0

2016/2017 0

2017/2018 0