



## COMPLAINTS POLICY FOR PARENTS

At Thomas's, we take pride in our openness and in the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to our pupils. We welcome suggestions and comments from parents and take seriously complaints and concerns which they may raise. If parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this policy.

**A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which needs a response.**

We wish to ensure that:

- Parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so
- We respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way
- Parents realise that we listen to complaints and take them seriously
- We take action where appropriate
- All complaints are reviewed on a regular basis

### **Stage 1 – Informal resolution**

#### ***“How should I complain?”***

We hope that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

If you have a complaint, you should normally contact your child's **form teacher** (or, where applicable, **form tutor**). This can be in person, by letter, telephone or email. In many cases, the form teacher will be able to resolve the matter to your satisfaction quickly and with the minimum of fuss. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him or her to consult the Head.

Complaints made directly to the Head at this stage will normally be referred to the relevant form teacher, unless the Head deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

The form teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within five working days or in the event that a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, then you will be advised to proceed to Stage 2 of this policy.

#### ***“I don't want to complain as such, but there is something bothering me.”***

The school shares with you the best interests of your child and we want to hear your concerns. Contact your child's form teacher, as described above.

#### ***“I am not sure whether to complain or not.”***

If, as parents, you have concerns, you are entitled to complain. If in doubt, you should contact your child's form teacher, who is there to help.

***“What if my complaint is about the form teacher?”***

Where possible, you should still raise concerns about the form teacher with the form teacher. Often small matters of miscommunication or misunderstanding can be put right quickly. If you do not feel that this is appropriate, then you should contact the Head directly. Initially, this can be in confidence. However, the Head is likely to seek your agreement to discuss the matter with the form teacher in order to deal effectively with the concern or complaint. It is the school's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

**Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

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

In most cases, the Head will meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within five working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.

The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

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 you will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for his or her decision.

***“What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?”***

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this policy and request a hearing before the Complaints Panel. Details of this procedure are set out in the full Complaints Policy for Parents, a copy of which is available on request from the Accounts Office, contact telephone number 01425-481500.

***“What happens about confidentiality?”***

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints raised will be treated seriously. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

You are welcome to contact your school to request the number of complaints that there have been during the last 12 months.

The school recognises the mutual benefit to be gained from open and honest communication. We acknowledge your entitlement to complain and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children whom you have placed in our care.

**Ofsted**

If you wish to make a complaint to Ofsted about the school, you can contact their helpline on 08456 404045 or request advice by email on [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

To make a formal complaint, you can complete a form online at

<http://live.ofsted.gov.uk/onlinecomplaints>

or write to: Enquiries  
National Business Unit  
Ofsted  
Royal Exchange Building  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

<b>This policy will be reviewed annually.</b>			
Reviewed: March 2010	By:	Jill Kelham Vice Principal	No changes
Reviewed: January 2009	By:	Jill Kelham Vice Principal	Changes made
Reviewed: December 2007	By:	Jill Kelham Vice Principal	No changes
Next Review: December 2009	By:	Jill Kelham, Vice Principal	