



COMPLAINTS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Thomas's Academy prides itself on its openness and 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 by the School in accordance with this Procedure. This Policy is written with regard to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

STAGE 1 – INFORMAL RESOLUTION

- Our hope is that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's class teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head.
- Complaints made directly to the Head will usually be referred to the relevant class teacher unless the Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The class 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 days or in the event that the class teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, 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. The Head will decide the appropriate course of action within three working days of receipt of the complaint.
- In most cases, the Head will meet or speak to the parents concerned 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. This may be decided at the first meeting with the parents. If however, the Head decides to carry out investigations before meeting the parents, they will be informed of this within three working days of the Head receiving the complaint and the meeting with parents will take place within seven working days.
- 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 the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing.

This will be within ten working days of receipt of the complaint. The Head will also give reasons for his/her decision.

- If parents are 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 Vice Principal, Thomas's London Day Schools, who has been appointed by the designated Governor to call hearings of the Complaints Panel and to act in the role of Investigating Officer as appropriate.
- The Vice Principal will then refer the matter 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, at least one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the specific school but not necessarily of the Thomas's Academy. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the designated Governor. The Vice Principal, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within ten 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 two 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 ten 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 by electronic mail or otherwise, to the parents, the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

CONFIDENTIALITY

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 paragraph 33 (k) of the Education [Independent Schools Standards England] Regulations 2014; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

At all formal stages of the complaints procedure, the following information should be recorded:

- The name of the complainant
- The date and time at which the complaint was made
- The details of the complaint
- The desired outcome of the complainant
- How the complaint is investigated (including written records of interviews held)
- Results and conclusions of investigations
- Any action taken

- The complainant’s response (satisfaction or further pursuit on complaint)

SUBJECT ACCESS REQUEST

On occasions, a complaint may also involve a Subject Access Request. The details of how the school should respond to such a request can be found in the Data Protection Policy, an excerpt form which is contained below:

Individuals have a right to make a ‘subject access request’ to gain access to personal information that the school holds about them. This includes:

- Confirmation that their personal data is being processed
- Access to a copy of the data
- The purposes of the data processing
- The categories of personal data concerned
- Who the data has been, or will be, shared with
- How long the data will be stored for, or if this isn’t possible, the criteria used to determine this period
- The source of the data, if not the individual
- Whether any automated decision-making is being applied to their data, and what the significance and consequences of this might be for the individual

Subject access requests must be submitted in writing by email to the Head Teacher.

They should include:

- Name of individual
- Correspondence address
- Contact number and email address
- Details of the information requested

If any member of staff receives a subject access request they must immediately forward it to the Head Teacher.

This policy is made available to parents on our website www.academy.thomas-s.co.uk. It is also available on request.

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

See also: Behaviour Policy, Code of Conduct, Terms & Conditions, Data Protection Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually		
Created: September 2015	By:	Miles Chester, Headmaster
Reviewed: January 2017, & Jan 2018 & June 19	By:	Miles Chester
Next review: June 22	By:	Miles Chester