



How to Raise a Concern Guidance for Parents

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HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN - GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

St Mary's Calne and St Margaret's ('the School') welcome suggestions and comments from parents and take seriously complaints and concerns that may arise.

Any concern or complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which needs a response.

The school recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to communicate your concerns and grievances and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care.

We wish to ensure that

- parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so,
- we respond to complaints within the time frames provided in the Complaints Policy and in a courteous and efficient way,
- parents realise that we listen and take complaints seriously, and
- we take action where appropriate.

How should I raise a concern?

Any member of staff will be happy to help and can be contacted by letter, email or telephone. It may be best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue – for example, to raise House matters with the Housemistress, academic concerns with the Head of Department in the first instance. They may be able to sort things out quickly, with the minimum of fuss. However, you may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff, for example, the Deputy Head Academic, Deputy Head Pastoral, Senior Deputy Head, the Head of Prep School, the Bursar or the Head, and if you wish to complain formally you may wish to write to the Chair of Governors via the Clerk to the Governors. In all cases the Head will be informed of any concern or complaint that has been raised.

What will happen next?

If you raise something face-to-face or by telephone it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction.

If you have raised a concern, made a complaint or suggestion in writing, we will contact you to respond to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed.

In many circumstances, the person you contact will need to discuss the matter with a colleague and consider it further before responding. You will be given a date by which time you will receive a response. If a detailed exploration of the issues is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible. This will tell you the outcome of your concern or complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

What happens about confidentiality?

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. The School will endeavour to ensure that knowledge of it will be limited to the Head and those directly involved. It is the School's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

Parents and pupils are encouraged to give their names and will be given reassurance on the issue of confidentiality. If they persist in wishing to remain anonymous, it is at the Head's discretion as to what action, if any, should be taken, depending on the nature of the complaint

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the School aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police or where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Provision 163 of the Education Act 2002, as amended, requests access. You would be fully informed.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints may not be pursued.

Action which needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints would be handled confidentially within the School.

What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?

We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered.

If you are not satisfied, you may wish to follow the formal complaints procedure.

Procedures for Complaints made by Pupils

A paper entitled 'What to do if I have a problem' is given to all pupils on entry to St Mary's and displayed on House Noticeboards and other prominent places. All concerns and complaints, even those which appear trivial, will be handled seriously and sensitively by the appropriate person usually the Housemistress in the first instance in conjunction with a member of senior staff.

Anonymity

Anonymous complaints will be recorded accordingly. It is at the Head's discretion as to what action, if any, will be taken in response to an anonymous complaint.

Anonymous allegations about child abuse will be handled under the Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy.

Procedures for Complaints made by the Public

Complaints from the public about the behaviour of a group of pupils will be dealt with on a general basis, with reminders to all about the school's expectations. Complaints against a known individual will be managed with that person.