



St Paul's School
FOUNDED 1509

Boarding Complaints Procedure

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Applicable to:	SPS		

This policy is available on the Handbook page of the School Intranet and policies page of the School website and can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required; such requests can be made by email to policyquery@stpaulsschool.org.uk.

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1. Policy Statement

This procedure is for Boarders at St Paul's School. It has been devised in accordance with standard 14 of the Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards, as amended in September 2022.

2. Worries and Problem situations

Despite everyone's best intentions, life has its ups and downs. When there are difficult moments for boarders there are a number of ways in which help may be sought. Even when you are aware of how you might receive help it is quite another matter to make the decision to do so. We hope that you will make the decision to find help so that your concerns or difficulties can be resolved or minimised.

There are many problems and situations which may upset you. For example, you may not be able to manage alone in the following situations:

- There are pressures or difficulties at or from home;
- You feel you are unable to cope owing to problems with work or for social reasons (e.g. pressure or difficulties with friendships);
- You or your friends are being bullied; possibly unfriendly or incessant teasing, being physically pushed around or being excluded;
- You receive upsetting e-mails or text messages, or discover that rumours are being spread about you via the intranet or internet;
- You feel low, depressed or ill;
- You feel that another pupil is not eating properly or may be harming her/himself;
- Someone has hurt your feelings, abused you or made suggestions you think are not right;
- You feel that there are intrusions into your space or privacy;
- You think you are being unfairly treated;
- You feel you have been treated unreasonably by a member of staff.

Everyone has worries, problems and difficulties from time to time, which may be major or minor and which may affect either an individual or a group. They almost certainly cause anxiety. At St Paul's, matters can usually be resolved if you talk openly to the right person. You may or may not be able to sense who is the right person, but you should go to someone with whom you feel comfortable. You may wish to telephone home but you may also wish to talk to a friend or seek out one of your teachers, your Tutor, or a member of the Boarding House staff. They will always be prepared to listen. On the other hand you may wish to speak directly to the Chaplain, the School Doctors, a School Counsellor (<https://stpaulscounselling.as.me/>), your Undermaster, the Deputy Head Pastoral, a DSL, the Surmaster or the High Master; or access support anonymously using the Whisper reporting line or QR code.

Some new problems are best dealt with by individual contact with one person, but others may need to be dealt with by several people. It is important to emphasise that you may choose the people with whom you would like to speak.

3. What should you do if something is worrying you?

The procedure is as follows: in general, if a boy feels dissatisfied with the treatment he has received from the person in column A, he should in the first instance consult the person in column B. If he is worried about any other aspect of boarding or has any other concerns, he should speak to the Housemaster. He should also discuss the matter with his parents and his tutor.

A		B
Other boys (day or Boarders)	→	Housemaster; Assistant/Deputy Housemaster; Matron
Assistant/Deputy Housemaster or Matron	→	Housemaster
Housemaster	→	Deputy Head (Pastoral)
Deputy Head (Pastoral)	→	Surmaster
Surmaster	→	High Master

If a boy is concerned that the behaviour of a member of the house staff is putting them or another pupil at risk of harm or abuse, they should immediately inform the High Master and the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) rather than the Housemaster.

This procedure is not intended to be prescriptive, however, and every boarder is encouraged to discuss matters with any member of staff whom he feels he can trust. He could also, for example, consult the school doctor, or nurse (via the medical room), or a school counsellor. The counsellors are available each week in term time and appointments can be made via the school nurse or through your tutor.

Your choice may depend on the circumstances and your feelings at the time and you do not have to tell anyone else what you are doing.

If you prefer to raise your concern by email, the following is a list of useful email contacts:

The Boarding House team: SchoolHouse@stpaulsschool.org.uk

Housemaster: Dr Shammass cnyas@stpaulsschool.org.uk

Deputy Housemaster: Mr Vickers tmv@stpaulsschool.org.uk

Boarding Team (School House):

- Mr Chase tasc@stpaulsschool.org.uk
- Revd Knox mks@stpaulsschool.org.uk
- Mr Mahmoud txm@stpaulsschool.org.uk
- Ms Turner rlt@stpaulsschool.org.uk
- Matrons Matron@stpaulsschool.org.uk

Boarding Tutors (West House)

- Mr Boydell db@stpaulsschool.org.uk
- Dr Gane scg@stpaulsschool.org.uk
- Ms Milanova (sim@stpaulsschool.org.uk)

- Mr Murray gdim@stpaulsschool.org.uk

Deputy Head Pastoral: Mr Watkins ngdw@stpaulsschool.org.uk

Surmaster: Dr Clough fjc@stpaulsschool.org.uk

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mr Hudson nch@stpaulsschool.org.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads:

Mrs Sharp safeguarding@stpaulsschool.org.uk

Dr Gilks jarg@stpaulsschool.org.uk

Mr Passmore tjp@stpaulsschool.org.uk

Mr Stewart ads@stpaulsschool.org.uk

Ms Warner hfrw@stpaulsschool.org.uk

Nurses: spsnurses@stpaulsschool.org.uk

Chaplain: Rev Knox msk@stpaulsschool.org.uk

These numbers are displayed, along with other avenues for outside support, on noticeboards in the Boarding House in the Who To Talk To document.

4. Who else needs to know?

The School understands that a boy may wish to talk about a problem only if it is kept secret. In many cases, this is possible, but there are two exceptions to be aware of:

- The High Master is required by law to ensure they are aware of all issues affecting the safety and welfare of pupils at the School. This means that the High Master will need to be kept informed by school staff of the broad nature (but not usually the details) of any serious health, safety or welfare issues of which they are aware. If the problem or complaint involves the High Master, then one of the Governors or the Surmaster will be informed instead.
- The School has a legal duty to keep each boarder's parents informed about their welfare and progress at School. However, if you do not wish them to be informed, please say, so that options can be discussed with you.
- Certain situations require statutory safeguarding procedures to be followed by the School, which may involve a matter being referred to the Local Authority and/or the Police (see section 6 below and Appendix 2 of the School's safeguarding policy and procedures, available via the School website). These situations are rare, and professionals involved in managing such cases take great care to protect the identity of any children involved as far as possible.

However, please do not let this stop you from raising complaints or saying when you are worried or upset. Most pupils, who find the courage to speak up, subsequently say that they

were helped and relieved and that the problem was eased by talking it through with someone experienced and helpful.

5. Making a formal complaint

If, after informal discussions, a boarder feels that the matter has not been resolved satisfactorily, they may make a formal complaint. They may wish to involve his parents at this stage if he has not done so already. The complaint should be made in writing to the Surmaster, who will record the complaint, interview the pupil (who may bring a friend to the interview), and take whatever action is necessary. They will see the pupil again within two weeks to outline what has been done.

The Surmaster will keep a record of serious complaints from boarders together with a summary of the school's response to each complaint. Complaints will be reviewed from time to time by the SMT and management information and statistics will be provided on concerns and complaints to the School Governors at least once a year.

The boarder's parents can also use the School's formal complaints procedure which is available on the School's website.

Boarders will never be penalised for raising a complaint in good faith.

6. What to do if you or your parents disagree with a decision made by the School about a complaint

If, at the end of this process you still feel that the complaint is unresolved, you or your parents may appeal against a decision made by the School about the complaint. You or your parents should write to the High Master explaining why there is still a problem. The High Master will ask the Clerk to the Governors to arrange for the complaint to be heard by a panel of three people. Two will be Governors and one will be independent of the running and management of the School. You and your parents may meet the panel to explain your concerns. You and your parents will be given details of the procedure to be followed. After the panel has considered the issues, they will give you and your parents a written response which may include making recommendations to the High Master or the Governors. If you and your parents are still unhappy with the response to the complaint you or your parents can contact ISI or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as explained below.

6.1 LADO

Each Local Authority has a designated officer, known as LADO, who has responsibility for advising on cases where there are allegations that children may be at risk of significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect by a person who works with children. The LADO for Richmond can be contacted via the Single Point of Access for Richmond Children's Services (spa@richmond.gov.uk or via telephone on 020 8547 5008 during office hours OR 020 8770 5000 out of hours) or in writing to:

The Child Protection and Planning Manager (LADO)
Specialist Children's Services
42 York Street
Twickenham

TW1 3BW

Further information is available at: www.richmond.gov.uk/lscb

6.2 Independent Schools Inspectorate

A boarder and his parents have the right to contact ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate) about a complaint concerning the boarder's welfare. ISI is responsible for the inspection of schools under the Children's Act. ISI will usually have expected the boarder and his parents to have followed the School's formal complaints procedure before contacting them. However, the officers to be contacted are:

Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House

9 -12 Long Lane

London

EC1A 9HA

Concerns about a school can also be relayed by email concerns@isi.net or telephone 020 7600 0100

6.3 Independent External Advice

The Independent Person is Mr David O'Donnell. He is a person external to and independent of the school who you may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the school. He is the DSL at Fulham Boys School. His number is 020 8746 5335. You can call him at any time.

There is also the NSPCC's Childline Service, accessible via www.childline.org.uk, or by telephone: 0800 11 11; and the Office of the Child's Commissioner 0800 528 0731.

Advocacy Support – If you ever need to make a complaint or face disciplinary action from the School you can always bring an advocate to ensure your views are fully considered and reflected in decision making. In most cases this will be a parent or guardian, however if this is not possible independent advocacy is available from Advocacy for All on 0345 310 1812 or referrals@advocacyforall.org.uk. Please contact them directly or speak to the Housemaster who can set this up.

The happiness and well-being of the boys at St Paul's is the first priority of all staff, and any staff member will give their time to talk with you. When you have a concern about the safety of another pupil, you should follow the steps laid out in the School's Safeguarding Reporting Guidelines. This is advertised on the main House noticeboards and other School noticeboards, as well as within the Safeguarding Policy (available on the intranet).