



Jasmine House School

Complaints Policy

Policy updated	September 2026
Next scheduled review	September 2027
Policy owner	Headteacher
Review arrangements	Earlier review if legislation, statutory guidance or school arrangements change

1. Statement of intent and statutory basis

Jasmine House School is committed to resolving concerns and complaints fairly, promptly and, wherever possible, at the earliest stage. Raising a concern or complaint will not adversely affect a pupil, and complainants will be treated respectfully throughout the process.

This policy is designed to meet Part 7, paragraph 33 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended. It provides the required three-stage process: informal consideration, a formal written complaint and, where the parent remains dissatisfied, a hearing before a panel that includes a member independent of the management and running of the school.

The policy also has regard to the DfE Independent School Standards Guidance (April 2026), the Education and Skills Act 2008, the Equality Act 2010, UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 (including section 164A from 19 June 2026), and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 where a complaint has safeguarding implications.

2. Scope of this policy

The statutory procedure applies to complaints from parents of pupils who are currently registered at Jasmine House School. A complaint that began while a pupil was registered will continue through the procedure even if the pupil subsequently leaves.

The school may also consider concerns from other people where appropriate, but Part 7 of the Independent School Standards does not require those complaints to follow this statutory process.

The following matters are dealt with through other procedures where applicable:

- staff grievances, disciplinary matters and whistleblowing;
- admissions decisions and complaints from prospective parents about failure to admit;
- safeguarding concerns requiring immediate protective action, allegations against staff or low-level concerns, which are managed under safeguarding procedures;
- complaints about statutory EHC plan decisions made by a local authority, which follow the relevant statutory route;
- examination or awarding-body matters where an external appeals or malpractice procedure applies; and
- data protection complaints, which may use this procedure but must also meet the additional requirements set out in section 10.

A complaint about the way the school has handled one of these matters may still be considered under this policy where appropriate, provided doing so does not compromise a statutory or safeguarding process.

3. Definitions, accessibility and timescales

A concern is an expression of worry or doubt for which reassurance or clarification is sought. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about an action taken, or a failure to take action. The school will not delay action simply because a parent has used the word "concern" rather than "complaint".

"Parent" includes a person with parental responsibility or a person who has care of the child. "School working day" means a day on which the school is open to pupils. If a complaint is received during a school closure period, it will normally be treated as received on the first school working day after reopening, unless urgent safeguarding or welfare action is required.

Parents may raise concerns in person, by telephone, by email or in writing. Formal complaints at Stage 2 must be recorded in writing. Where disability, literacy, communication or other needs make this difficult, the school will make reasonable adjustments, including helping the parent to put the complaint into writing and asking them to confirm that the record is accurate.

Complaints should normally be raised as soon as possible and within three months of the event complained about, or the last event in a series of related incidents. The school may accept a later complaint where there is a reasonable explanation for delay or where fairness, safeguarding or the circumstances of the case justify doing so.

4. The three-stage complaints procedure

Stage	Who handles it	Normal timescale	Outcome
Stage 1 Informal	Relevant member of staff / Headteacher	Acknowledge within 2 working days; aim to respond within 5 working days	Concern resolved or parent advised how to proceed to Stage 2
Stage 2 Formal	Headteacher, or proprietor representative if complaint is about the Headteacher	Acknowledge within 2 working days; written outcome normally within 10 working days	Written decision, reasons and information about Stage 3
Stage 3 Panel	Panel appointed by/on behalf of the proprietor; at least 3 uninvolved people, including 1 independent member	Hearing normally within 20 working days of valid request; written findings within 5 working days after hearing	Findings and recommendations; school procedure concluded

5. Stage 1 - informal concern

Most concerns can be resolved quickly through discussion. A parent should normally raise the concern with the member of staff best placed to help. Educational matters will usually begin with the relevant teacher; wider pastoral, financial or whole-school concerns may be raised with the Headteacher.

The school will acknowledge a concern made in writing within two school working days and will aim to provide a response within five school working days. Where more time is needed, the parent will be told why and given a revised timescale.

If the parent remains dissatisfied, or if the matter is sufficiently serious that informal resolution is inappropriate, the parent will be advised how to make a formal complaint at Stage 2.

6. Stage 2 - formal written complaint

A formal complaint should be sent to the Headteacher by email or letter and should explain the concern, the relevant facts, the steps already taken where applicable, and the outcome the parent is seeking. Complaints about the Headteacher should instead be addressed to the proprietor/Chair of the Proprietor Body via the school office, clearly marked "Private and Confidential - Formal Complaint".

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within two school working days. The person investigating will be impartial and may meet or speak with the complainant, the person complained about and other relevant witnesses, and may review records or other evidence. A written record of the investigation and communications will be retained.

The school will normally send a written Stage 2 outcome within 10 school working days of receiving the formal complaint. The response will state the decision, give sufficient reasons, identify any action the school will take where appropriate and explain how the parent may request a Stage 3 panel hearing. If the investigation cannot reasonably be completed in that period, the complainant will be informed of the reason and the revised date for response.

7. Stage 3 - panel hearing

If the parent remains dissatisfied after Stage 2, they may request a panel hearing in writing, normally within 10 school working days of the Stage 2 outcome. The request should explain why the parent remains dissatisfied and what outcome is sought.

- The panel will be appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters complained about.
- At least one panel member will be independent of the management and running of Jasmine House School. The independent member will not be an employee, member of the proprietor/governing body or someone otherwise involved in managing the school, such as a regular professional adviser to the school.
- The hearing will normally take place within 20 school working days of a valid request. Reasonable arrangements will be made to enable the parent to attend. The parent may be accompanied by a friend, relative or supporter. Legal representation is not normally necessary, but the school may agree to it in appropriate circumstances.
- Relevant papers will normally be circulated to the panel and parties at least five school working days before the hearing. Sensitive personal information will be shared only where it is necessary and lawful to do so.
- If the parent chooses not to attend, the panel hearing will still take place and the complaint will be considered on the available evidence.
- The panel may make findings and recommendations. A copy of the findings and recommendations will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. A copy will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and Headteacher.
- The written outcome will normally be issued within five school working days of the hearing. This concludes the school's complaints procedure.

8. Complaints about senior leaders or the proprietor

A complaint about the Headteacher will be handled at Stage 2 by the proprietor, Chair of the Proprietor Body or another suitably independent person appointed by the proprietor who has had no prior involvement. A subsequent Stage 3 panel will still meet all of the independence requirements above.

Where a complaint concerns a director, governor or proprietor representative, that person will take no part in investigating or determining the complaint. Another uninvolved person will be appointed to manage the relevant stage. Where necessary, the proprietor will obtain an appropriately independent panel so that the complainant receives a fair process.

9. Safeguarding, pupil concerns and immediate risk

Nothing in this policy delays or replaces safeguarding action. Where information indicates that a child may be at risk of harm, staff will follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and make any necessary referral without waiting for the complaints process to conclude. A complaint about how

safeguarding action was subsequently handled may be considered under this policy where appropriate.

Pupils may raise concerns or complaints with any trusted adult and may use communication methods appropriate to their needs. Staff will support pupils with autism, communication differences, sensory needs or other SEND to express their views, including through visual or augmentative methods where appropriate. Significant pupil complaints will be recorded through the school's agreed systems and safeguarding concerns will be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

10. Data protection complaints

A complaint about the school's processing of personal data may be made through this procedure or directly to the school's Data Protection Officer. From 19 June 2026, section 164A of the Data Protection Act 2018 places additional requirements on data controllers. The school will facilitate the making of a data protection complaint, acknowledge it within 30 days, take appropriate steps to investigate without undue delay and communicate the outcome promptly.

Where a parental complaint is also a data protection complaint, the school will manage the two sets of requirements together so that neither the Independent School Standards nor data protection law is compromised. Complainants may also have the right to raise concerns with the Information Commissioner's Office after giving the school an opportunity to respond.

11. Recording, confidentiality and learning from complaints

The school will keep a written record of all complaints made under Stage 2 of this procedure and will record:

- whether the complaint was resolved following the formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing;
- the action taken by the school as a result of the complaint, whether or not the complaint was upheld; and
- relevant correspondence, investigation notes, findings and panel records needed to demonstrate a fair process.

Records will be retained securely in accordance with the school's Records Management and Data Protection arrangements. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where access is requested by the Secretary of State or by a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, or where disclosure is otherwise required by law.

Leaders will review complaints for patterns, recurring issues and opportunities to improve practice. Learning from a complaint may result in changes to procedures, staff training, communication or other school arrangements even where the complaint is not upheld.

12. Publication, external routes and review

This policy will be published on the school website and made available free of charge to parents. In line with Part 6 of the Independent School Standards, the school will also make available the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. That figure will be updated annually.

Once the school's procedure has concluded, a parent who believes the school has failed to meet the Independent School Standards may contact the Department for Education. The DfE does not re-hear the merits of an individual private-school complaint or overturn the panel's decision, but it may consider

whether the school has complied with the regulatory standards. Information is available through GOV.UK under "Complain about a school - private schools".

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance or school arrangements change. The proprietor is responsible for ensuring that the procedure is drawn up, made available and effectively implemented.

13. Formal complaints received

In accordance with Part 6 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Jasmine House School makes available the number of complaints registered under the formal stage of its complaints procedure during the preceding school year.

Academic year 2025/26: [0] formal complaints were registered.

School	Jasmine House School
Telephone	01773 305029
Proprietor	Smoothstone Care and Education Ltd

Appendix 1 - Parent guide to the complaints process

This quick guide summarises the statutory procedure. The full policy above applies if there is any uncertainty.

Stage	What you do	Who responds	Target response	If dissatisfied
1 Informal	Raise the concern with the relevant member of staff or Headteacher	Relevant staff / Headteacher	Usually within 5 school working days	Move to Stage 2
2 Formal	Put the complaint in writing and state the outcome sought	Headteacher or proprietor representative	Normally within 10 school working days	Request Stage 3 within 10 school working days
3 Panel	Explain in writing why you remain dissatisfied	Panel of at least 3 uninvolved people, including 1 independent member	Hearing normally within 20 school working days; outcome within 5 working days	School procedure ends

If you need help to put a complaint in writing or require a reasonable adjustment because of disability, communication, literacy or other needs, please contact the school office. The school will help you access the procedure without changing the substance or fairness of the process.