Forres Sandle Manor (Non-Academic) Policy

Policy Title	**Parents' Complaints Procedure**
Policy Lead (Appointment (& Initials))	**Head (MH)**
Date of Last Review	**September 2026**
Date of Next Review	**September 2027**

PARENTS' COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

SCOPE

This Annex outlines the procedure to be followed in the event that a parent or guardian of a pupil wishes to make a complaint about procedures or anything that they may be unhappy about or about a member of staff, or because they are dissatisfied with decisions taken by FSM following a serious breach of the behavioural guidelines, as described in the FSM Pupil Behaviour Management Policy.

GRADUATED DISCIPLINARY RESPONSE

Parents will always be informed when a child's behaviour provokes a response at Level 4 or above in the Pupil Behaviour Management Policy (also available on FSM website).

SUSPENSION

The Head may suspend a child without consulting the Chairman of the Board of Directors but he will always consult the Chair before a decision to expel a child is taken. In the event of a child being suspended or expelled, FSM has the right to insist on suspension whilst any complaint is investigated.

POINT OF CONTACT

Parents are invited to discuss their concerns about any aspect of FSM's performance or attitude at any time with the Head or other senior member of staff. Their first point of contact may be the member of staff involved, but if the parent has deeper concerns he/she will usually contact a Deputy Head or the Head. At this stage, it is to be hoped that the matter may be resolved informally. However, if this is not the case, the parent may wish to make a formal complaint.

The process is as follows:

STAGE 1 INFORMAL COMPLAINT

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's Form Teacher or Boarding Staff. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the member of staff cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult a senior member of staff.

- Complaints made directly to a Head of Faculty/Senior Staff/the Head will usually be referred to the relevant Form Teacher or Boarding Staff unless the Head of Faculty/Senior Staff/the Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The member of staff 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 7 days or in the event that the member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised how to lodge their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this Procedure.

STAGE 2 FORMAL COMPLAINT

- The parent will describe their grievance in writing (this can be in the form of an e-mail communication) to the Head within five working days of the initial response. Although flexibility will be employed during School Holidays.
- The grievance letter should detail why the parent feels that the school's response to the issue taken is inappropriate, unfair or unacceptable. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- The Head (or in his absence, a Deputy Head) conducts an investigation.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- A written response to the grievance is sent within 2 working days of receipt of the grievance letter. The Head will also give reasons for their decision.
- For all EYFS written complaints, the school will notify complainants of the outcome of any investigation undertaken within 28 days of having received the complaint.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure. The written record will record whether the complaint has been resolved or proceeded to a panel hearing (see below).

STAGE 3 PANEL HEARING

- In the event that the parent does not feel that the grievance has been resolved, they have a right of appeal to the Chair of Directors.
- A letter outlining the grievance should be sent to the Chair of the Board of Directors, c/o FSM and marked 'Urgent'.
- The parent should inform the Head that this step has been taken.
- The Chair of Directors will endeavour to make an initial response within 2 working days of receiving the letter.
- In the event that the parent remains dissatisfied, the Chair will convene a panel hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 working days, of not less than 3 persons who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of FSM. The parent(s) may attend the panel hearing, together with a friend but legal representation is not considered appropriate. However, should the complainant require legal representation then FSM should be given at least 7 working days' notice.
- The findings of this panel, together with a record of decisions and recommendations reached, will be made available. They will be sent by

electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and where relevant, the person complained about, and will be available for inspection at FSM by the Chair of Directors and the Head, within 7 working days.

- Those decisions are final and there shall be no further Right of Appeal.

Parents of boarders who feel that a complaint about the welfare of boarders has not been satisfactorily resolved by FSM, may contact **Hampshire Children's Services** on 01329 600 4555 or **ISI** (Independent Schools Inspectorate) Telephone 0207 600 0100.
Email: concerns@isi.net

All parents, should they wish, can contact **Ofsted** (for EYFS) or **ISI** (Independent Schools Inspectorate) to make a complaint.

Contact details for ISI are:
Independent Schools Inspectorate
Ground Floor
CAP House
9-12 Long Lane
London EC1A 9HA

Telephone 0207 600 0100 Email: concerns@isi.net

EYFS: Contact details for Ofsted EYFS are telephone 0300 1231231

WRITTEN RECORDS
A written record of all formal complaints will be kept whether or not they are resolved following the formal procedure or went to a panel hearing. The written record will detail the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they were upheld) and will be kept for at least three years. In addition a written record is kept of serious complaints and their outcomes for regular review by the Head or a member of Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

The written records will also be scrutinised by a member of the Governing Body (usually the Chair of the Board of Directors) at least termly and a summary of this written log will be presented by them at each of the termly Directors meetings.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 33k of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014; where disclosure is required by the Secretary of State or in the course of the school's inspection under section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Appendix 1

School Year 2022-23

Number of formal complaints registered in the School Year 2022-23: 6

School Year 2023-24

Number of formal complaints registered in the School Year 2023-24: 7

School Year 2024-25

Number of formal complaints registered in the School Year 2024-25: 5

School Year 2025-26

Number of formal complaints registered in the School Year 2025-26: 2

Appendix 2

Post Result Procedures & Appeals Policy for GCSE

Context

Papers are set by the awarding bodies and the same papers sat by candidates across the country. These papers are then marked externally by the awarding bodies and results are published to all candidates in August.

Post Results Services

Following the issue of results, a variety of post results services are available to candidates. Information regarding these services, plus the dates by which the Academy needs to receive requests in order to comply with awarding body deadlines is shown below. Details of how to apply for post results services and the fees that are applicable are provided to students with their results and also made available on the FSM website, Public Examinations page.

Services Available

Candidates may request a copy of their marked exam script in order to help decide whether to proceed with a review of marking request. The script should be returned in time for a student to proceed with a review.

Review of Marking

This is a review of the original marking to ensure that the mark scheme has been applied correctly. It is not a re-mark. The outcome should be issued within 20 days of the awarding body receiving the request.

A marking error can occur because of:
• an administrative error;
• a failure to apply the mark scheme where a task has only a ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answer;
• an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement.

Note that if a request is made for a review of the result of one or more examinations after the subject grade has been issued, there are three possible outcomes:
• The original mark is lowered, so the final grade may be lower than the original grade received.
• The original mark is confirmed as correct, and there is no change to the grade.
• The original mark is raised, so the final grade may be higher than the original grade received.

Candidates may request a copy of their reviewed script to be returned with the outcome of their review. This service is similar to the review of marking above but is

prioritised for candidates who have college places, pending results. The outcome should be issued within 15 days of the awarding body receiving the request.

Clerical Re-Check

This service will include the following checks:
• that all parts of the script have been marked;
• the totalling of marks;
• the recording of marks.

The outcome should be issued within 10 days of the awarding body receiving the request Before submitting a request for a review or re-check candidates must be clear that the final subject grade awarded may be lower than, higher than, or the same as the grade which was originally awarded for this subject. Pupils are advised to consult a member of staff if they are in any doubt about going ahead with a review. These can be ordered without a fee once the school has re-opened for the autumn term.

Fees

Note that in all but exceptional circumstances the fees for post-results services will be paid by the candidate. Details of fees and methods of payment will accompany the statement of results sent to students on results days.

Appeals

If a candidate remains dissatisfied following the outcome of a review of their results, they are advised to refer to the following JCQ publications before requesting an appeal: https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/appeals/

Appeals for internal candidates must be submitted by the head of centre, and not by the candidates themselves.

Private candidates (that is, candidates who have been entered for a subject by the centre but not received any tuition at the centre in the academic year in which the exam series occurs) may submit an application for an appeal directly to the awarding body.

Awarding bodies will only accept appeals following the outcome of a review of results or re-check. Appeals can only be lodged where there are clear and specific grounds for complaint.

In considering the case for internal applicants the school would need to take account of all relevant factors in deciding whether to support the appeal. If, on consideration of the evidence, the school does not believe that an appeal is justified, the school will inform the student and their parents/carers of this. Having taken their views into account, the school will make the final decision as to whether to submit the appeal and will ensure that this decision, and the justification for it, is communicated to parents/carers and students by the relevant Head of Faculty.

Candidates grades may go up, down or stay the same following an appeal. It is important that candidates are aware of this before the decision is made to submit an appeal. Grounds for appeal will be where the appellant (that is, the head of centre or private candidate) believes that either:
• A marking or moderation (or review of marking/moderation) error has occurred
or
• The awarding body did not apply its procedures consistently, properly or fairly

Process for Appeals

There is generally a two-stage appeals process:
• Stage One – the preliminary appeal – the case will be reviewed by a member of the awarding body who has not had any previous involvement with or personal interest in the matter.
• Stage Two – the appeal hearing – the case will be considered by a panel which will include at least one independent person.

At each stage, the appeal will either be upheld, not upheld or partially upheld.

An awarding body will send the centre or private candidate an outcome letter for each appeal once a decision has been reached.

Timescale for Appeals

Awarding bodies will process:
• Preliminary appeals (Stage One) within 42 calendar days of receipt of a valid application.
• Appeal hearings (Stage Two) within 70 calendar days of receipt of a valid application.
• Reviews of other administrative decisions within 42 days of receipt of a valid application.

Malpractice Appeals may also be lodged against decisions made in cases of malpractice. Further details on this can be found in the JCQ document Suspected Malpractice – Policies and Procedures and anyone considering requesting an appeal should read this document beforehand: http://www.jcq.org.uk/examsoffice/malpractice

Appeals against findings of malpractice must be made by the head of centre for internal candidates or by the candidates themselves in the case of private candidates. Applications for an appeal should be made within 14 calendar days of receiving the malpractice decision. The candidate will be informed if the centre is submitting an appeal against a malpractice decision on their behalf. The decision to appeal will be taken in line with the centre's internal appeals policy.

Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments or Special Consideration

Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration decisions are based on inter awarding body procedures. The principles and regulations governing access arrangements and special consideration are set out in the JCQ documents Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and A guide to the special consideration process: http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office

In considering appeals in relation to access arrangements, reasonable adjustments or special consideration, an appeals panel will consider whether the awarding body's actions in decisions relating to these were consistent with the published procedures and were fair. If a candidate reasonably believes that the awarding body has not followed due procedures, and the head of centre agrees, the head of centre may submit a written request for an appeal on behalf of the candidate. Applications for an appeal should be made within 14 calendar days of receiving the reasonable adjustment or special consideration decision.

Timelines for Appeals Against Post-Results Outcomes

Appeals must be submitted to exam boards within 30 days of the outcome of the review being issued by them and can only be submitted via the Examinations Co-ordinator (or by the candidate themselves in the case of private candidates).

Internal candidates wishing to go ahead must ensure that they contact the Examinations Officer via exams@fsmschool.com well in advance of the appeal deadline so that the school has sufficient time to consider the grounds for their request.

For more information on Appeals, including the criteria for lodging an Appeal and the stages of process for an Appeal, candidates should read the JCQ guide: https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/appeals