VICTORIA COLLEGE

PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Policy	Complaints		
Reviewer	Dan Pateman		
Reviewed ***Changes***	September 2026 *CYPES replaced Education Department* *Merged with new CYPES expectations*	**Next review**	August 2027
Relevant CYPES policies		Dealing with customer complaints and concerns	

VCP Policy

Introduction

Victoria College and Victoria College Preparatory School prides themselves on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to their pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this procedure.

Our school procedure has been written following guidance from the Children, Young People, Education and Skills (CYPES) Department. It ensures that we as a Government of Jersey school follow and are in line with the Government of Jersey Customer Feedback Policy. The various steps of our school's complaints procedure outline the actions we will undertake to respond to concerns and complaints in line with Stage 1 of this government policy.

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Victoria College Preparatory School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

Concerns	Complaints
A concern may be defined as '*an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*.	A complaint may be defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or a lack of action*'.
These are normally dealt with by class teachers or support staff.	These are normally dealt with by school leaders.
We don't keep formal records of concerns.	We keep records of all complaints.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of our school complaints procedure. Victoria College Preparatory School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, Victoria College Preparatory School will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, Victoria College Preparatory School will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Victoria College Preparatory School will initially attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the steps outlined within this complaints procedure.

Overview

How to raise a concern or make a complaint
A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of the complainant, as long as they have the complainant's consent to do so.

Concerns should normally be raised with the class teacher or member of staff concerned. However sometimes you may feel it more appropriate to contact, another member of staff or the headteacher. Please contact the school to arrange a suitable time to meet them or give them a call. Our staff are often busy, but we will always seek to respond to any concerns received within 2-3 working days wherever we can.

If the issue remains unresolved after you have tried this approach, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office.

Complaints against school staff (except the headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to the headteacher via the school office**.** Please mark them as Private and Confidential. You may wish also to refer to the CYPES Allegations Policy when doing this.

As a government provided primary school, we do not have a board of governors. Therefore, if your complaint is about, or involves, the headteacher, please contact the CYPES Department via education@gov.je or 01534 445504 who will forward your complaint to the senior adviser linked to the school.

In accordance with the discrimination (Jersey) Law 2013, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Anonymous complaints
We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the headteacher will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Time scales
It is important that a complaint is made as soon as possible but generally a complaint should be made:

- within 12 months of the date when the service was provided or the event being complained about occurred
  OR
- within 12 months of becoming aware of the event / subject matter

However, we will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if your complaint involves a disclosure of a safeguarding nature.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure
This procedure covers all complaints about any provision or services by Victoria College Preparatory School other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
• Admissions to schools	If you've made a request for a school admission and had that request denied, you have the right to appeal. You can request an appeal by emailing education@gov.je or by writing to CYPES. For further details please see the admissions information on the Government website
• Assessments of Special Educational Needs	Concerns or complaints about provision for your child should be addressed using our school complaints policy. However, if your child has a Record of Need and you wish to appeal the content of the assessment or the educational arrangements offered, you have 15 days in which to make a written appeal to the Education Minister. Please see the Government website for details.
• School re-organisation proposals	Please contact the CYPES by emailing education@gov.je or in writing.
• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact: • Dani Perrier, Designated Safeguarding Officer for CYPES (who has responsibility for safeguarding across Jersey schools) on 07797 924274 • or the Children and Families Hub on 01534 519000
• Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusions can be found on the School exclusion pages of the Government website. * *If your complaint is about the application of the school's behaviour policy* 084E08FE7AAB2108DD37DC9C8130DF49.pdf (sch.je) *you can do this through our school complaints procedure*
• Whistleblowing	Please see the government of Jersey's Whistleblowing Policy

• Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's and government's internal grievance procedures.
• Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the Government of Jersey's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them directly.
• Jersey Curriculum - content	Please contact the CYPES Department on education@gov.je

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, Jersey's safeguarding teams or tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against Victoria College Preparatory School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Resolving complaints

As indicated in our flow chart above, at each step in the procedure, Victoria College Preparatory School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Persistent complaints

Unreasonably persistent complaints

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore we will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:

- has made the same complaint before, and it's already been resolved by following the school's complaints procedure
- makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory or repetitive
- insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complaints procedure, beyond all reason
- pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner, e.g. refuses to articulate the complaint, refuses to co-operate with this complaints procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the timeframes it sets out
- makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on school time
- seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value.

Steps we will take

We will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns, and give them a clear statement of our position and their options. We will maintain our role as an objective arbiter throughout the process, including when we meet with individuals. We will follow our complaints procedure as normal (as outlined above) wherever possible.

If the complainant continues to contact the school in a disruptive way, we may put communications strategies in place. We may:

- Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term
- Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf
- Put any other strategy in place as necessary.

Stopping responding

In rare occasions we may stop responding to the complainant when all of the following factors are met:

- we, in agreement with senior officers from CYPES, believe that the school and CYPES have taken all reasonable steps (as in this procedure and the Government of Jersey Customer Feedback Policy) to help address their concerns
- we have provided a clear statement of our position and their options
- the complainant contacts us repeatedly, and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience

Where we stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so. We will also explain that we will still consider any new complaints they make.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from our school site.

Duplicate complaints

If we have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that we hadn't previously considered, or any new information we need to take into account.

If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will:

- tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and that the local process is complete
- direct them to the DfE if they are dissatisfied with our original handling of the complaint

If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again.

Complaint campaigns

Should the school receive a large volume of complaints about the same topic or subject, especially if these come from complainants unconnected with the school, we will follow CYPES guidance. This means that the school may respond to these complaints by:

- Publishing a single response on the school website
- Sending a template response to all of the complainants

If complainants are not satisfied with the school's response, or wish to pursue the complaint further, the normal procedures will apply.

How to make a complaint

Stage 1

Formal complaints should be made via the online form found on the Government of Jersey website - Submit feedback to the Government of Jersey or by contacting the school office.

The system will record the date the complaint was received. We aim to respond to step 1 complaints at the point of service or as soon possible after receipt. This should be up to 5 school days from the date of receipt.

Within this response, the school will decide the appropriate leader to investigate your complaint and they will seek to contact you. They will want to:

- clarify the nature of your complaint,
- ask what remains unresolved
- ask what outcome you would like to see.

The school leader you are dealing with can then consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

During their investigation, the investigator will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

Some investigations may require more time than others depending on the nature of the complaint. If the investigator is unable to meet the 5 working days deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date. At the conclusion of their investigation, they will provide a formal written response.

The response will detail the actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Victoria College Preparatory School will take to resolve the complaint.

The letter or email will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of School Step 1.

If the complaint is about the headteacher, the CYPES Department will appoint a senior officer to complete all the actions at School Step 1.

Stage 2

If a complaint is escalated to stage 2 then it will either be handled by a Senior Leader (stage 2a) or by the Head Teacher (stage 2b). If a complaint is handled by the Head Teacher. This may be done in person, in writing or by telephone to the school office.

Complaints handled by a Senior Leader

A senior leader will contact you to explore your reasons for wanting to take the matter further. They will then reconsider all or some of your complaint and all the evidence gathered by the investigator at School Step 1. They will then consider how effectively school policies and procedures have been followed and, if necessary, gather further evidence to review the judgement(s) made.

The senior leader can then:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the senior leader will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.

The senior leader will then contact you to detail their actions taken to re-consider the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. The letter or email they send you will advise you how to escalate your complaint should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of School Step 2.

Complaints handled by a Head Teacher

In certain cases it may be appropriate for the Head Teacher to handle a Stage 2 complaint. The Head Teacher will also review a complaint that has been handled by a Senior Leader at Stage 2.

The headteacher will arrange a time to contact you to discuss your reasons for wanting them to do this. This may be done in person, in writing or by telephone to the school office.

If appropriate, the headteacher may repeat some or all of the actions of School Step 2.

Having reconsidered the evidence gathered and processes followed, the headteacher will then contact you to share their findings. The letter or email they send you will:

- detail their actions and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it.
- explain whether your complaint has been upheld in part or in full
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future
- advise you of your right to escalate your complaint to the CYPES Department to consider under Stage 2 of the Government of Jersey Customer Feedback Policy should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Victoria College Preparatory School internal complaints procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- Complaints rarely reach this formal level but, should you need to, you should make a formal complaint to the Chair of Governors within 10 school days of the Stage 2 decision.
- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), the Chair of the Board of Governors, will instigate the process to set up a Complaints Panel (see below how the Complaints Panel is to be formed).
- The matter will then be referred 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*, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors. The Chair, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 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 5 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. The Complaints Panel will meet in private to consider all the relevant facts when making its decision.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it will be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it will complete within 5 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 any recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headteacher, the Governors and, where relevant, the person or persons about whom the complaint was made.

Complaints Panel Formation:

- Parents, carers or pupils who wish to pursue a complaint regarding a school issue can refer the complaint to a review committee of governors, known as a Complaints Panel.
- The panel will consist of at least three persons, not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. Two of the panel must be governors, with at least one of these governors being a Parent Governor. The third member shall be independent of the management and running of the school.
- The Headteacher may **not** be a member of the panel.
- Governors should be mindful of equality issues when looking at the composition of a Complaints Panel.
- If a Governor Complaints Panel cannot be formed (i.e. owing to conflicts of interest), the schools may opt to approach a different school in Jersey or the Education Department to sit on the panel, thereby ensuring independence of the Complaints Panel formed.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where any other legal obligation prevails, or it is appropriate to disclose such information.

Unless an objection is made, complainants should be aware that the Headteacher may deem it necessary to inform the schools' senior management teams and the Chair of Governors of the nature of the complaint, so that services can be improved. Complaints will not be shared with the whole Governing Body, except in very general terms, in case an appeal panel needs to be organised.

The procedure when the Headteacher or Member of the Governing Body is the subject of the complaint or has a conflict of interest

- Complaints against the Headteacher are usually first dealt with by the Chair of Governors and, if a conflict of interest arises, may be referred by the Chair of Governors to the Chief Education Officer from CYPES.
- Complaints against the Chair of Governors or any individual Governor should be made in writing to the Chief Education Officer of CYPES.
- The decision of the Chief Education Officer will be final. CYPES' findings and any recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headteacher, the Governors and, where relevant, the person or persons about whom the complaint was made.

Escalation to CYPES

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure, or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the CYPES Department. This should normally only be done after they have been through the school procedures outlined above.

If escalated in this way, the complaint will be considered in line with Stage 3 of the Government of Jersey Customer Feedback Policy. This means that it will be considered by a senior manager within the CYPES Department, or occasionally the headteacher of the school, whoever is deemed to be most appropriate for the case in question.

This stage of the complaints process is designed for issues that require further investigation or are complex, serious, high-risk, requires consent, or will take time to investigate.

The CYPES Department will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by schools who have followed their complaints procedures. They will consider whether the school has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

This level of complaint handling will allow for:

- assessment and investigation of the complaint and decision/s already made.
- facilitated resolution process by request of the complainant (where a person not connected with the complaint reviews the matter and attempts to find an outcome acceptable to the relevant parties.

Further details can be found online: Government of Jersey Customer Feedback Policy.

The complainant can refer their complaint to CYPES by:

- T 01534 445504
- F 01534 445524
- E education@gov.je

Monday to Friday, 8.45am to 4.30pm

Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department
PO Box 142
Highlands Campus
Jersey
JE4 8QJ

Learning lessons

The headteacher will review any underlying issues raised by complaints to determine whether there are any improvements that the school can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

Monitoring arrangements

The senior leadership team will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in making sure that complaints are handled properly. We will track the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues. The complaints records are logged and managed by the Head/Deputy Headteacher.

This policy will be reviewed by every 3 years.

VICTORIA COLLEGE
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Complaint Form
Please complete and return to a member of the school leadership team who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: **Day time telephone number:** **Evening telephone number:**

Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.
What remains unresolved?
What outcome would you like to see?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.
Signature: **Date:**
Official use
Date acknowledgement sent:
By who:
Complaint referred to:
Date:

Roles and Responsibilities:

Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- ask for assistance as needed
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
  - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
  - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
  - consideration of records and other relevant information
  - analysing information
- liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond
- prepare a comprehensive report that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems. Senior leaders / the headteacher will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint. The school will communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.