



ST EDMUND'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL, PORTSMOUTH



GOVERNORS' POLICY ON COMPLAINTS
(The Complaints Procedure is an integral part of this Policy)

THE SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

I can do all things with the help of God who strengthens me. Philippians 4.13

INTRODUCTION

The Governors are committed to ensuring the highest standards are maintained at St Edmund's both in the provision of education to pupils and in every other aspect of the running of the School. A complaints procedure is an integral part of the management of a well-run school, allowing parents the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have, through the appropriate channels. This procedure has been adopted by the Governing Body to ensure a systematic and fair approach to the resolution of such concerns.

Note: Complaints relating to the curriculum should be addressed under the separate Curriculum Complaints procedure * and any complaints by staff should be addressed under the School's Grievance Procedure **.

This procedure is designed to allow parents and carers of registered pupils at the School a means of making a complaint which they can be confident will be addressed properly.

A complaint may result in disciplinary action by the Governors of St Edmund's against a member of staff, which would be confidential between that member of staff and the Governors but otherwise parents/carers should be kept fully informed of the handling of any complaint. Any complaint will be kept confidential unless it is necessary to involve other parties and will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

In general, any written complaint should be addressed to the Headteacher it is expected that attempts will be made to resolve difficulties informally with the appropriate Middle Leader, before being referred to the Headteacher. The informal stage of the procedure should be exhausted before the matter is referred to the formal stage. If any substantial complaint is received by a member of staff it should be referred to the Line Manager or Headteacher as appropriate, if it cannot immediately be resolved by the member of staff to the satisfaction of the parent/carer.

Complaints Procedure - stages in the Procedure

Introduction

There are two stages in the School's Complaints Procedure: an informal stage when staff will try to resolve the problem and a formal stage when the matter is referred to Governors if the parent/carer is not satisfied with the outcome of the first stage.

Informal stage

Most parents'/carers' concerns can be adequately resolved by discussion with the Tutor/Head of Learning/Head of Year, or with other members of staff. There may be no need for the complaint to be put in writing which would formalise matters, and may lead parents to feel less prepared to articulate concerns, perhaps because of a fear that such action may prejudice the interests of their child.

1. If the concern is not met to the parents'/carers' satisfaction by discussion then the initial recipient of the complaint should refer the matter to the Headteacher or a designated member of the Senior Management Team (SMT). It may be appropriate at this stage for the complaint to be put in writing.
2. The Headteacher or a designated member of the SMT will investigate the circumstances of the complaint and may find it appropriate to ask for written statements from staff or pupils and to request further relevant information.
3. If the complaint is against a member of staff, that member of staff has a right to be given details of the complaint and the opportunity to make representation about it. These will be taken into account by the investigating officer.
4. The Headteacher or designated member of staff will respond to the parent/carer with the outcome of the investigation, normally within 10 school working days of receipt of the substance of the complaint. The response may be in writing or at a meeting with written confirmation of the outcome.
5. The parent/carer must be informed of his or her right to have the matter referred to Governors if they believe the outcome of the informal stage is not satisfactory. Any such request by a parent/carer should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governors at the School.

Formal stage

6. When a formal request for the Governors to consider a complaint is received by the Clerk, the Clerk will refer the matter in the first instance to the Chair of Governors or another nominated Governor who will investigate. The Governor will investigate and prepare a written statement of findings to be submitted to the parent/carer. The parent/carer must be informed of the right to refer the matter to the Complaints Committee of the Governing Body if they are not satisfied with the outcome.
7. If a Hearing is requested, the Clerk will write to the parent/carer, the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors. Giving details of the meeting, requesting copies of any documents to be put before the meeting and names of any witnesses who either party may wish to attend. The parent/carer will be informed of the right to be accompanied by a friend. The hearing should be on reasonable notice and be held as soon as practicable after receipt of the referral.
8. The procedure at the hearing needs to be appropriate for the circumstances and is at the discretion of the Chair of the Complaints committee but is likely to involve:
 - Presentation of the complaint
 - A reply by the Headteacher or Governor
 - Questioning by all parties
 - Representation about ways to resolve the complaint satisfactorily

9. If necessary, the Committee will withdraw to consider their findings of fact based on the evidence put before them and their conclusions, which may include measures to redress problems identified. The Committee's decision is final.

REVIEW: This Policy/Procedure was reviewed in October 2018 and will be kept under review.