

Complaints Procedure

Quick Guide for Parents September 2017

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has a complaints procedure to ensure that we respond to complaints as quickly and as effectively as possible. A copy of the full policy can be obtained from the school office or downloaded from the school website

This procedure is to deal with complaints relating to the school and any community facilities or services that the school provides. We value all comments about our school and we will endeavour to address your concerns at the earliest stage possible to prevent escalation to the formal stage and a protracted complaint that can be distressing for all involved.

When making a complaint it is important you identify your desired outcome, that is what actions you feel might resolve the problem at any stage. If the complaint concerns the Head Teacher or Governors you should contact the Chair of Governors directly in writing. If you are not satisfied with the action taken by the Chair of Governors you should contact the Local Authority or the Diocese.

Stage 1 (also known as the Informal Stage)

The complainant raises and discusses their concerns/issues with child/young person's class teacher or form tutor. Most concerns can be resolved satisfactorily at this stage. However, the staff member may feel it more appropriate to refer the complainant to a more senior or experienced member of staff who will try to resolve the concern informally.

Stage 2

If the complainant remains unhappy, they should then contact the headteacher either by arranging an appointment to see them or putting their concerns in writing. The headteacher (or their nominated representative) will then investigate the concerns and respond within agreed timescales. An acknowledgement will be made of the concern/complaint within five school working days. The headteacher will respond to the issues raised within 15 school working days of receiving the complaint. If it is not possible to meet these timescales, then the headteacher will contact the complainant to discuss reviewing these.

If the concern or complaint is against the headteacher, in the first instance the complainant will need to write in confidence to the chair of governors at the school. The chair of governors will seek to resolve the issue informally before, if necessary, moving to Stage 3.

Stage 3 (also known as the Formal Stage)

If the headteacher is unable to resolve the concern to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant may write to the chair of governors at the school. The chair of governors will acknowledge the complaint within five school working days and arrange a panel of governors to be formed to hear the complaint (within agreed timescales). These governors will have no previous involvement or knowledge of the case. The chair/clerk of the complaints panel will contact the complainant with the arrangements. Both parties may bring their representative with them.

Once the panel has been held the complainant and school will be informed of their decision within five school working days. If it is not possible to meet these timescales then the chair of the panel will contact both parties to discuss a mutually convenient date. For further details about how the panel should operate see Appendix 1.

Stage 4

If the complainant remains unsatisfied by the outcome of the governors' panel, they may contact the local authority, who will investigate if the school's complaints process has been carried out appropriately. However, the local authority cannot overturn a panel's decision.

The local authority contact is:

Lead Commissioner for Learning & Partnership

Kings House

Grand Avenue

Hove

BN3 2LS

Telephone: 01273 293514

The local authority will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five school working days. They will inform the complainant and the school of the outcome of their investigation of the process within 15 school working days of receiving the complaint. If it is not possible to meet the timescales then the local authority officer will contact the complainant and school to discuss reviewing these.

Stage 5

If the complainant is unsatisfied at the end of Stage 4 they can contact the Secretary of State:

Secretary of State for Education

Department for Education

Sanctuary Buildings

Great Smith Street

London

SW1P 3BT

Telephone: 0870 000 2288

The following diagram details the stages you should follow in the event of a complaint:

Model Complaints Procedure

