



Complaint Policy

As a Catholic community we come together to celebrate our love of God and each other, by following Jesus' example of love, forgiveness and truth.

- We provide a safe and happy school recognizing the achievements, talents and personal worth of every child.
- We nurture our children in the spirit of peace and reconciliation, encouraging the values of love, care and respect within all our relationships.
- We encourage our children to be responsible by caring for the world that God created and by being aware of those in need in the wider community.

Introduction

This is a Catholic School and we believe that all who work here have a God given responsibility to do the best we can, ultimately for the good of the children we are privileged to care for. We also place great emphasis on the power of positive relationships and this is reflected in our ethos and in our mission statement. The Staff work hard and are very dedicated to their teaching vocation at all levels across the school. We believe we genuinely do give our best and there are many areas in which staff repeatedly go well beyond the call of duty. No school is perfect, however, and we are all aware that sometimes despite everyone's best efforts things do on occasion go wrong. When this happens we ask that parents talk to us right away so that we can act quickly to try to put things right. The school will always try to work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure all children are well provided for in every respect. However, from time to time, we understand that a parent may not be happy about an aspect of this school or with something that has happened.

When parents or carers have a concern or complaint the school has in place a complaint policy and procedure that can be easily accessed, a copy of which is available on request from the school. This policy sets out the process parents or carers should follow if they wish to discuss a concern or progress a formal complaint with the school.

Principle

Staff will respond to any concerns or complaints received in a sensitive and courteous way and will ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times. If a member of staff is in receipt of a concern or complaint they will listen to what is said and in the first instance try to resolve matters informally as quickly as possible. The dignity of individuals must always be respected and upheld both by those responding to a concern or complaint, and by those raising a concern or making a complaint. The school follows the guidance set out by the Local Authority in dealing with vexatious or aggressive behaviour, and any such incidents will be recorded and dealt with appropriately, including seeking legal advice where this is felt to be necessary.

A complaint should not be heard by the whole Governing Body at any time as this may compromise the ability of individual Governors to provide an independent overview required at the later stages of the procedure. It would also restrict their eligibility to sit on any disciplinary panel that may result from a complaint. If individual governors are approached by parents regarding making a formal complaint they should signpost the parent to the Head Teacher and the school complaint process.

Aims and objectives

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any concern or complaint, and we also welcome any positive feedback from parents and carers. We give careful consideration to all concerns and complaints, and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We will always aim to resolve matters through dialogue and mutual understanding, and in all cases we will put the interests of the child above all other issues.

An effective Complaint policy should:

- be easily **accessible** and **publicised**;
- encourage **informal** resolution wherever possible
- be **simple** to understand and use;
- be **impartial and non-adversarial**
- allow **swift** handling with reasonable **time-limits**, and keep people informed.
- ensure full and **impartial** investigation
- respect people's desire for **confidentiality**;
- provide **effective** response and **appropriate** redress, where necessary;
- provide for effective monitoring of complaint information

How to Share a Concern:

In the first instance any concerns should be raised as soon as possible with the class teacher, most concerns are resolved in this way without the need to engage the formal process. (If the concern or complaint is about the Head Teacher then it should be taken to the Chair of the School Governing Body who will deal with the concern or complaint).

If the concern or complaint cannot be resolved informally by the class teacher then it can be progressed through the formal complaints process as set out below:

The Formal Complaints Process

Three stages are in place at St Joseph's School:

- Stage one: Complaint heard by Head Teacher
- Stage two: Complaint heard by Chair of Governors
- Stage three: Complaint referred to Governing Body Complaint Appeal Panel.

Stage One: Complaint Heard by Head Teacher

- Where the class teacher is unable to resolve matters informally, then an appointment should be made as soon as possible to discuss the concerns or complaint with the Head Teacher.
- The Head Teacher will acknowledge and agree the complaint issues in writing, and may want to discuss any possible outcome that would resolve matters.
- The Head Teacher will investigate the complaint, and may review any relevant documentation available, or speak to those involved as appropriate.
- A written response detailing the outcome and any actions to be taken as a result of the complaint will be received by the complainant, usually within a maximum of 25 working days.

NB: If the complaint is about the Head Teacher then it will be dealt with immediately at the second stage of the formal process.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the response from the Head Teacher then they can request that their complaint be progressed to the next stage of the complaint process.

NB: In some circumstances, a parent may feel that an interim step is more appropriate, and may wish to take the matter to a senior or pastoral member of staff at the school as an interim measure before taking it to the head teacher.

Stage 2: Complaint Heard by Chair of Governors

- The complainant will need to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of their complaint, and enclosing where possible a copy of the response to their complaint received from the Head Teacher.
- The Chair of Governors will acknowledge receipt of the complaint usually in writing within 5 working days, and will arrange to meet, further discuss the complaint and try to find a satisfactory resolution. Where appropriate the Chair of Governors may make further enquiries and will write to confirm details of the outcome.

If the complaint is still not resolved then the complainant may request that the Chair of Governors arranges for a Governing Body Complaint Appeal Panel to hear their complaint.

Stage 3: Review by the Governing Body Complaint Appeal Panel

- The Chair of Governors will arrange for a Governing Body Complaint Appeal Panel to be convened (usually within 20 working days of receipt of the request).
- The Complaint Panel will be made up of Governing Body members who have had no prior involvement in the complaint.
- The Chair will write to all parties informing of the date, time and venue of the panel at least 5 working days in advance. The notification to the complainant should also inform him/her of the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend and the right to submit further written evidence.
- Information packs will be sent out to those attending at least 3 working days prior to the panel.
- The Chair may invite any officers/witnesses to attend for part of the panel where this is felt to be appropriate.
- It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that the meeting is properly conducted and where required minuted.
- It may be possible for the panel to enable a resolution to be found that all parties can agree, or if a resolution cannot be reached it may only be possible for the panel to identify a constructive way forward.
- Following the Panel meeting, the Chair will write to both the school and the complainant/s confirming the outcome, (usually within 5 working days) and detailing any recommendations made by the panel members in respect of the complaint.

The Governing Body Complaint Appeal Panel is the final stage of the school based complaint procedure. Should parents/carers remain dissatisfied with the way that the school has responded to their complaint then they have the right to write to the Secretary of State for Education.

More information is available for Parents wishing to make a complaint about a school from the Department for Education and from Ofsted.

Monitoring and review

The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The head teacher logs all formal complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

See Appendix 1 for School Complaint Process Flowchart.

Appendix 1

ST. JOSEPH'S R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL – COMPLAINT PROCESS

In the first instance any concerns or complaint should be discussed with the class teacher who will try to resolve matters informally
(If the concern/complaint is about the Head Teacher it should be taken to the Chair of Governors).

IF CONCERN/COMPLAINT CANNOT BE RESOLVED INFORMALLY (Stage 1 – Formal Process)

You should make an appointment to meet with the Head Teacher to discuss your concern/complaint
The Head Teacher will investigate your complaint and write to you with a response usually within 20 working days.

IF YOUR COMPLAINT IS STILL NOT RESOLVED (Stage 2 – Formal Process)

You will need to write to the Chair of Governors detailing your complaint.
The Chair will acknowledge receipt of your complaint, usually within 5 working days and arrange to meet with you.

IF YOUR COMPLAINT IS STILL NOT RESOLVED

You can request that the Chair of Governors arranges for a Governing Body Complaint Appeal Panel to hear your complaint.

You will be invited along with the school representative to attend the panel and will receive a written response from the Chair of the Panel following the meeting.

THIS PANEL CONCLUDES THE SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Should you remain dissatisfied following the Governing Body Complaint Appeal Panel meeting with the way that the school has responded to your complaint, you can contact the Secretary of State for Education.