

# St. John's C of E (VA) Primary School

## Complaints Policy and Procedure



**'That all may Love, Learn, Flourish'**

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Frequency of review	Bi-annual
Reviewed by	P&F <sub>1</sub>

## **That all may: Love, Learn, Flourish**

As a Church of England School, our school vision and Christian values are at the heart of all we do. We value our relationship with parents and all members of the school and local community. If you have a concern, we want to know about it so that it can be dealt with as soon as possible. Most concerns can be dealt with easily and quickly but to ensure all concerns are handled effectively, the Governing Body has adopted this complaints policy and procedure.

As a school we actively welcome the views and opinions of all members of our school community. The school will give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them fairly and honestly. As well as addressing an individual's complaints, the process of listening to and resolving complaints will contribute to school improvement. The monitoring and review of complaints by the school and the Governing Body can be a useful tool in evaluating a school's performance.

## **What is required by law?**

Since 1 September 2003, governing bodies of all maintained schools and maintained nursery schools in England have been required, under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, to have in place a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides. The law also requires the procedure to be publicised.

## **Scope**

This policy and procedure sets out how complaints made by members of our school community relating to the school will be addressed.

## What is not covered by this complaints policy and procedure?

A complaints procedure does not cover those aspects of school life for which there is a statutory or separate procedure as they will be addressed by their own protocol/procedures.

For example it does not apply to complaints or appeals about:

- Statutory assessment of Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Pupil admissions
- Pupil exclusions
- Staff discipline, grievance, capability or pay
- School re-organisation proposals
- Matters likely to require a Child Protection investigation
- Whistleblowing allegations, e.g. of financial impropriety or criminal activity
- A third party who hires or uses the school premises or facilities

## .This policy is devised with the intention that it will:

- usually be possible to resolve problems by informal means
- be simple to use and understand
- treat complaints confidentially
- allow problems to be handled swiftly
- ensure consistency of action for the handling of complaints
- inform future practice so that the problem is unlikely to recur
- reaffirm the partnership between parents, staff and governors as they work together for the good of the pupils in the school
- ensure that a full, fair investigation takes place as appropriate
- ensure that the school's attitude to a pupil would never be affected by a parental complaint
- discourage anonymous complaints
- actively encourage strong home-school links

- ensure that all staff have opportunities to discuss and understand the school's response to concerns and complaints made by parents
- ensure that any person complained against has equal rights with the person making the complaint
- ensure that all parties are kept informed of the progress
- regularly review its system for monitoring concerns and complaints received from parents.

## **1. Expressing a concern: for parents, legal guardians and carers**

### **If you have a concern**

We would like you to tell us about it directly so that we can talk with you and see how best to resolve your concern. It is important that any concern is raised as soon as possible. The majority of concerns can be resolved informally by speaking to a member of staff. We take concerns seriously and welcome suggestions for improving our work in the school. Whatever your concern, please know that we shall treat it as strictly confidential.

Be assured that no matter what you wish to share with us, our support and respect for you and your child in the school will not be affected in any way; please do not delay telling us of your concern.

After hearing your concern, we will act as quickly as we can; we will let you know the timescale within which you may expect a response. Please allow time for any action we may take to be effective.

### **Our Procedure is in 4 stages .**

#### **What to do first (Stage 1 - informal)**

Please contact your child's class teacher or other appropriate member of staff, and arrange a time when you can discuss your concern. It may be possible for you to see the member of staff straight away but normally it is better to make an appointment so that you can sit and talk things through. It may be possible to give a response quite quickly, but where any investigation or information is required a response may be provided within 5 working school days; this may be to provide a timeline or to arrange a meeting.

#### **If you need further action (Stage 2 - still informal)**

Please contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to arrange a time when you can meet with them informally to discuss your concern. All efforts will be made to meet with you as soon as possible and within 5 working school days if realistic. Following the meeting it may be necessary for the member of SLT to investigate the matter, after which they will aim to get back to you within 5 working school days of your meeting.

#### **What to do next (Stage 3 – formal, using the complaints form).**

If you are still unhappy you may ask for an appointment with the Head Teacher within 10 school days of receiving the final . Stage 2 response. You should provide an outline of your concern on the School's complaints form when you make the appointment. After your discussion with the Head Teacher you may have to wait a short time while investigations are carried out. Every effort will be made to resolve the situation as quickly as possible and the Head Teacher will aim to send you a written response within 5 school days of your meeting. If it is not possible to respond within this timescale, the Head Teacher will confirm when you can expect a response.

#### **If you are still having concerns (Stage 4 - formal)**

The problem will normally be resolved by this stage. However, if you still have concerns that have not been resolved you may ask the Chair of the School's Governing Body for your

complaint to be considered by a panel of three members of the Governing Body who have had no prior involvement in the complaint.

To request a Panel to hear your complaint please complete the form in Appendix 1 below and send it in a sealed envelope marked 'Confidential, Addressee only' to the Chair of Governors c/o the School,

The Complaints Panel will listen to you, to the Head Teacher and, if appropriate, to any others involved before coming to a decision. You may bring a friend to the hearing if you wish but legal representation is not permitted.

## **2. Complaints from other members of the school community**

**Pupils** who may wish to express a concern are encouraged to speak to an appropriate adult who will investigate the concern and seek to resolve the matter informally. Should the investigation raise serious issues these will be dealt with by following school policies and procedures such as the behavior or anti bullying policies.

**Visitors** to the school may also raise concerns or make a verbal or more formal complaint. These will be investigated as with parental complaints and the complainant will be responded to following the same procedure.

**The handling of any anonymous complaints** will be left to the Head Teacher's or the Chair of Governor's discretion to decide whether the complaint justifies investigation.

## **3. Roles in the complaints procedure**

### **The Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher is responsible for the organisation and management of the school and its staff. The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for considering complaints in the first instance or if appropriate, arranging for a designated member of staff to deal with them.

If a governor or a member of staff receives a written complaint this should be forwarded to the Head Teacher.

Where other members of staff are designated to consider complaints there will always be arrangements for the Head Teacher to be kept fully informed of the complaint and the way in which it is being addressed. In determining which course of action to take over a response to a complaint, the Head Teacher may wish to consult the Chair of the Governing Body, the Local Authority or the Diocesan Board.

### **The Governing Body**

The Governing Body is responsible for the overall conduct of the school and to ensure that a complaints procedure is in place.

If a governor is approached directly, the complainant will be referred to the appropriate person in accordance with the complaints procedure. Only in circumstances where the Head Teacher is the subject of the complaint would the Chair of Governors undertake the initial investigation. If the Chair of the Governing Body receives a formal written complaint, the Chair would normally first discuss the matter with the Head Teacher and follow the appropriate process.

After a complaint has been dealt with it may be appropriate for the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors to report to the Governing Body without mentioning named or information which would identify individuals.

## **The Complaints Panel**

The Governing Body nominates and appoints a Complaints Panel consisting of three governors each Autumn Term to consider any formal written complaint for that academic year. Should any member of that panel have involvement with a specific complaint at any point prior to Stage 4 a new appointed governor will replace that member for that complaint. The panel chair will contact you within 5 working school days to arrange the meeting; which should be held within 10 working school days.

## **4. Requests to record meetings**

It is not permitted for anyone to make a recording (for example audio or video) of any conversation, or during any informal or formal meeting, without the prior expressed consent of all those participating being given and noted in writing.

Notes should be taken by the school at all meetings and copies, marked confidential and sent to the participants as a record of what was said. These will not be verbatim, but a summary and record of the key points.

## **5. Child Protection**

For any complaint that involves a potential child protection issue, local authority procedures will be followed and appropriate agencies will be informed.

## **6. Monitoring of complaints**

All formal complaints are reported to Governors on a termly basis. They will monitor the number and nature of any complaints in order to identify any trends or recurring issues so that services can be improved.

## **7. Further rights of appeal**

Parents may, if they believe the Governors' Complaints Panel has acted unreasonably, or that the Governors have not followed their own procedures in considering the complaint, make a complaint to the Department for Education using an on-line complaints form. Parents may also complain to OFSTED, but OFSTED will not normally investigate complaints concerning individual pupils, but if there are any child protection concerns they may pass these to social services, or the police and this may trigger an inspection.



**Formal Complaint Form for use at Stage 3 and Stage 4**

I wish to meet with ..... to discuss the following matter:

Your name:	
<b>Pupil's name:</b>	
Your relationship to the pupil:	
Your address:	Day time telephone number:
	Evening telephone number
	email address:
Postcode:	
<p>Please note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ if completing online, all sections of this form expand.</li> <li>➤ if completing a printed hard copy please use additional sheets if needed, numbering them and confirming the number of sheets here:</li> </ul> <p>..... <b>number of additional sheets enclosed.</b></p> <p><b>A. Original Complaint.</b>                  Please give details of your <u>original</u> complaint/concern and how it has affected you or your/a child. Please include dates, times, details of witnesses etc to allow the matter to be fully investigated.  <i>(Please use section <b>B</b> below for outlining what has happened since you contacted the school.)</i></p>	

**B. Previous Stages:**

Please give details of how your complaint has progressed. For example: who did you speak to?; what was the response?; and what action have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint?

Stage 1:

Stage 2:

*If applicable*

Stage 3:

Stage 4:

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please list the documents here:

Dates/times when it would be most convenient for you to attend a meeting

**Please print, sign this form below and send it to the school office in a sealed envelope marked 'Confidential, Addressee only' to:**

The Head Teacher

or

The Chair of Governors if the complaint is at Stage 4 **or** the complaint is regarding the Head Teacher.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**FOR SCHOOL USE:**

**1. Date received:  
By whom:**

**2. Date acknowledgement sent:  
By whom:**

**3. Complaint referred to:  
By whom:**