



Complaints Policy

St Mary's Church of England (A) Primary School promotes the safeguarding and welfare of all students in its care: all policies support the "Safeguarding Policy", are fully consistent with the "Every Child Matters" agenda, and fully support the principles of equal opportunities for all.

St Mary's Church of England (A) Primary School has adopted the Staffordshire County Council Complaints Policy.

1. Introduction

We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and that the Headteacher and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place to give all interested parties a means to raise issues of concern and have them addressed. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

2. Aims and objectives

Our School aims to:

- be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint
- give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible
- resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases; we put the interests of the child above all other issues
- provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved
- treat all complainants respectfully during and after the course of any complaints investigation
- make all staff aware of the complaints procedure and ensure that they understand:
 1. The importance of attempting to resolve problems before they become formal complaints.
 2. The importance of treating complaints respectfully.

3. Expressing Concerns

Stage 1 - Informal conversation with class teacher

If a parent/guardian has any concerns, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress. Please make a before or after school appointment with the Office Manager for a meeting with your child's class teacher.

Stage 2 – Referral of concerns to the Headteacher

This stage should be progressed to if a parent/guardian feels that:

- a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher; or
- that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature that they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher.

The Headteacher considers any such complaint very seriously and will investigate each case thoroughly. The complaint will be formally recorded and will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage. At this stage the Headteacher will consider whether the complaint can be resolved without recourse to the Governing Board.

Action through a complaints procedure may lead to action being initiated under other procedures. This may be disciplinary, or child protection procedures and consideration should be given to this possibility at the earliest stage. In these cases, the investigations under the complaints procedure, will be suspended until action under the other procedures (including appeals) has been concluded. The complainant will be advised if this is the case and also informed of the likely delay in the final resolution of their complaint.

Stage 3 – Referral of Complaint to the Chair of Governors/Complaints Committee

If after discussion with the Headteacher under stage 2, the matter is still not resolved or the Headteacher feels it appropriate to refer to the Governing Board, the matter will be presented to the Chair of Governors. The complainant will need to write to the Chair of Governors outlining the complaint and the actions already taken by the school to resolve the matter. Appendix 1 of this document may be used instead of a letter if the complainant so wishes. The name of the current Chair of Governors is available on the school website or through the school office. The Chair will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 working days. The Chair of Governors will consider whether the investigation can be completed by the Headteacher (who will already have been involved), the Chair him/herself, or whether to refer the complaint to a Complaints Committee of the Governing Body. The panel will be made up of between 3 and 5 members of the Governing Body. The panel will not include the Headteacher and, according to the matter complained about, it may not be appropriate for certain categories of Governor to be included.

The Committee will meet at a time convenient to the members of the Committee, the Chair (who will present the report), the complainant (in order that they may make representations in person) and any witnesses.

Outcomes

In all cases where a complaint has been investigated the complainant will be given a written response, within 48 hours of the hearing, covering:

- the complaint;
- the scope of the investigation;
- the conclusion of the investigation;
- any action which has resulted.

The Committee may wish to offer the complainant the opportunity to discuss the response.

If the investigation upholds the complaint, redress should be appropriate to the complaint and may include:

- Offering an appropriate expression of regret
- Providing the solution desired by the complaint
- Changing the procedures to avoid future problems

The school will take responsibility for:

- Deciding who can take remedial action
- Ensuring that the remedy is carried out
- Ensuring that any remedy is within the powers of the school
- Ensuring the approach to remedies is reasonable and consistent

If the committee believes that the complaint may lead to disciplinary proceedings against a teacher or involves child protection procedures the response will say that these procedures have been invoked.

Where a complaint is not upheld the complainant will be given a written response and informed of any further action that might be appropriate in their situation.

If dissatisfied with the Committee's decision the complainant can raise the matter with the Secretary of State for Education. However, the Secretary of State for Education will investigate further only if the school and the Governing Board have failed to adopt the correct procedures or if new information has come to light.

4. Complaint about the Headteacher

Should a parent have a complaint about the Headteacher, s/he should contact the Chair of Governors as in stage 3 above.

5. Concerns About a Member of Staff

Any concerns a parent/carer may have regarding a member of staff should, in the first instance, be referred to the Headteacher. However, if for whatever reason, it is felt to be inappropriate to refer the concern to the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors may be contacted. This should be done through the School Office. The Office Manager will contact the Chair of Governors and ask him/her to contact the complainant directly. Details of the concern need not be disclosed to the Office Manager and any request to contact the Chair of Governors will be dealt with in confidence.

6. Monitoring and review

The Governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher logs all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors are informed of any complaints on a termly basis via the Headteacher's Report. 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.

Appendix 1

Complaints

Please complete this form and return it to the school who will then forward it to the Chair of the Governing Board. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

1. Name _____

2. Address _____

3. Telephone Number Home _____ Work _____

4. Name of Child _____

5. Details of the complaint, (please include the date or period of time to which your complaint relates and confirm whether you have already expressed your concerns informally, and to whom and when).

6. Do you have a suggestion for change?

Please attach copies of any more information you have to back up your complaint such as letters or report.

Signed: _____ Date: _____