



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Complaints Procedure Policy

Introduction

As the first educators of their children, parents have a duty to take an active interest in their school. Canon Law requires that there is a partnership between the parent and the school “...there must be the closest co-operation between parents and the teachers to whom they entrust their children to be educated. In fulfilling their task, teachers are to collaborate closely with the parents and willingly listen to them.” (Canon 796).

The partnership between the parent and the school is integral to the ethos and mission of this Catholic school and should be characterised by a mutual respect by which parents feel they are able to bring their concerns to the attention of someone in the school, at any time, with the expectation they will be listened to and their concerns addressed.

Dealing with concerns

Not all concerns are complaints. A concern is an issue raised by a parent, pupil or other person that is resolved quickly and informally. Most concerns are resolved by the person to whom the concern is addressed e.g. the class teacher. We treat all concerns seriously and take prompt action to reach a resolution.

Many concerns are expressed because of misunderstandings. We work to reduce these concerns by:

- providing parents with regular information;
- involving parents and pupils in school reviews and evaluations;
- providing adequate times in the school year for parents to meet with teachers;
- ensuring regular communication between the teacher and the parent by notes home or entries in the contact book;
- inviting parents in if the school has concerns.

Concerns that are resolved informally are not complaints and there is no requirement to record them as complaints.

Statutory requirements.

We follow statutory requirements in this policy and it will be reviewed regularly.

The complaints procedure **does not** deal with: -

- complaints about the curriculum (including the provision for collective worship); there is a separate procedure for this which is set up by the LEA. *The Guide to the Law for School Governors 2004: Voluntary Aided Schools* describes how this works (ch. 6 Paragraphs 64-65)
- staff grievances;
- staff discipline;
- staff capability;
- staff absence owing to sickness.

General Principles of the complaints procedure:

- This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a complaint relating to the school, or the services that it provides;
- An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances;
- To allow for a proper investigation, complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than three months after the event being complained of, will not be considered.

Raising a complaint

Informal Stage

It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person, by appointment. Many complaints can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage.

In the case of serious concerns, it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Headteacher [or to the Chair of the Governing Body, if the complaint is about the Headteacher].

If you are uncertain about who to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the Governing Body.

Formal Stage

If your complaint is not resolved at the informal stage you must put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Headteacher [or to the Clerk to the Governing Body, for the attention of

the Chair, if the complaint is about the Headteacher], who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately.

The attached Complaint Form should be used when raising a complaint.

You should include details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents.

It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like the school to take to resolve your complaint. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.

Please pass the completed form, in a sealed envelope, to the Headteacher or to the Clerk to the Governing Body, as appropriate.

The Headteacher [or Chair] may invite you to a meeting to clarify your complaint and to seek an informal resolution. If you accept that invitation, you may be accompanied by a friend, if you wish, to assist you in explaining the nature of your complaint.

It is possible that your complaint will be resolved through a meeting with the Headteacher [or Chair]. If not, arrangements will be made for the matter to be fully investigated, using the appropriate procedure. You should hear, in writing, usually within five school days of the school receiving your formal complaint, how the school intends to proceed. This notification should also include an indication of the anticipated timescale.

Any investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, you will be informed in writing of its conclusion.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, you may request that the Governing Body reviews the process followed by the school in handling the complaint. Any such request must be made in writing to the clerk to the Governing Body, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure.

The procedure described below will be followed when undertaking the review. The attached Complaint Review Form should be used when requesting a review.

Review Process

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of three members of the Governing Body. This will usually take place within 15 school days of receipt of your request.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests to make oral representations will be considered sympathetically.

The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant.

The panel will then invite representatives of the school [usually the Headteacher or the Chair of the Governing Body panel that has considered the matter], as appropriate, to make a response to the complaint.

The panel may also have access to the records kept of the process followed.

You, and the school representative[s], will be informed in writing of the outcome, usually within five school days of the panel meeting.

The matter will then be closed as far as the school is concerned.



St Mary's Catholic Primary School Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to the Headteacher [or the Clerk to the Governing Body], who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:

Relationship with school [e.g. parent of a pupil on the school roll]:

.....

Pupil's name [if relevant to your complaint]:

.....

Your address:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give concise details of your complaint, [including dates, names of witnesses etc...], to allow the matter to be fully investigated.:

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of Additional pages attached =

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? [i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?]

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

Signature:

Date:

School use:

Date Form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to:			
Date:			



St Mary's Catholic Primary School Complaint Review Request Form

Please complete this form and return it to the Headteacher [or the Clerk to the Governing Body], who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:

Your address:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

I submitted a formal complaint to the school on and am dissatisfied by the way the procedure was followed.

My complaint was submitted to and I received a response from on

I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the response[s] from the school.

I am dissatisfied with the way in which the procedure was carried out, because:

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of Additional pages attached =

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

Signature:

Date:

School use

Date Form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Request referred to:			
Date:			