

ST. GEORGE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY

Complaints Policy & Procedure



2026-2027



St. George's Catholic Primary School and Nursery

Complaints Policy & Procedure

At St. George's Catholic Primary School, we encourage each child to recognise their own value both as an individual and as part of the school family. We expect and encourage a high standard of positive behaviour in relationships with other pupils, staff, parents and visitors.

We aim to enable every individual, made in the image and likeness of God, to learn, grow and reach their full potential.

We aim to be a loving Christian family living the values of the Gospel... developing caring relationships with the local and wider community

(School Mission Statement aims)

To learn with kindness, respect and friendship through God's love.

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear, fair, and effective procedure for addressing complaints relating to St. George's Catholic Primary School & Nursery, in line with statutory requirements and best practice.

This policy covers concerns and complaints raised by parents, carers, pupils, staff, and other members of the school community regarding the actions of the school or its staff, or the provision of education and services, except for matters subject to separate statutory or school procedures (e.g., admissions, statutory assessments, staff disciplinary matters, safeguarding referrals).

General Principles

- An anonymous complaint will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances
- To allow for a proper and effective investigation, complaints should ideally be brought to the school's attention as soon as possible after the event occurs. While we aim to consider all complaints, matters brought to the school's attention more than three months after the event may not be investigated, unless there are exceptional circumstances and the Governing Body agrees to waive this time limit.
- Acknowledgement of receipt of a formal complaint will be sent within five working days. The investigation of any complaint or review request will commence as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter, and we will endeavour to complete it within 20

working days, except in exceptional circumstances. We will keep complainants informed of any significant delays.

- The investigation will be completed as soon as reasonably practicable.

PART A

Complaints about the actions of a member of staff (excluding the Headteacher) –

1. **Informal Stage** - We encourage complainants to first try and resolve concerns directly with the member of staff concerned, where appropriate. This can be done via a phone call, email, or by making an appointment to speak in person. Many issues can be resolved quickly and effectively through open communication and clarification. If the concern is serious, or if direct communication is not appropriate or has not resolved the issue, the complainant should then proceed to the formal stage by contacting the Headteacher.
2. **Formal Stage** - If the concern is not resolved informally, or if the complainant wishes to proceed directly to a formal complaint, the complainant must put the complaint in writing to the Headteacher. The written complaint should include specific details such as names of individuals involved, dates and times of events, and copies of any relevant documentation. The Headteacher will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days and will then investigate the matter. The Headteacher will gather any necessary evidence, which may include speaking to witnesses. The member of staff who is the subject of the complaint will be informed of the complaint and given an opportunity to respond. They may be accompanied by a representative or friend at any formal interview.

The investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, the complainant and the member of staff concerned will be informed in writing of the outcome. This may be to the effect that:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld
- The concern is not substantiated by evidence
- The concern was partly or fully substantiated. Some details may then be given of action the school may be taking to review procedures etc., but details of the investigation or disciplinary procedures will not be released
- The matter has been fully investigated and that appropriate procedures are being followed, which are strictly confidential.

The complainant will be informed that consideration of their complaint is now concluded. If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, they may request that the Governing Body review the process undertaken by

the Headteacher in handling the complaint. Any such request must be made in writing (or can be email to: governors@stgschool.uk) within 2 weeks of receiving notice of the outcome from the Headteacher, and include a specific statement detailing perceived failures to follow the procedure. The Procedure described in Part C will be followed. If the complainant considers that the decision of the Headteacher is incorrect, or that the Headteacher has acted unreasonably, then the complainant may bring a complaint against the Headteacher, under Part B of this procedure. This will provide an opportunity for the evidence to support such a complaint to be investigated.

PART B

Complaining about the actions of the Headteacher

1) Informal Stage

We encourage complainants to first try and resolve concerns directly with the Headteacher. This can be done through a meeting where the issues can be discussed and clarified. If the matter is not resolved at this initial meeting, and if both parties agree, a further meeting may be arranged, potentially with a mediator. If a complainant unreasonably refuses to engage in the informal resolution process, the procedure may be terminated at this point.

2) Formal Stage

If the complaint cannot be resolved through the informal stage, the complainant must put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Chair of Governors, via the school office, or emailed to governors@stgschool.uk, to who will determine which of the arranged procedures to invoke. If it is determined that the complaint is 'General', the chair will arrange for its investigation.

The complainant should include detail which will help the investigation. In addition, the complainant may be invited to meet with the chair to present oral evidence or to clarify the complaint. The chair will collect other evidence as is deemed necessary. This may well include the interviewing of witnesses and others who may provide relevant information. The Headteacher will be provided with a copy of the complaint and any additional evidence presented by the complainant or collected by the chair. Once the Headteacher has had time to consider this, they will be invited to meet with the Chair of Governors in order to respond. A friend or representative may accompany the Headteacher at this meeting.

When the investigation has been concluded, the complainant and the Headteacher will be informed in writing of the outcome. The complainant will not be informed of any disciplinary/capability action.

The complainant will be told that consideration of their complaint is now complete. If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, or considers that the decision of the Chair is incorrect, or that the Chair has behaved unreasonably in considering the complaint, the complainant may request that the Governing Body review the handling of the complaint by the Chair. Any such request

must be made in writing within 2 weeks of receiving notice of the outcome from the Chair, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures.

PART C

Review Process

A panel of three Governors, who have had no prior involvement in the complaint, will conduct any review of the process followed by the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. The review will primarily consider written submissions, but reasonable requests for oral representations will be accommodated. The panel will review all relevant documentation, including the original complaint, the investigation findings, and the written outcome. The panel will inform the complainant and the Headteacher/Chair of Governors in writing of their findings, which may include:

- Upholding the appeal if a significant procedural failure occurred that impacted the outcome.
- Dismissing the appeal if no significant procedural failure occurred, or if any failures did not impact the outcome.
- Recommending specific actions to rectify procedural errors or prevent recurrence, where appropriate. The decision of the review panel will be final.

NOTES

Confidentiality: Complainants will not have access to internal school records or information pertaining to disciplinary matters concerning staff. Any information shared with children during an investigation will be handled with sensitivity and in accordance with safeguarding policies. If a complainant believes that the school or Governing Body has acted illegally or unreasonably in handling their complaint, they may contact the Department for Education for further guidance.

INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

Carrying out an Investigation into a Formal Complaint

The investigation of an allegation or a complaint should always be carried out thoroughly and responsibly, irrespective of whether the complaint appears to be trivial or serious. The outcome of such an investigation will have significance not only for the complainant but also, for the member of staff against whom the complaint has been made.

Any procedure should include provision that 'anonymous complaints will not be investigated'.

There are serious allegations that should be investigated if reported anonymously, such as child protection or bullying allegations, where school would either involve appropriate external agencies or else conduct its own internal review to test whether or not there is any corroborative evidence which may trigger an informal investigation.

Where the Headteacher or Chair of Governors receives a complaint, it should be acknowledged formally and a commitment made that the complaint will be investigated and the outcome of the investigation notified to the complainant in due course. The member of staff against whom the complaint has been made should be notified that

a complaint has been received, provided with a copy of the complaint and be informed that an investigation will be carried out.

It is essential that there is a clear understanding of the complaint. Where necessary the nature of the complaint should be confirmed with the complainant.

Once the complaint has been confirmed the investigator should establish who they wish to interview and which documentation (if any) they will need to review. Arrangements should be agreed so that accurate notes can be taken of all interviews and the outcome of the investigation, be accurately recorded. The complainant and member of staff should be given the opportunity to offer documentation and to identify potential witnesses and other sources of evidence.

The member of staff subject to the complaint will be informed of their right to be accompanied by a friend or Trade Union representative at any formal interview. When considering interviewing a child as a witness, the school will exercise extreme discretion, prioritising their well-being and ensuring it is only undertaken when absolutely necessary, the complaint is sufficiently serious, and no suitable adult witnesses are available. All interviews with children will be conducted by trained personnel in a sensitive and age-appropriate manner, adhering strictly to safeguarding protocols and KCSIE guidance.

Any interviews should be conducted as soon as possible to ensure that recollections are as fresh as possible and to minimize the possibility that evidence will become tainted through witnesses discussing alleged incidents with other persons.

In conducting interviews, the investigator should prepare the questions to be asked prior to the interview. These can always be supplemented during the interviews. The investigator should allow the interviewee to answer in their own way. Responses should be listened to attentively. The temptation to cut answers short or ask 'leading' questions must be avoided. Any attempts by the interviewee to introduce information relating to other members of staff or to unrelated issues must be resisted. The investigator should avoid reaching conclusions or passing judgment until the investigation has been completed. A summary of the process undertaken and the outcome should be provided to both the complainant and the member of staff against whom the complaint has been made. Caution **MUST** be exercised when reporting back to the complainant as certain details must not be revealed due to confidentiality.

Any recommendations should also be shared with all parties, unless there is good reason not to do so. Wherever possible, recommendations should be constructive and not punitive.

The complainant should be advised that he/she may request a review of the process if they are not happy that the process has been undertaken properly.

The Governing Body should invite the LA to express a view on the retention of records of any complaints procedure. The most extreme stance is: 'All documentation regarding a complaint should be stored securely for a period of 6 years'