



St Mary's RC Primary School

Complaints Policy

This policy covers any general complaints which any member of the public (including parents/carers) may wish to raise. It is not intended to cover those aspects of school life for which there are specific statutory requirements, in particular:

- Arrangements under S409 of the Education Act 1996 for complaints about the delivery of the National Curriculum and the provision of collective worship and religious education.
- Parents who are not satisfied with a Local Authority decision about special needs assessments.
- Concerns about schools admissions and exclusions.
- Allegations of child abuse financial improprieties or other criminal activities.
- Complaints about general matters of policy, such as the overall resourcing of a school.
- Teacher performance.

Introduction

At St Mary's, we strive to provide a good education for all our children. The Headteacher and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents and carers, and the wider general public. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents/carers, or indeed members of the general public. The following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases.

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all concerns and complaints, and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding. In all cases, we put the interests of the child above all else. We provide sufficient opportunity for any concern or complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

The Complaints Process

Parents/ Carers:

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. In our experience, most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress.

Where parents or carers feel that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the headteacher.

- The Headteacher considers any such complaint very seriously, and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved by this stage.
- If the parent/carer is not satisfied with the response from the Headteacher then they should use the formal complaint form to present a written complaint to the Headteacher, using the attached formal complaints form.
- The Headteacher will investigate the complaint via discussions with the parent and those involved.
- Once all the relevant facts have been established the Headteacher will produce a written response to the complaint and/or may wish to speak to the parent/carer to resolve the matter directly.

- The response will document the decision reached and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, it will also include what action the school should take/has taken to resolve the complaint.
- As far as reasonable this will take place within ten days of the initial complaint being received by the Headteacher.

If the parent/carer is not satisfied with the Headteacher's response then they have an option to put their complaint in writing within ten days of the Headteacher's response, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far, addressing their correspondence to the Chair of Governors, either via the school in a sealed envelope or addressed to:

Chair of Governors
 St Mary's RC Primary School,
 C/o Governors Support Services,
 Dryden Professional Development Centre,
 Evistones Road,
 Gateshead
 NE9 5UR

If the complaint relates to the Headteacher the parent/carer should write directly to the Chair of Governors with their complaint.

General Public:

If a member of the public wishes to make a complaint to school regarding the fulfilment of its duties, they are invited to contact the Headteacher. The same complaints procedure outlined for parents/carers will then be followed.

Following a Referral to the Chair of Governors

The Governing Body must consider all written complaints within 5 school days of receipt. It will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and will invite the person making it to attend the meeting, so that she/he can explain the complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting. The Chair will conduct their own investigation into the complaint. If a pupil needs to be interviewed as part of the investigation it shall only be done with the complainant's consent and an appropriate adult will be asked to be present during the interview. The Chair may request an independent officer to assist them with the investigation if appropriate.

After hearing all the evidence, the governors will consider their decision and inform the complainant about it in writing. The governors do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction.

Possible outcomes may include:-

- An apology.
- An admission that the situation could have been addressed differently or better and re-assurance that similar events will not reoccur.
- Recommending changes to the school systems and procedures to ensure similar issues do not reoccur in the future.
- An undertaking that school policies will be reviewed in the light of the complaint.
- No fault found, complaint not upheld, no action taken.

All decisions will be recorded in writing within 10 school days of the chair completing the investigation as far as is reasonably practical and a copy provided to the complainant. The letter to the complainant will offer the right of appeal to the Governing Body complaints committee (Vice

Chair of Governors to chair this committee).

If the complaint relates to the Chair or Governing Body, the complainant should write directly to the Clerk to the body at the above address who will consider how to best address the complaint.

Referral to the Complaints Committee

If the complainant wishes to appeal they must do so in writing to the Vice Chair of Governors (via the school or at the above address for Governor Support Service) within 10 school days. The complainant will be offered the opportunity to attend a meeting where they will have the opportunity to discuss their complaint with the committee (minimum of 3 governors, not previously involved) and why they are not satisfied with the Chair's decision. The Chair will also attend this meeting.

Possible outcomes may include:

- An apology.
- An admission that the situation could have been addressed differently or better and re-assurance that similar events will not reoccur.
- Recommending changes to the school systems and procedures to ensure similar issues do not reoccur in the future.
- An undertaking that school policies will be reviewed in the light of the complaint.
- No fault found, complaint not upheld, no action taken.

This is the last stage at which the complaint may be heard at school level

Should the complainant not be satisfied with the outcome then they may complain to the Secretary of State (Department for Education). A judgement will be made as to how a school has acted upon its policy, but not on internal school management matters.

Monitoring and review

The Governing Body 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 examine this log on an annual basis.

Anonymous Complaints

The Governing Body will not consider anonymous complaint. Any anonymous complaint will be retained and the number reported to Governors to enable them to monitor any patterns of complaint.

Persistent and Vexatious Complaints

There may be occasions when, *despite all stages of the procedures having been followed*, the complainant remains unsatisfied. If the parent/carer tries to reopen the same issue, the Chair of Governors will inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is now closed.

Michael Currie

Chair of Governors



St Mary's R C Primary School
Formal Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Headteacher, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint.

Have you complained to the class teacher?

What happened when you complained to the class teacher? If you did not complain to the class teacher, why not?

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.
(Who did you speak to and what was the response)?

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

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: