



**ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

*"Faithfully following in the footsteps of Jesus,  
we serve, love and learn together  
inspiring each other to excellence."*

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# Policy for managing se- rial and unreasonable communication

2025



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### **Policy on Managing Serial and Unreasonable Communication**

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St Patrick's Catholic Primary School recognises the importance of working in partnership with families and strives to have clear, open communication with parent/carers. This includes responding to requests for information in a timely manner, trying to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, as swiftly and effectively as possible. (Please refer to the Communication Policy and Complaints Policy for more information about these procedures.)

This policy identifies situations where communication, including complaints and requests for information, from a parent/carer, might be considered to be “serial or unreasonable.” It also outlines ways that St Patrick's may respond to these situations.

Anonymised correspondence will not be shared unless it relates to a specific safeguarding issue.

This policy should only be invoked following careful consideration by the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors. It will only be invoked following an attempt to reason with the parent/carer involved and it has been explained to them what it will mean if the Managing Serial and Unreasonable Communication Policy is invoked.

We will not normally limit the contact parent/carers have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unreasonable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

St Patrick's defines that the unreasonable behaviour threshold has been met if a parent/carer hinders our consideration of requests, concerns and complaints because of the frequency or nature of their contact with the school, such as if a parent/carer:

- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- does not follow the procedures outlined within the Communication and Complaints policies, on a regular basis
- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice

- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Parents/carers should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their request, concern or complaint, while these are being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the headteacher or Chair of Governors (or delegated Governor) will try to discuss any concerns with the parent/carer before applying an '*unreasonable*' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the headteacher will write to the parent/carer explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For parents/carers who excessively contact St Patrick's causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

Communication plans may include one or more of the following actions:

- (a) Withdrawal of contact, either in person, by telephone, by email, by letter or any combination of these, provided that at least one form of contact is maintained. If staff are to withdraw from a telephone conversation there will be an agreed statement available for them to use at such times.
- (b) Restriction of contact to liaison through a designated member of staff.
- (c) Notification in writing that the Governing Body has responded fully to the points raised and has tried to resolve the complaint but there is nothing more to add and continuing contact on the matter will serve no useful purpose. They should be notified that any form of contact, either orally or in writing, in relation to their complaint, or any further complaints relative to the same period of time, or the same or similar issues as an earlier request, concern or complaint, is at an end, and that further contact received will be acknowledged but not answered.

(e) Banning of the parent/carer involved from attending the school without prior written consent, seeking legal advice to ensure the appropriate procedures are used.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring a parent/carer from St Patrick's.

### **Monitoring Arrangements**

Incidents will be presented at the next scheduled meeting of the Governing Body with details of complainants who are categorised as serial and/ or unreasonable in the Headteacher's Report to Governors.

### **Equal opportunities**

When considering the application of a communication plan or other actions referenced above, due to persistent unreasonable behaviour, St. Patrick's must take into account its duties under the Equality Act 2010, particularly the obligation to avoid discrimination against individuals with protected characteristics such as disability, race, religion, or age. This includes assessing whether the behaviour in question may be linked to a disability or other protected characteristic, and whether reasonable adjustments are required to ensure fair treatment. Any decision to restrict communication must be proportionate, justified, and compliant with the St. Patrick's public sector equality duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations.