



ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

Policy on Complaints

2024

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the Governing Body

Signed..... Date May 2024

Mr T O'Malley

Chair of Governors

Review date: Summer 2026

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We strive to provide a good education for all our children. All staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents and carers. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents or guardians. The following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases.
- 1.2 If any parents or carers* are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the school, we encourage them to talk to the child's class teacher immediately.
- 1.3 We deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures laid down by the LA. If the school itself cannot resolve a complaint, those concerned can refer the matter to the LA.
- 1.4 All parents and carers have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

2 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. Complaints should be made in a timely manner. We give careful consideration to all 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 complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

3 Stage One – *Informal*

- 3.1.1 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 and well-being.

Concerns should be raised in a timely manner. This should be within 10 working days of an incident/ issue becoming a concern. A concern raised at this stage will be responded to within 10 working days either verbally/in writing or by phone through the school office.

- 3.1.2 If a parent has already spoken with the class teacher and remains concerned, then s/he should contact the Phase Leader. This should be within 5 working days of the response from the class teacher.

Phase Leaders: Key Stage 1: Mrs R. Shirley,

Key Stage 2: Miss R. McAteer.

- 3.1.3 If a parent does not wish to raise the matter with the class teacher in the first instance as laid out in 3.1.1, they should contact the Phase leader. The timescales laid out in 3.1.1 remain the same. A concern should be raised within 10 working days of an incident/ issue becoming a concern and will be responded to within 10 working days, either verbally or in writing. If the concern remains unresolved following this process, then parents must move to stage two within 5 working days of the response.

When expressing concerns to class teachers and/ or Phase Leaders, we expect parents to be respectful at all times. Whilst we understand that concerns can be upsetting for parents, staff will not respond to any communication that is deemed to be aggressive or disrespectful.

In the event that communication from parents is not respectful, staff will not respond to questions or concerns raised. If a parent's communication is persistently disrespectful or a singular communication is deemed unacceptable, these may be directed to the Governing Body.

Please note: **Stage 1 must be followed before moving to Stage 2.** The Headteacher will not meet with parents unless the above process has been followed regarding a specific concern.

Stage Two – Formal

- 3.2.1. Where parents or carers feel that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher and/or phase leader, they should put their concern in writing to the Headteacher (this may be delegated to an Assistant Head) stating the complaint and outlining why they feel it has not been resolved at Stage One. The Headteacher (or, if delegated, the Assistant Head) will respond formally, usually within 10 working days. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.
- 3.2.2. Should the concern remain unresolved after the Headteacher's (or Assistant Headteacher's if delegated) investigation the complainant may move directly to 3.3.1. where the Governors' Grievance and Disciplinary Committee will review whether the investigation has been dealt with appropriately. Should dialogue persist, e.g. more than 2 meetings or 2 letters between the Assistant / Headteacher and the complainant or if the Assistant/ Headteacher believes she cannot resolve the concern satisfactorily then it may be reasonable that the Headteacher refer the matter directly to 3.3.1. where the Governors' Grievance and Disciplinary Committee will review whether the investigation has been dealt with appropriately.
- 3.2.3 Should any parents or carers have a complaint about, or involving, the Headteacher, they should do so formally to the Chair of Governors.
- 3.2.4. If a parent makes a formal complaint which doesn't follow the procedure set out in this policy the Chair of Governors may request that the Headteacher carries out an investigation provided that the complaint is not about him or her. The Chair will inform the complainant of this and the complaint may be resolved at this point. Should the complaint remain unresolved the Chair of Governors will resume to 3.3.1. and organise a meeting with the complainant.
- 3.2.5. Only if an informal complaint fails to resolve the matter or those instances outlined in 3.2.3. should a formal complaint be made to the governing body. This complaint must be made in writing within 5 working days of the end of stage two, stating the nature of the complaint, and how the school has handled it so far and what action the parent would like taken in order to resolve the matter.

Stage Three – Complaint heard by the Governing Body

- 3.3.1. The governing body must consider all written complaints within three school weeks of receipt. It's Grievance and Disciplinary Committee may arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and may invite the person making it to attend the meeting, so that s/he can explain the complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.
- 3.3.2 After hearing/ reviewing all the evidence, the governors' Grievance and Disciplinary Committee will consider their decision and inform the parent about it in writing within 3 school weeks. If the Governors require longer to consider the matter an extension can be agreed at this stage and the parent will be advised of this. The governors do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction.
- 3.3.3. If the parent is unhappy with the outcome of the Grievance and Disciplinary Committee's decision s/he may appeal this to the school's Appeals Committee. This should be completed within 5 working days. They will consider whether the Complaints process has been properly adhered to and inform the complainant of their decision within 3 school weeks.
- 3.3.4 If the complaint is not resolved at school level, a parent may make representation to the local government ombudsman.
- 3.3.5 If any parent is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then s/he is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

4 Monitoring and review

- 4.1 The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly.
- 4.2 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 and carers, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.
- 4.3 This policy will be reviewed annually, or before if necessary.

**** Parents and carers of pupils on roll at the time of the complaint***