



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 for Concerns and Complaints

2025

Introduction

At St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School, we strive to provide a good education for all our children. All our staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents and carers. However, the school has procedures in place in case concerns/complaints are raised by parents or guardians. The following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases.

If any parents or carers* are unhappy with the education their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the school, we encourage them to talk to the child's class teacher immediately. It is in everyone's interest that concerns/complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally without the need to use the formal stage of the complaints procedure.

We deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures laid down by the Local Authority (LA). If the school itself cannot resolve a complaint, those concerned can refer the matter to the LA.

All parents and carers have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Department for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

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

Aims and objectives

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any concern/complaint. Concerns/Complaints should be made in a timely manner. We give careful consideration to all concerns/complaints, and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any issue 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.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as:

‘An expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important, for which reassurances are sought’

A complaint may be defined as:

An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action’

Stage 1 - How to raise a concern

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 5 working days of an incident/ issue becoming a concern. A concern raised at this stage will be responded to within 5 working days either verbally/in writing or by phone through the school office.

If a parent has already spoken with the class teacher and remains concerned, then the issue can be raised with the appropriate Phase Leader via the School Office. This should be within 5 working days of the response from the class teacher.

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. 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 (i.e. Formal Complaint). The Headteacher will not meet with parents unless the above process has been followed regarding a specific concern.

Stage Two – Formal

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 the Deputy Head) stating the complaint and outlining why they feel it has not been resolved at Stage One. The Headteacher (or, if delegated, the Deputy Head) will respond formally, usually within 10 working days. Most complaints are usually resolved at this stage. (A template complaint form is included at the end of this policy or is available from the School Office)

Should the concern remain unresolved after the Headteacher's /Deputy Headteacher's (if delegated) investigation the complainant may move directly to the Governors' Grievance and Disciplinary Committee who will review whether the investigation has been dealt with appropriately.

Should dialogue persist, e.g. more than 2 meetings or 2 letters between the Deputy / Headteacher and the complainant or if the Deputy/ Headteacher believes the concern cannot be resolved satisfactorily, then it may be reasonable that the Headteacher refer the matter directly to the Governors' Grievance and Disciplinary Committee who will review whether the investigation has been dealt with appropriately.

Should any parents or carers have a complaint about, or involving, the Headteacher, they should do so formally to the Chair of Governors.

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/ 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 organise a meeting with the complainant.

Only if an informal complaint fails to resolve the matter 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 2, stating the nature of the complaint, and how the school has handled it so far.

Stage Three – Complaint heard by the Governing Body

The governing body must consider all written complaints within 3 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 they can explain the complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.

After hearing/ reviewing all the evidence, the governors' Grievance and Disciplinary Committee will consider their decision and inform the parent/ carer 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/ carer will be advised of this. If the parent/ carer is unhappy with the outcome of the Grievance and Disciplinary Committee's decision they 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.

If the complaint is not resolved at school level, a parent may make representation to the Local Education Authority.

If any parent/ carer is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then s/he is entitled to appeal to the Department for Education.

Monitoring and review

The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. 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 available to all parents and carers on the school website.

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

Concern/Complaint Form

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

Your Name: _____ Relationship to Pupil: _____

Pupil's Name: _____ Class: _____

Address: _____ Postcode: _____

Contact No: _____

Email: _____

Preferred method of contact: _____

Please provide details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anyone at the school about it.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Office Use Only

Date Recvd: _____

Date Acknowledgement sent: _____ email/letter

Complaint referred to: _____