



St John's Church of England Primary School

Complaints Procedures Policy

Procedure on the Handling of Concerns and Complaints

Referenced to Model Procedures for Dealing with School Based Complaints

Herts CS4288 Issue 7 2015

Date Approved:	22nd June 2016
Headteacher:	Mrs Helen Langeveld
Chair of Governors:	Mrs Julie Griffiths
Review Date:	Summer 2019

Love, Respect, Value

St John's Church of England Primary School is committed to high expectations for all and to embracing equality.

St John's Church of England School

38c Estcourt Road

Watford

Herts

WD17 2PS

www.watfordstjohns.org

office@watfordstjohns.org

01923 255017

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures that will cover any concerns and complaints should they arise. St John's is committed to the delivery of the best education possible supported by the Christian ethos.

We care about what you think

Each day this school makes many decisions and tries hard to do the best for all the children. Your comments - either positive or negative - are helpful for future planning.

You may want to talk to us about a particular aspect of this school, though not actually make a complaint - you just want to get something 'off your chest'.

If you are dissatisfied about the way your child is being treated, or any actions or lack of action by us, please feel free to contact us using the details listed above.

Our aims

- Your complaint will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence.
- Your complaint will be looked into thoroughly and fairly.
- If your complaint is urgent we will deal with it more quickly.
- We will keep you up to date with progress at each stage.
- You will get an apology if we have made a mistake.
- You will be told what we are going to do to put things right.
- You will get a full and clear written reply to formal complaints within 28 School days.

Application:

This policy applies to all concerns and complaints other than those relating to Child Protection issues or to cases where parents wish to appeal against a decision by the Headteacher to permanently exclude a student. Separate procedures apply to each of these exceptional cases.

This policy complies with Schedule 1, Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010.

Regulations 2010. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made>

Timescales:

We aim to resolve any complaints in a timely manner. Timescales for each stage of the Complaints Procedure are set out below in the relevant paragraphs. For the purposes of this policy, a "working day" is defined as a weekday during term time, when the School is open. The definition of "working day" excludes weekends and Bank Holidays. For the avoidance of doubt, term dates are published on the School's website.

Policy statement:

We need to know as soon as possible if there is any cause for dissatisfaction. We recognise that a difficulty which is not resolved quickly and fairly can soon become a cause of resentment, which could be damaging to relationships and also to our school culture. We intend that parents and pupils should never feel – or be made to feel – that a complaint will be taken amiss or will adversely affect a pupil or his/her opportunities at school. The policy, however, distinguishes between a concern or difficulty which can be resolved informally and a formal complaint which will require further investigation.

Stage 1: Concerns and Difficulties

1. Concerns: Most concerns, where a parent seeks intervention, reconsideration or some other action to be taken, can be resolved informally. Examples might include dissatisfaction about some aspect of teaching or pastoral care, issues relating to other students or some other aspect of the school's systems or equipment.

2. Notification: Parents should raise the concern initially as follows:

2.1 Education, Pastoral and Disciplinary issues – if the matter relates to the classroom, the curriculum, special educational needs or discipline please speak or write to the class teacher or Senco as appropriate.

2.2 Financial and administrative matters – a query relating to charges or to other administrative matters should be raised either with the School Office (Finance) or with the Headteacher (curriculum).

3. Unresolved concerns: A concern which has not been resolved by informal means within ten working days from the receipt of the complaint can be notified as a formal complaint in accordance with Stage 2 below.

4. Record of concerns: In the case of concerns raised under Stage 1 of this procedure, the only record of the concern and its resolution will be file notes by the person dealing with the complaint and/or file correspondence between the person raising the concern and the respondent. These will be filed together with a number and the date so as to monitor the 10 days. These come under day to day running of the school and are therefore under the Headteacher's jurisdiction. They may be shared with Governor's if appropriate.

Stage 2: Formal complaints

5. Notification: An unresolved concern under Stage 1, or a complaint which needs investigation, or a more serious dissatisfaction with some aspect of the School's policies, procedures, management or administration should be set out in writing with full details and sent with all relevant documents and your full contact details for the attention of the Headteacher or, where the complaint is about the Headteacher, the chair of governors. Should a formal written complaint be received by another member of the school's staff, this should be immediately passed it to the Headteacher, or the appropriate SLT line leader.

6. Acknowledgement: Your complaint will be acknowledged by telephone or in writing normally within five working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable during the holidays. The acknowledgement will indicate the action that is being taken and the likely timescale for resolution. This is aimed to be within 10 working days.

7. Investigation and resolution: The Headteacher may deal with the matter personally or delegate a senior member of staff to act as "investigating officer." The "investigating officer" may request additional information from the complainant and will fully investigate the issue. Following appropriate investigation the conclusions of the investigation will be shared with the complainant, either by telephone, in a meeting or in writing.

8. Outcome: The aim is to inform any complainant of the outcome of an investigation and the resolution to the complaint within one calendar month from the receipt of the complaint. Please note that any complaint received during a School holiday or within one month of the end of term or half term may take longer to resolve.

9. Record of complaints: Complaints will be documented and held on file for the period the relevant child is in the school.

Stage 3: Reference to the Governing Body

10. Notification: If you are dissatisfied with the decision under Stage 2, your complaint may be renewed in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body. You should write to the Clerk within five working days of receiving the decision. Your letter to the Clerk will be forwarded to the governor responsible for complaints. You should give full details of your complaint and enclose all relevant documents and your full contact details. Your letter will normally be acknowledged within five working days during term time, indicating the action that is being taken and the likely timescale. This is aimed to be within 28 days.

11. Action by the Governing Body: A member of the Governing Body who has dedicated responsibility for school complaints will arrange for your complaint to be investigated following procedures equivalent to those described in Stage 2 (above). When the governor is satisfied that he/she has established all the material facts and relevant policies, so far as practicable, he/she will notify you in writing of his/her decision and the reasons for it. He/She will aim to provide a response within fifteen working days of receiving your letter but will inform the parents if this timescale will need to be increased. If you are not satisfied with the Governor's decision you may ask for the complaint to be referred to the Review Panel, by writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body (see paragraph 16 below).

Stage 4: Reference to the Review Panel

12. Notification: Only if you have been through the earlier stages of this procedure, and are dissatisfied with the decision that has been notified to you by the Complaints Governor, you may request a final hearing by a Review Panel. To request a hearing before the Review Panel, please write to the Clerk to the Governing Body within five working days of the decision you wish to review. Your request will only be considered if you have completed the relevant procedures at Stages 1-3. Please ensure that copies of all relevant documents accompany your letter and state all the grounds for your complaint and the outcome that you desire. The Clerk to the Governing Body will acknowledge your request in writing within five working days.

13. Review Panel: The review will be undertaken by a panel of at least three members appointed on behalf of the Governing Body and selected by the Clerk to the Governing Body. The Panel members will have no detailed previous knowledge of the case, will not include the Governor responsible for Complaints, and one member will be independent of the management and running of the School.

14. Convening the Panel: The Clerk to the Governing Body will convene the Review Panel as soon as is reasonably practicable but the Panel will not normally sit during school holidays.

15. Notice of hearing: Every effort will be made to enable the Panel hearing to take place within 15 working days of the receipt of your request. As soon as reasonably practical and in any event at least five working days before the hearing, the Clerk to the Governing Body will

send you written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing, together with brief details of the Panel members who will be present.

16. Attendance: You will be asked to attend the hearing and may be accompanied by one other person such as a relative, teacher, or friend, who should not be legally qualified. The Clerk to the Governing body or nominated deputy will also attend the hearing in order to keep a record of the proceedings. Copies of additional documents you wish the Panel to consider should be sent to the Clerk to the Governing body at least three clear days prior to the hearing.

17. The Chair of the Review Panel will conduct the hearing in such a way as to ensure that all those present have the opportunity of asking questions and making comments in an appropriate manner. The hearing is not a legal proceeding and the Panel shall be under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses but may do so and/or may take written statements into account.

18. Adjournment: The Chair of the Panel may at his/her discretion adjourn the hearing for further investigation of any relevant issue. This may include an adjournment to take legal or other advice.

19. Decision: After due consideration of the matters discussed at the hearing, the Panel shall reach a decision. The Panel's decision, findings and any recommendations may be notified orally at the hearing or subsequently and shall be confirmed in writing to you by letter or electronic mail where appropriate within ten working days.

20. Confidentiality: A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at Stage 1 or proceed to a panel hearing. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by paragraph 25(k) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent College Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, that is where access is requested by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required in the course of a school's inspection or under other legal authority. In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will normally be destroyed after a three year period. In exceptional circumstances some details will be retained for a further period as necessary.

Availability

A copy of this procedure is available to all parents on request from the school office.

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Governing Body.

If you have a complaint which has not been satisfactorily resolved through this complaints procedure, you may complain to the:

Diocese

The Diocesan Director of Education, Diocesan Office, Holywell Lodge, 41 Holywell Hill, St Albans, AL1 1HE Email: schools@stalbans.anglican.org.uk , Website: www.stalbans.anglican.org. Tel: 01727 818170

You can complain to the Secretary of State at the Department of Education

The Secretary of State

Department for Education

Sanctuary Buildings

Great Smith Street

London

SW1P 3BT

Website: www.education.gov.uk

Telephone: 0370 000 2288