



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Bingley



Complaints Procedure Policy

Our Vision

'Learning with Jesus, to be the best we can be'

Date written: May 2015

Reviewed: June 2017

This is a procedure for dealing with complaints:

- It will be used to resolve complaints about the way that the school is run or about the way a school policy has been implemented. Most of these complaints will be about decisions, which either effect a particular pupil or pupils.
- It cannot be used to resolve matters where other legal procedures already apply. For example, staff discipline, special educational needs, admissions, excursions and some National Curriculum matters.

Who can complain and when?

This procedure applies to complaints made by:

- Parents of pupils currently or recently at the school.
- People who either have 'parental responsibility' for a pupil who care for him or her, but are not the pupil's parents.

Complaints must be presented within three months of the action or matter complained of.

Action by the Governing Body

The Governing Body of St. Joseph's have:

1. Approved and adopted this written Complaints Procedure.
2. No governor who has any prior involvement in the matter being complained about will serve on the Committee dealing with that complaint.
 - The membership of this committee will be reviewed at the first meeting in each autumn term in the same way as all other standing committees of the Governing Body.
 - The Governing Body have given the Complaints Committee full delegated powers to investigate and make decisions about complaints which are referred to it.



- All the usual rules about governors meetings apply, including declaration of interest. Minutes of the Committee meetings will be confidential and refer to the person making the complaint, the pupil, or anyone involved, by initials rather than by name.

How does the complaints procedure work?

The procedure is based on informal and formal stages. The informal stage involves trying to resolve the matter as quickly as possible with first, the class teacher or the Head teacher. Only if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome or the matter cannot be resolved by this individual will the matter be referred to the formal stage with the Head teacher or the Governing Body.

Where a complaint is initially sent to the Chair of Governors they will refer the matter to the Headteacher for it to be dealt with under the procedures below.

Exceptions

There are two exceptions to the procedure above:

1. A complaint may appear to be sufficiently serious that it will be referred straight through to the formal procedure, or
2. A complaint may clearly relate to breaches of discipline by a staff member, in which case this procedure would not apply and personal advice will be sought.

Informal stage

Where to complain

1. Appropriate member of staff

- Parents will be given the opportunity to discuss their concerns with an appropriate member of staff, such as the class teacher.
- In many cases parents' concerns and complaints will be resolved at this early part of the informal stage.
- If the concern remains unsolved the staff member will advise the parent that they may complain to the Headteacher.
- A complaint against the Headteacher will be referred straight to the Chair of Governors.

2. Headteacher

The Headteacher will

- Meet with the person making the complaint and obtain full details of the complaint.
- Discuss this with the member of staff involved.
- Where a complaint concerns a pupil – that pupil will normally be interviewed.
- Ensure written records are kept of all meetings, telephone discussions, and any other relevant documents.
- Consider all the facts and reach a conclusion.
- Write to the person making the complaint giving a full explanation of the decision, the reasons for it and, where appropriate, what action the school proposes to take. The letter will inform the parent that if they are not satisfied with the outcome they may complain to the Chair of the Governing Body with a minimum of ten school days.



3. Chair of Governors

If a complaint has been through stages 1 and 2 above, the Chair will normally pass the complaint straight to the Complaints Committee unless it is clear that the matter can be immediately resolved.

- This would usually involve the Chair speaking with the person making the complaint and the Headteacher to ascertain whether or not the complaint will be resolved at this informal meeting.
- If the matter cannot be resolved and the complaint falls within the scope of the procedure the Chair will refer the complaint straight to the Complaints Committee.
- If the Chair has had some prior involvement in the matter which is being complained or they will ask the vice-chair to undertake this role instead of the Chair.

Formal stage

The Complaints Committee of the Governing Body will deal with any complaint that has reached the formal stage.

This involves:

- 1. Receiving the complaint**
- 2. Investigating the complaint**
- 3. Making a decision on the complaint**
- 4. Reporting the decision of the Complaints Committee to the Governing Body**

1. Receiving the complaint

- The Complaints Committee will meet as soon as possible after the complaint is received, to agree and be clear about what needs to be done and draw up a timetable for doing it.
- The Chair of the Complaints Committee will write to the person making the complaint to.
 - a) Explain that the Committee is now dealing with the complaint.
 - b) Confirm that the Committee has received a copy of any written complaint.
 - c) Set out what appears to be the nature of the complaint and to invite the complainant to send any further written information about the complaint.
 - d) Set out the Committee's timescale for dealing with the complaint.
 - e) Invite the person making the complaint to meet the Committee to give full details of their complaint, and inform them a friend or a representative may accompany them.
 - f) Set a reasonable deadline for reply by the person making the complaint, and make it clear that if there is no response by this deadline the Committee will proceed on the basis of the information it already has.
 - If the person making the complaint accepts the invitation to meet the Committee, arrangements will be made to make this as easy as possible. The Committee will consider the most appropriate time and place for the meeting to take place and whether other facilities such as providing an interpreter would be helpful.
 - The committee will write to the person (s) complained of informing him/her of the complaint and explaining that they will be given the opportunity to give their version of events.



The purpose of all the above is to find out precisely what the complaint is about and to inform the complainant of the procedure and timescale.

2. Investigating the complaint

- The Committee will meet to discuss the complaint and decide what information they need, who they may need to interview in addition to the person (s) complained of and what questions will need to be asked.
- The interviews will proceed with prepared questions followed by other questions if necessary, and the people being interviewed will be asked if they have anything to add. Answers to the questions will be carefully recorded and the people being interviewed will be asked to sign the record of answers.
- The investigation is not a staff disciplinary investigation.
- Following interviews with staff it may be necessary to ask for further information from the person making the complaint.
- The complainant and the person (s) who is the subject of the complaint will be informed if there is any delay in the investigation process.
- When the Complaints Committee is satisfied that it has all the available information it will consider the complaint and all the evidence. Governors serving on the committee will try to reach an agreed decision and should decide what should be done to resolve the complaint.
- The complaints committee may recommend changes to school policies or procedures to prevent the same problem happening again in the future.

3. Making the decision

- The Complaints Committee will make their decision on the basis of the information in their possession.
- They will produce an investigation report that documents their decision. This may need to be produced if the complainant was to refer the matter to the Secretary of State.
- The Chair of the Committee will usually write the report.
- The investigation report will be brief and will usually keep the names of the pupil, parents and people interviewed confidential. Its purpose is to :
 - a) Summarise the evidence gathered
 - b) Give the decisions made by the Complaints Committee.
 - c) Give any recommendations made by the Complaints Committee to prevent a similar problem happening again.
 - Where conflicting versions of events have been given it will be clear from the report why one version has been preferred over the other.
 - In very few cases it may happen that one of the recommendations is for the Governing Body to hold a formal disciplinary investigation to find out if staff disciplinary action is necessary. In this case the Complaints Committee will seek the advice of the School Governor Service and/or the Human Resource Service before the investigation report is issued to the Governing Body.
 - The decisions and recommendations of the Committee will be:
 - a) sent to the person making the complaint with the information that if the Governing Body or Diocese response has failed the satisfy the person making the complaint he or she may



complain to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on the grounds that the Governing Body has failed to discharge its statutory duties.

b) Sent to the Headteacher

c) Sent to the person (s) complained of

4. Reporting back the decision

- The outcome of the complaint will be reported back to the Governing Body, for information only as with any delegated decision.
- The report back will take the form of a paragraph briefly summarising the complaint, the investigation and the outcome. The Committee's recommendations should be given. No names should be given in the report back.

Signed: L Robinson

Date: July 2017