



St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School

Headteacher: Miss V Maher

Complaints Procedure

2018

Date of Policy	Signed	Position
2018	Veronica Maher	Headteacher
Monitoring	By	Date
Reviewed	Resources Committee	2018
To be ratified	Full Governing Body	
Uploaded to website	By	Date
	Corinne Heffernan	2018
<p>This policy will be reviewed at least every two years by the full Governing Body</p> <p>Date of next review : 2020</p>		

The Catholic Ethos of St Philomena's

As the first educators of their children, we believe that parents have a duty to take an active interest in their school. Canon Law requires that there is a partnership between the parent and the school “..there must be the closest co-operation between parents and the teachers to whom they entrust their children to be educated. In fulfilling their task, teachers are to collaborate closely with parents and willingly listen to them.” (Canon796)

At St Philomena's, the partnership between the parent and school is integral to the ethos and mission of the Catholic school and is characterised by a mutual respect. We endeavour to create a climate where parents feel they are able to bring their concerns to the attention of staff in the school, with the expectation they will be listened to and their concerns addressed.

Dealing with concerns

We encourage parents to raise their concerns with the school so they can be resolved quickly and informally. Most concerns can be resolved by the person to whom the concern is addressed e.g. the Class Teacher. It is only when a resolution cannot be reached at the informal stage the concern becomes a complaint and the formal part of the procedure is applied. We treat all concerns seriously and take prompt action to reach a resolution.

Many concerns arise because of misunderstandings. At St Philomena's we try to reduce these concerns by :-

- providing parents with regular information;
- informing parents and pupils in school workshops, reviews and evaluations;
- inviting feedback from parents e.g. policy developments;
- providing adequate times in the school year for parents to meet with teachers;
- regular communication between the teacher and the parent by notes home, emails or entries in the homework/contact book;
- inviting parents in if the school has any concerns.

The school recognises that there may be other parties, e.g. neighbours, who may also express concerns; these concerns are dealt with as seriously as those expressed by parents.

Concerns that are resolved informally are not complaints and are not recorded as complaints. It may be that a concern that was resolved becomes a complaint at a later date. It is important that there is evidence to show that the school takes prompt action to resolve a concern at its initial stage. The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher must be informed of all concerns so that services can be improved if necessary.

Statutory Requirements

All academies must have a complaints procedure that meets the standards set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014. This procedure is reviewed regularly. It conforms to Diocesan Guidance and guidance from the EFA issued in January 2015.

The complaints procedure does not deal with :-

- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline
- Staff capability
- Staff absence owing to sickness

Third party providers offering community facilities or services through use of the school premises or using school facilities have their own complaints procedures in place.

Aims

At St Philomena's we ensure that :-

- The person's concerns have been taken seriously and been addressed in a fair way
- That the resolution reached will enable relationships to be strengthened so that the school and those who use its services can continue to work together.

It is important to the school that the gospel values of justice and reconciliation underpin the whole process.

We believe it is important that all people concerned in an investigation are supported. The complainant may feel intimidated by the school as an institution and members of staff who are subject of complaints may feel vulnerable.

General Principles

- This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the services that it provides.
- An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- To allow for a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than three months after the event being complained of, will not be considered.
- Procedures will be impartial and non-adversarial.
- Confidentiality will be respected at all times.

The Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – Informal Procedures

Every effort is made to resolve a concern or complaint at this stage. A phone call or a meeting with a member of staff should be sufficient to resolve most concerns. On occasion, a senior member of staff might become involved to help resolve an issue. The complainant may wish to meet with the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher to discuss their concerns. The member of staff will make clear the school's response to the concerns raised and may agree certain actions to help resolve the complaint.

Where an approach is made directly to a member of the Governors, the Governor will refer the complainant to the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

Where the complainant is not satisfied with the response at stage 1, they can choose to take the matter to the formal complaints stage. They should put their complaint in writing, addressed to the Head Teacher. The person responsible for assessing the complaint and deciding the outcome is the Headteacher. Where the complaint is about the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will act in this capacity. The formal complaint will be investigated and the decision conveyed within 15 working days of receiving the formal complaint.

A Complaint Form is provided to assist you.

You should include details which might assist the investigation, such as the names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents. It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like the school to take to resolve your concern. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.

The Headteacher/Chair of Governors can decide to :

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or part
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to the schools' systems or procedures to ensure that issues of a similar nature do not recur.

The number and nature of formal complaints will be reported at the next full governing body meeting via the Headteacher's report. No details of individuals will be contained in this report.

Stage 3 – Governors’ Complaints Committee (Panel Hearing)

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, they can choose to take the matter to the next stage. They should request this in writing to the Chair of Governors. The Chair will convene a meeting of the Governors’ complaints committee within 15 working days of receiving the letter.

The Governors’ complaints committee will contain 3 or 5 members. It will not contain Governors who have had previous involvement with this complaint. It will contain 1 member who is independent of the management and running of the school.

The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting/panel hearing and may be accompanied if they wish. The complainant will be given reasonable notice of the date of the panel hearing and clear information on the process to enable them to attend will be given.

It is vital that during the meeting all parties act in a reasonable way. Any behaviour which is aggressive or threatening will not be tolerated. If the complainant behaves unacceptably, they may be asked to leave the meeting.

The Governors’ complaints committee can decide to :-

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or part
- Decide on the appropriate action taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to the school’s systems or procedures to ensure that issues of a similar nature do not recur.

Once the complaints committee has reached a decision, the Chair will inform all parties of the decision within 5 working days. At this point it should be made clear that the complaint procedure has been exhausted. Copies of all written records will be retained by the school. They will remain confidential, except where the Secretary of State (or someone acting on his/her behalf) requests access to them.

The Role of the Education Funding Agency (EFA)

As the school is an academy, the Local Authority cannot investigate complaints. The role of the EFA is to check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the academy. The EFA will not overturn an academy’s decision about a complaint. However, if the EFA find an academy did not deal with a complaint properly, they will request the complaint is looked at again from the appropriate stage.

St Philomena's CP School – Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to the Headteacher (or Clerk to the Governing Body), who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name :.....

Relationship with the school (e.g.parents of a pupil on the school's roll):

.....

Pupil's name (if relevant to your complaint):

.....

Your Address :

Daytime telephone number:.....

Evening Telephone number:.....

Please give concise details of your complaint, (including dates, names of witnesses etc...), to allow the matter to be fully investigated. :

You may continue on a separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of additional pages attached :

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint ? (i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome ?)

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage ?

Signature:.....Date:.....

...

School use :
Date this form was received : Received
by :
Date acknowledgement sent:
Acknowledgement sent by :

Complaint referred to :			
Date:			
Complaint resolved at	Stage 2	Stage 3	

