



St Mary's Church of England Primary School
Established 1845

Complaints Policy

It is hoped that complaints will be few and far between but, inevitably, there will be problems from time to time and it is essential that these are resolved quickly and to the satisfaction of all concerned.

PRINCIPLES

1. The written procedure detailed below is made available to the parents of all pupils and prospective pupils at the School.
2. It sets out clear time scales for the management of a complaint.
3. It allows for a complaint to be made and considered initially on an informal basis.
4. Where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with paragraph 3, it establishes a formal procedure for the complaint to be made in writing.
5. Where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with paragraph 4, it makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.
6. It ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member will be independent of the management and running of the school.
7. It allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish.
8. It provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is: (i) sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, to the person complained about; (ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and the Principal.

9. A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.
10. All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act requests access to them.

PROCEDURE

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. In many cases, a problem may start off as a concern. If this can be dealt with by positive action at the outset, the concern may not turn into a complaint. The following procedure will be adopted in all cases.

1. All concerns should be addressed **immediately** to the Principal, who will carry out a preliminary investigation without delay and then bring together all parties involved for informal discussion, **preferably on the day concerned but, if not, as soon as possible thereafter.**
2. If no resolution of the concern is achieved by the process detailed in paragraph 1, the complainant should be told to make a formal submission in writing, outlining briefly and clearly, the precise nature of the problem. This should be sent to the Principal (or the Chair of Governors if the complaint is about the Principal) **within three days of the problem being raised**, and a copy kept.
3. On receipt of a written complaint, the Principal should make a further attempt at resolution of the issue by arranging and conducting, together with the Chair of Governors, a formal face-to-face interview with the complainant **within three days of receipt of the written complaint.**
4. If this fails, a panel will be set up involving three people not previously involved with the issue, to re-examine the whole matter; one member of this panel should be independent of the management and running of the school. The complainant may be accompanied, if required. When it is clear that a panel will be required to resolve the issue, every effort will be made to

convene a meeting **within one week** or, if this is not possible, as soon as is feasible thereafter.

5. A decision will then be taken as to whether to dismiss or uphold the complaint and what, if any, action should be taken. A copy of the findings and recommendations of the panel will, **within three days**, be: (i) sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, to the person complained about; (ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and the Principal.
6. A written, but strictly confidential, record of all complaints and the outcomes will be kept at the school.
7. At all stages of this process, any failure to meet the specified timescales must be notified to all concerned in the process, by electronic mail or otherwise as appropriate, as soon as such failure is apparent. Alternative arrangements will then be set up to ensure continuity of the proceedings.

It is in the interests of all concerned that every effort should be made to deal with a complaint and arrive at a solution quickly; this will be attempted in every case by applying the timescale set out, if at all possible.

Ref. 'The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010', Part 7.

NB. This policy does not apply to complaints that are concerned with child protection issues. These are covered separately within the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Date Implemented: 1st April 2016

Approved by: Madeleine Spinks Chair of Governors

Person Responsible: Peter Kyles Principal

Review Date:

1st April 2017