



St Edward's Catholic First School
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Complaints Procedure for Concerns or Complaints about the Actions of St Edward's First School Staff

1. General Principles

St Edward's Catholic First is committed to providing the very highest standards of education and support and places great value on its strong partnership with parents. We recognise that from time concerns or complaints may arise and it is our aim to work with all parties involved towards a satisfactory resolution.

The aim of this procedure is to enable those involved to reach a resolution of their concerns by providing a transparent and easily understood process for handling complaints. We will do this by:

- ☐ Attempting to resolve concerns through informal discussions at the earliest stage
- ☐ Providing named contacts and a timescale for a response to be made by the school
- ☐ Focusing on resolving complaints rather than apportioning blame
- ☐ Promoting confidentiality and discretion
- ☐ Being forthright in dealing with vexatious, abusive and malicious complaints

All complaints, regardless of the subject matter, will first of all be reviewed by the Head Teacher to ensure that the appropriate staff in the school are notified. If after reviewing the nature of your complaint it is decided that an alternative statutory procedure applies then we will inform you. Examples of such complaints include those relating to exclusions or admissions.

2. How to report a complaint

Stage 1 – Informal concerns or complaints

Concerns or complaints should initially be discussed informally with the relevant member of staff, for example the class teacher with a view to resolving the issue. There is no need at this stage for the complaint to be made in writing, however the member of staff will make a note of any agreed actions using the form at Appendix A and this will be retained as a record.

If the complaint has already been discussed with the member of staff, or that would be inappropriate, a senior manager (this could be the Head Teacher or another senior leader) will discuss the complaint again with you with a view to seeking to resolve the matter informally.

We would expect and hope that the vast majority of concerns or complaints would be resolved at this early stage.

In the unusual event that your complaint remains unresolved after discussions with the appropriate member of staff then you may put your complaint in writing and this will be handled under Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint Investigation

If your complaint cannot be resolved informally then you will be given the opportunity to put it formally in writing using the form at Appendix B. You will need to send this to the Head teacher within 10 school days of the conclusion of Stage 1.

We will then appoint an appropriate person to investigate your complaint further (The Investigating Officer) who will:

- ☐ Acknowledge your complaint within 5 school days.
- ☐ Investigate the complaint and then decide how best to resolve it within a further 10 school days.
- ☐ Provide a written response to you outlining how the investigation was conducted and the outcome of the complaint, as well as offering you an opportunity to discuss the outcome if appropriate. This will normally be within 5 school days of completing the investigation.
- ☐ Advise you on the next steps if after this review your complaint has not been resolved which will be covered under Stage 3.

Stage 3 – Formal Complaint Panel

If your complaint has not been resolved at Stage 2 then you may write within 10 school days of the notification of the Stage 2 outcome to the Clerk to the Governors requesting a Formal Complaints Panel and explaining why you feel that your complaint has not been fully addressed at Stage 2. You should do this using the reporting form at Appendix C.

We will acknowledge your request within 5 school days and inform you of the arrangements for the Formal Complaint Panel.

A meeting of the Panel will be convened normally within 20 school days of your request.

The Panel will consider the following:

- Any appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Whether to dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- Whether to uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- Whether changes to the school procedures in the future may be necessary.
- The Panel will take into account whether the complaint has been handled properly and reasonably in accordance with this procedure and whether the Stage 2 outcome was reasonable and appropriate.
- You will normally be informed of the outcome at the end of the Formal Panel and this will be confirmed in writing within 7 days. The decision of the Panel is Final.

3. Taking your complaint further

Although the decision of the Panel is final under this procedure if you consider that the school or its representatives is proposing to act unreasonably, or has failed to carry out its statutory duties then you may write to the Secretary of State for Education.

4. Expectations under this procedure

When you bring a complaint to us under this procedure you may expect the school to:

- Take your complaint seriously
- Treat you with courtesy and respect
- Deal with it with discretion and confidentiality (if the matter relates to the safety and well-being of a child then we reserve the right to share details with other agencies)
- Offer you the opportunity to be accompanied by a friend, adviser or colleague
- Meet the timescales set unless there is good reasons to extend these – in which case you will be informed
- Seek and offer resolution at all stages
- Inform you of the action taken to resolve your complaint and of any measures to ensure that a similar complaint does not arise in the future

In turn we expect that:

- Our staff will be treated with respect
- You will be mindful of the need to keep information relating to children confidential in the interests of all our students
- That you will enter into the procedure in the spirit of seeking resolution
- If we consider that disciplinary action may be necessary against our staff then we will deal with this under our disciplinary procedure and in confidence
- In the unlikely event that anyone bringing a complaint is considered by the Head Teacher to be acting unreasonably or that the complaint is malicious or vexatious then the Head Teacher will intervene and appropriate restrictions may be imposed.

5. Monitoring and Review

The governing body is informed of and regularly monitors and reviews any incidents on file.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or when necessary.

Reviewed:	Head Teacher	March 2017
Approved:	FGB	April 2017
Review frequency	Every 3 years or as required	
Signed by Chair of Governors		
Signed by Head Teacher		

<p>STAGE ONE: INFORMAL</p> <p>Complainant to proceed to Stage 2 by informing the school within 10 school working days</p>	<p>Expression of concern to member of staff / Response within 5 school days</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Satisfactory outcome reached?</p> <p>↓ ↓</p> <p>No: Go to stage 2 Yes: No further action</p>
<p>STAGE TWO: HEADTEACHER'S INVESTIGATION</p> <p>Complainant to proceed to Stage 3 by informing the school within 10 school working days</p>	<p>Complainant makes verbal/written complaint to headteacher</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Investigation conducted and outcome reported to complainant. Response within 3 school days</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Satisfactory outcome reached?</p> <p>↓ ↓</p> <p>No: Go to stage 3 Yes: No further action</p>
<p>STAGE THREE: CHAIR OF GOVERNORS/ GOVERNORS INVESTIGATION</p> <p>Complainant to proceed to Stage 3 by informing the school within 10 school working days</p>	<p>If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the headteacher or the complaint is about the headteacher, the complainant should write to the Chair of Governors to request that their complaint is considered further.</p> <p>Investigation conducted and outcome reported to complainant.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Satisfactory outcome reached?</p> <p>↓ ↓</p> <p>No: Go to stage 4 Yes: No further action</p>
<p>STAGE FOUR: GOVERNORS' APPEAL PANEL</p>	<p>If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the Chair. The complainant usually needs to write to the Clerk to the Governing Body giving details of the complaint and asking that it is put before the appeal panel (Response within 5 school days). The Chair, or if the Chair has been involved at any previous stage in the process, a nominated governor, will convene a GB complaints panel.</p> <p>The governors' appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process and is not convened merely to rubber-stamp previous decisions.</p>
<p>FINAL STAGE: FURTHER RIGHT OF PROGRESSING COMPLAINT</p> <p>The Chair of the above Panel needs to ensure that the complainant is notified of the panel's decision, in writing, with the panel's response (including the reasons for the decision); this is usually within a set deadline which is publicised in the procedure. The letter needs to explain if there are any further rights of appeal and, if so, to whom they need to be addressed. This may be the LA or Diocesan Board.</p> <p>The final stage of appeal is to the Secretary of State for Education. Complainants should be advised to write to The School Complaints Unit (SCU) at:</p> <p>Department for Education, 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Manchester, M1 2WD</p>	

APPENDIX A

Initial Record of Concern/Complaint

School Name	
Name of Complainant	
Name of Child	
Class	
Date of Initial Contact With the School	
Nature of Concern/Complaint	
Actions Taken	
Signature	Date

Appendix B

Stage 2 Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Clerk of Governors who will acknowledge receipt and pass to the Complaints Co-coordinator who will explain what action will be taken.

Your Name
Pupil's Name & Class
Your relationship to the pupil
Your Address
Phone Number
E-Mail Address
Please give details of your complaint
What action have you already taken to try and resolve this situation and what was the response?

What action do you feel would resolve this problem to your satisfaction?

Are you attaching any paperwork?

Yes/No

If yes, please give details.

Signature

Date

For Office Use Only

Date Received:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Complaint Referred to:

Signed

Print Name

Date

Appendix C

Stage 3 Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Clerk of Governors who will acknowledge receipt and pass to the Complaints Co-coordinator who will explain what action will be taken.

Your Name
Pupil's Name & Class
Your relationship to the pupil
Your Address
Phone Number
E-Mail Address
Please confirm that you are requesting that your complaint be taken to a Governors Panel
Signature
Please provide details as to why you are dissatisfied with the outcomes of the Stage 2 investigation:

What action do you feel would resolve this problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork?

Yes/No

If yes, please give details.

Signature

Date

For Office Use Only

Date Received:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Complaint Referred to:

Signed

Print Name

Date