

All Saints' CEVCP School

Complaints Policy and Procedure



Inspire Challenge Succeed

Review Frequency	Every three years	Approval Level Required	Full GB
Approved By:	Full GB	Approval Date:	01/12/2016
Signed:		Print Name:	Richard Harding Chair of Governors

Introduction

This policy has been approved by our governing board.

The Governing Board is required to deal with all complaints relating to the school (stages 1-3 in the guidelines outlined below).

The LA is required only (stage 4) to deal with complaints that are dealt with in accordance with statutory provision i.e.

- School curriculum, collective worship, religious education and the provision of information by law
- Appeals about admission
- Appeals about exclusion
- Appeals about assessment and statements of special educational needs

Policy

Advice and guidance for parents / carers

The LA will provide advice and guidance to parents, Headteacher and Governors at any stage of the complaints process. Details of contact numbers are available from the school office.

A Listening School

At All Saints' we aim to deal with all worries and complaints in a positive and supportive manner. We describe ourselves as a listening school and welcome questions, comments and suggestions for improvement.

In most cases the teacher should be the first point of contact and we aim to deal with all concerns quickly and effectively. If the parent / carer is not happy with the way the concern has been dealt with, the stages below offer clear guidance as to the action to be taken.

Stage 1: Initial Contact with the school (an informal complaint)

Many concerns will be dealt with informally when you first make them known to the school. In most cases we would expect the class teacher to be the first point of contact, either by telephone or in person.

Motivation Cooperation Creativity Independence Curiosity Stickability

If the parent / carer wishes to meet with the class teacher we respectfully ask them to make an appointment to discuss the situation. This ensures that:

- We allocate sufficient time to listen carefully to your complaint
- Lessons can start on time and are uninterrupted

If for any reason the teacher is unable to meet with the parent, he / she will either

- arrange an alternative appointment
- ask the Headteacher to informally meet with the parent / carer

If possible we prefer all concerns / complaints to be dealt with as quickly as possible and to everyone's satisfaction. It is preferable for concerns to be handled without the need for formal procedures. We pride ourselves on honest and genuine relationships within our school; such values extend to all relationships with children, parents and members of our wider school community.

However, we do appreciate that there may be times when more formal procedures are required and we will treat all complaints with respect and with good manners. In most cases we hope that the class teacher will be the first contact and we will endeavour to resolve issues at that point.

All complaints will be investigated with respect and integrity.

Stage 2: Escalating an informal complaint

If you feel dissatisfied with the outcome of discussions with the class teacher please ask for an appointment to meet with the Headteacher. This can be arranged by telephoning the school office or speaking to Mrs Lamb directly. Mrs Lamb operates an open door policy and is very happy for parents to raise concerns with her but please be aware that she has a considerable workload and may not be able to deal with your issue straight away. If this is the case she will undertake to arrange a mutually convenient time as soon as possible.

The purpose of this meeting should be to establish the nature of the ongoing concern, what has been discussed with the class teacher so far and any actions arising from the initial meeting.

It is in everyone's interest, particularly the child or children, for concerns to be sorted out quickly and smoothly. However, it may be that Mrs Lamb will need to look into what has happened since the initial meeting before she can suggest how your concern might be resolved. If this is the case, it should be agreed how and within what timescale she will contact you to let you know the outcome of her enquiries and what actions she has taken/proposes to take.

Mrs Lamb will make a brief written record of the concern discussed on the school's Pastoral Support Forms and what has been agreed and to write to parents summarising this.

Occasionally these discussions do not always resolve your concern, and if you are still dissatisfied your concern will become a formal complaint.

Stage 3: Formal Consideration of your complaint

You will be asked to confirm the complaint in writing to Mrs Lamb (or Chair of Governors if the complaint is about the Headteacher) and it will be acknowledged in writing.

As part of the school's consideration of your complaint, you may be invited to a meeting to discuss the complaint and to discuss any further details. If you wish, you can ask someone to accompany you, to help you explain the reasons for your complaint.

Mrs Lamb or the Chair of Governors will carry out a full investigation of all matters relating to your complaint. Where necessary they will talk to witnesses and take statements from others involved.

If the complaint centres on a pupil, the school will talk to the pupil concerned and, where appropriate, others present at the time of the incident in question. The school will normally talk to a pupil with a parent or carer present.

If the complaint is against a member of staff, it will be dealt with under the school's internal, confidential procedures.

Mrs Lamb or the Chair of Governors will keep written, signed and dated records of all meetings and telephone conversations, and other related documents.

Once the school has established all the relevant facts, they will send you a written response to your complaint. This will give a full explanation of Mrs Lamb's / the Chair of Governor's decision and the reason for it. If follow-up action is needed, the school will indicate what we are proposing to do.

If you complaint is specifically about the Headteacher or an individual Governor

Where you are unhappy about the decision the Headteacher has made about your complaint, this does not become a complaint about the Headteacher. However, if the complaint is about the conduct of the Headteacher, and you feel that it has not been resolved at the informal stage then you should move directly to Step 4 of the procedure and write to the Chair of Governors.

A complaint that is specifically about the conduct of an individual governor, and which has not been resolved at the informal stage, should also proceed directly to Step 4 and be made by writing to the Chair of Governors.

Concerns or complaints specifically about the Chair of Governors

A complaint about the conduct of the Chair of Governors of the school, and which has not been resolved at the informal stage, will need to be dealt with outside this policy. The complaint should be made in writing to the Assistant Director of Education and Learning (Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX), The recipient's response will include options if the complaint is unresolved which might involve moving to Step 5, the Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel.

Stage 4: Formal Complaint Letter to the Chair of Governors

If your concern has already been through Stage 1, 2 and 3 and you are not happy with the outcome, the next step is to make a formal complaint to the Governing Board. You should contact the school's Chair of Governors by letter, enclosing a copy of the written complaint originally submitted, indicating which matters remain unresolved. No new complaint may be included.

Letters should be sent to:

Chair of Governors

All Saints' CEVCP School
The Street
Lawshall
Suffolk
IP294QA

The Chair of Governors will acknowledge receipt of the letter within five school days and as All Saints' is a local authority maintained school they will contact the local authority Strategic Officer for advice.

Where the complaint is about the Headteacher the Chair of Governors may appoint an independent Investigating Officer to examine the complaint.

Complaints not resolved though the formal procedure

The Governing Board's decision will usually be final; however, if you wish to pursue the matter further, you can ask Local Authority (LA) whether your complaint is one that can be heard by them. This could also be the case if you feel that the school has not followed its own Complaints Procedure. However, in the majority of cases, unless your complaint relates to issues for which there are separate arrangements laid down by law (as previously detailed) there is no right of formal complaint to the Local Authority.

The Local Authority has no legal power or duty to deal with most complaints about schools but will provide advice to the parent/carer and Governing Board in the event that a complaint which has been considered under the formal procedure remains unresolved or if the complaint is specifically about the Headteacher.

Should you wish for an independent review of your complaint you will need to write to the Local Authority giving the details of your complaint, what action you have already taken to try and resolve your complaint and attaching a copy of the written response from the school.

Address for correspondence:

Strategic Support
Education and Learning
Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
Ipswich
IP1 2BX

If the LA receives an anonymous complaint, the details will be passed to the school, but it will be at the school's discretion if this is investigated. N.B. this will not apply in relation to issues connected with Child Protection.

Stage 5: Governing Board Hearing

The Chair of Governors has discretion to agree to a complaint review panel if he feels it would be helpful in resolving the complaint. You may also ask the Governing Board to move to this stage if you feel that your complaint has not been resolved by the previous steps.

The aim of the complaints review panel is to resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the parent(s) / carer(s). However, it may sometimes only be possible to establish facts and to make recommendations, which will reassure you that the complaint has been taken seriously.

The format of such a meeting would be for you to attend, to present your case and allow the Governing Board to take evidence. A separate meeting will then take place to allow the school staff to do the same.

Should the Governing Board agree to hold a complaints review meeting you will be informed of the date, time and place of the meeting by letter. The letter will also explain what will happen at the meeting and inform you that you are entitled to be accompanied at the meeting. With agreement of the Chair of the Panel, the Headteacher may invite members of the staff directly involved in matters raised by you to attend the meeting.

As a general rule, no evidence or witnesses previously undisclosed should be introduced into the meeting by any of the participants.

The clerk will send you and the Headteacher a written statement outlining the decision of the panel within two weeks.

Complaints to the Secretary of State

If you wish to pursue the complaint, you have recourse to the Secretary of state or, if the complaint is against action taken, or not taken by the LA, it is possible for that complaint to be referred to the Local Government Ombudsman.

We would advise that, unless the school or LA has acted unreasonably or not to have followed our own procedures, there is little further action that can be taken. This is because Governing Bodies are empowered to deal with many issues without reference to either the LA or Secretary of State.

The School Complaints Unit (SCU)
Department for Education
2nd Floor,
Piccadilly Gate
Manchester
M1 2WD

Tel: 0370 000 2288
Typetalk: 18001 0370 000 2288
Fax: 0161 600 1332

www.education.gov.uk/schoolcomplaints