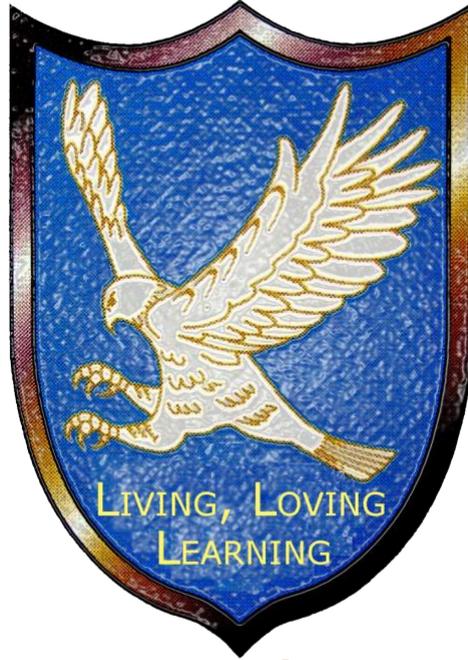


ST. JOHN'S C OF E



PRIMARY SCHOOL

Complaints Policy

Last Reviewed by Governing Body: Feb 2018

Date of next review: Feb 2020

Mission and Vision Statement

Our mission is that:

Each of us is special; each of us is unique.

We aim to provide pupils with high quality teaching and learning, so that they can become effective life-long learners, striving for excellence.

We aim to demonstrate clear Christian characteristics and values, whilst at the same time, encouraging recognition of and respect for other faiths.

We value greatly school, home and parish connections.

We believe in “Living, Loving and Learning” together in God's World.

Our vision is to:

Empower creative independent thinkers, who are resilient to challenges, in readiness for our diverse and ever-changing world.

Introduction

Here at St John's C of E Primary School, we believe that good communication between the school and you as parents or carers is essential. Children achieve more when schools and parents work together.

At St John's C of E Primary School we aim to have a clear and effective communication system with parents, carers and the wider community, as we feel this enables us to share our aims and values, and keeps everyone well informed about school life.

Aim of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide clarity and guidance about how we will deal with any concerns or complaints that you as parents, carers or others bring to our attention, and the school encourages you to inform us as soon as possible of any concerns that you may have in regards to your child's progress or any other school matter. We will not usually look into complaints in respect of historic matters that are more than 6 months old however we will assess these on a case by case basis. Matters which relate to the following will also fall outside of the scope of this policy:

- Safeguarding matters
- Matters relating to staff employment or any disciplinary process
- Any legal matters
- Matters for which there is a separate process of appeal or redress

Our Promise to You...

- Your concern, question, feedback or complaint will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence.

- Matters will be looked into thoroughly and fairly.
- If your concern is urgent we will endeavour to respond on the same day if at all possible.
- We will work in partnership with you to try and find a positive resolution and/or way forward.
- We will keep you up to date with progress at each stage.
- You will get an apology if we have made a mistake.
- You will be told what we are going to do to put things right and any learning and improvement made as a result of your complaint or feedback.
- You will get a full and clear written reply to a formal complaint within 28 working days.

What is the difference between a Concern and a Complaint?

A 'concern' may be defined as '*an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought*'. A complaint may be generally defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action*'.

How to pay a compliment if we have done something well, ask us a question, give feedback or raise a concern informally?

We are always happy to receive your feedback, comments and suggestions or answer any questions you may have. Most concerns can be sorted out quickly by speaking with your child's class teacher or associated teaching assistant, in line with the school communication policy, and staff will make every effort to resolve the concerns informally.

What if things are not resolved informally?

If you are unable to resolve matters informally and wish to progress the matter, or your concern is about a member of staff, you will be referred to the appropriate Assistant Head Teacher who will work with you to try to find a resolution.

If your concern is about the Assistant Head Teacher then you should contact the Head Teacher, and for any complaints about the Head Teacher you should contact the Chair of Governors. All communication must be made via the school office and a mutually convenient time to meet will be arranged. Assistant Head will work with you to try to find a resolution to your concern or complaint and they will ask you to think about what outcome you would like to see.

Complaints:

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage and as outlined above many issues can be resolved without the need to invoke formal complaint procedures.

There are some occasions however where matters cannot be resolved informally and when matters will need to be progressed via the formal complaint process. Where this is the case you will need to send a letter of complaint to the Head Teacher who will arrange to meet with you, agree a course of action and then investigate your complaint. You will then receive a written response from the Head Teacher with feedback regarding any

action the school will be taking in response to your complaint. (Normally this will be as soon as possible within 28 working days).

If the complaint is still not resolved, and you remain dissatisfied with the Head Teacher's response you are able to request that matters be progressed to the next stage of the complaint process. You will need to write to the Chair of Governors detailing your complaint and what further outcome you are seeking. The Chair of Governors will then after acknowledging your complaint, investigate further and then respond in writing regarding what if any further action the school will be taking. The Chair may ask to meet with you if this is felt to be helpful, and you will normally receive a letter from the Chair detailing the outcome as soon as possible (Normally, within 28 working days).

What if things are still not resolved and I remain dissatisfied with the Response from the Chair of Governors?

You are able to write to the Chair of Governors within 7 working days of receiving their response, to request that the Chair convenes a Governor Complaint Panel to review your complaint and how the school has responded so far. Please note the Complaint Panel will not reinvestigate the complaint, but will aim to provide both sides with a fair hearing, review information available and look at how school has dealt with the complaint and try to identify any further resolution or way forward.

Governing Body Complaint Panel:

Upon receipt of a request to convene a panel meeting, the Chair of Governors will arrange for 3 School Governors who have not had any prior involvement in the investigation of the complaint to sit on the panel and will contact you to agree a date for the panel meeting. You will be invited to provide in advance of the panel any evidence or documentation you wish the panel to review and discuss on the day, and all attendees will receive a panel information pack at least 3 working days prior to the date of the panel meeting.

At the panel meeting you will be invited to discuss with the panel members your concerns and complaints and what further outcome you are looking for to resolve matters. The panel will also listen to what the school have to say regarding what they have actioned to try to resolve things. Once the panel members have all of the information they need they will close the meeting and will then agree the outcome. The Panel Chair will write to you and the school on behalf of the panel members detailing the outcome and any recommendations they wish to make (usually within 5 working days).

The Governing Body Complaint Panel is the final stage of the school complaint procedure and the school will at this point consider the matters of complaint to be closed. If it is the case that you still remain dissatisfied with how the school have dealt with your complaint you are able to contact the Department for Education Complaints Unit at the following address:

Department for Education
School Complaints Unit
2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate
Store Street

Manchester
M1 2WD

Further information can be obtained from the SCU by calling the National Helpline on **0370 000 2288** or going online at: www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus or by writing to:

Monitoring and Evaluation

The School Leadership Team is responsible to ensure the Complaints Policy is embedded into the school provision and will report to governors on the effectiveness of the policy.

Persistent or Unreasonable Complaints:

We will do our best to be helpful in responding to and trying to resolve any complaints received. However, once a complaint has completed the school complaint process it is not an effective or proper use of school resources and time to continue to respond if no further reasonable outcome can be achieved. In such instances the complainant will be advised to contact the DfE Complaints Unit.

Should a complainant unreasonably pursue a complaint to the point that the school considers it to constitute harassment the school will write to the complainant to notify them of this and will take such steps as deemed appropriate, which may include seeking legal advice where necessary.

A complaint will be deemed to be unreasonable if the person making the complaint:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or

responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);

- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic or unreasonable outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person in making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone, in writing or electronically in a way that is deemed to be:-

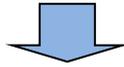
- malicious;
- aggressive;
- threatening in tone or content
- abusive, offensive or discriminatory (use of such language)
- using falsified information;
- using unacceptable information in a variety of ways including use of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Whenever possible, the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying any of the above criteria. Where a complainant's behavior is deemed to be unacceptable or unreasonable in their pursuit of a complaint this will be managed in line with the school policy and the Department for Education guidance for dealing with such behavior.

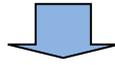
Appendix 1

Complaints Procedure

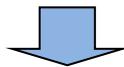
**Initial query or concern should be raised with
the class teacher**



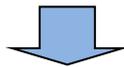
Concern escalated to Deputy Head
EYFS & KS1 – Miss Bonter
KS2 – Mr Gibson



Complaint directed to Head Teacher



**If unresolved complaint goes to Chair of
Governors**



**Final Stage – On request Chair convenes
Governing Body Complaint panel**

END OF SCHOOL COMPLAINT PROCESS

NB: If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with their complaint they will be signposted to The Department for Education Complaints Unit.