



St. Paul's C of E Academy

Compliments and Complaints Policy

We walk by faith and not by sight: 2 Corinthians 5:7



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Principles of the Procedure Compliments

It is important for parents/carers and other individuals to let us know when we have got it right so we can celebrate our successes.

It is essential that all compliments are recorded by the Principal and shared with the member of staff within five school working days.

Complaints

The implementation of the complaints procedure in the school is the responsibility of the Principal, including making decisions about their own involvement at various stages.

Informal Procedures

General day-to-day concerns should be raised initially with the class/subject teacher where applicable. On occasions individuals, who are not parents, may need to go direct to the Principal.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- Many enquiries and concerns can be dealt with satisfactorily by the class teacher, the head teacher or other members of staff without the need to resort to a formal procedure. The school values informal meetings and discussions.

- All complaints should be acknowledged within five school working days. Every attempt should be made to respond to complainants within twenty school working days.
- The Principal will formally investigate the complaint. They will talk to everyone involved and confirm the outcome of their enquiries with the complainant. If the complaint is about the Principal or a Governor the Governing Body will investigate and confirm the outcome rather than the Principal.
- If the complainant is not satisfied they may appeal to the Governing Body within ten school working days. When the Chair of Governors receives the complaint, they may wish to investigate and respond initially. If they feel that the nature of the complaint warrants it or if the complainant requests it following the Chair's response, the complaint should progress to stage two.

Stage 2 – Formal Written Complaints

- The complainant should set out the precise nature of the complaint in written form and return this to the Principal. The complainant should keep a copy of this and all other relevant correspondence.
- Should a complaint be about a general matter, the Principal may be able to respond immediately, e.g. if it only requires an explanation of school policy. For complaints that relate to specific actions or events, there is likely to be a need for further investigation in order to clarify the facts. The Principal or their nominee will determine how best to undertake this investigation.
- However, if in the early stages of the investigation, the Principal considers that the complaint is best dealt with at Stage 3, it will be passed to the Chair of Governors (or to the clerk to the governing body for the chair's attention) and the complainant informed of this action without delay.
- Should the Principal or a governor be the subject of a complaint, these will be dealt with under Stage 3 below. The complainant should send the form directly to the chair of governors (or to the clerk to the governing body for the chair's attention) c/o the school marking the envelope 'private and confidential'.

- Should the chair of governors be the subject of a complaint, the complainant should send the form directly to the vice-chair of governors (or to the clerk to the governing body for the vice-chair's attention) c/o the school marking the envelope 'private and confidential'.
- All formal complaints will be acknowledged by telephone call, email or letter within 5 school days of receipt.
- Investigations at this stage should normally be completed within 20 school days of receipt of the complaint, unless there are circumstances that require a longer investigatory period. The complainant will be informed in writing should more time be required.
- The school will aim to send a formal written response within 5 school days of the completion of the investigation. This gives a target of 5 school weeks for the completion of this stage of the procedure.
- Following the stage 2 investigation, the Principal will decide on one of two outcomes:-

Recommend that appropriate remedial action necessary to resolve the complaint be undertaken, or

Confirm that all internal investigative measures have been exhausted and uphold the original informal response if this had occurred.

The decision is confidential to the complainant and to the governing body.

The complainant may take the complaint further if they are unhappy with the Stage 2 outcome by giving notice of their intention within 10 school days of their receipt of the formal outcome. This notice should be made in writing to the chair of governors (or to the clerk to the governing body for the chair's attention) c/o the school marking the envelope 'private and confidential'.

Stage 3 – Referral to the Governing Body

- Where the Principal is unable to resolve a complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant or where there is a complaint against the Principal or a governor, the complainant should write to the chair of governors (or to the clerk to the governing body for the chair's attention) c/o the school

marking the envelope 'private and confidential' including copies of all relevant documents.

- Should the chair of governors be the subject of a complaint, the complainant should send the form directly to the vice-chair of governors (or to the clerk to the governing body for the vice-chair's attention) c/o the school marking the envelope 'private and confidential'.
- A panel of three governors must be convened by the chair (or vice-chair) of governors to investigate the complaint.
- All formal complaints will be acknowledged within 5 school days of receipt.
- Investigations at this stage should normally be completed within 20 school days of receipt of the complaint, unless there are circumstances that require a longer investigatory period. The complainant will be informed in writing should more time be required.
- The school will aim to send a formal written response within 5 school days of the completion of the investigation.
- This gives a target of 5 school weeks for the completion of this stage of the procedure.
- Following the stage 3 investigation, the panel will decide on one of two outcomes:–

Recommend that appropriate remedial action necessary to resolve the complaint be undertaken, or

Confirm that all internal investigative measures have been exhausted and uphold the original response.

The decision is confidential to the complainant and to the governing body.

5.0 What can I do if I am not happy with the schools and governing body's responses?

If your complaint is still unresolved after referring to stage 3 and you feel that the school has behaved unreasonably about your concerns, you can write to the Secretary of State for Education. Write to:

Ministerial and Public Communications Division, Department for Education,
Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Telephone 0370 000 2288

Email: <http://www.education.gov.uk/>

Annual report to Governors

A summary of complaints will be presented to Governors annually. The Chair of Governors will be notified when a formal complaint has been received by the school. The Clerk to Governors will keep a list of formal complaints and copies of correspondence relating to the complaint.

Monitoring Compliments and Complaints

Monitoring forms will be reported to the Senior Management Team and Governing Body termly.

Staff Support

A complaint about a member of staff can be a major source of anxiety it is therefore important that members of staff involved in a complaint are kept informed about the progress (see page 8). **Please note that if the complaint relates to a Child Protection issue different procedures apply. In these cases, no information should be given to the member of staff without the agreement of Social Services and the Police.**

Other Procedures

The Complaints procedures will not be used to investigate the following statutory procedures:

- Admissions to schools;
- Exclusions;

- Special Education Needs Provision (SEN Tribunal);
- Statutory Proposals for School Re-organisation;
- Serious complaints against staff;
- Child Protection Issues;
- Risk Assessment/Claim for Damages.

Complaints can be made about:

- Non-compliance with curriculum issues;
- Failure to provide a satisfactory service;
- Failure to follow policies and processes;
- The conduct of staff/Governors.

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints would not normally be considered under this procedure, the Principal or Governors will need to make a judgement and seek consultation if necessary.

Investigating Complaints

At each stage, the person investigating the complaint, makes sure that they:

- Establish **what** has happened so far, and **who** has been involved;
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- Meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary);
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right;
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained about, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- Conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- Keep notes of the interview.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Clerk

The LA and DFE strongly recommend that any committee considering complaints be clerked. The clerk would be the contact point for the complainant and be required to:

- Set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
- Collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing;
- Meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing;
- Record the proceedings;
- Notify all parties of the panel's decision.

The Role of the Chair of the Committee

The Chair of the Committee has a key role, ensuring that:

- The remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption;
- The issues are addressed;
- Key findings of fact are made
- Parents and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease;
- The hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy;
- The panel is open minded and acting independently;
- No member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure.

Checklist for a Complaints Committee Good Practice Guide

The Committee needs to take the following points into account:

- The hearing is as informal as possible;
- Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence;
- After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses;
- The Principal may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken;
- The Principal is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses;
- The complainant may question both the Principal and the witnesses after each has spoken;
- The panel may ask questions at any point;
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint;
- The Principal is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint;
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues;
- The chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set timescale.

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