



St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The school's values are concerned with meeting the needs of pupils, parents, staff and others who have a stake in the school. The Governing Body believes that constant feedback is an important ingredient in self-improvement and raising standards.
- 1.2 We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and the Headteacher and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with parents/carers. However, we recognise that there are times when the school does not perform at its best. For this reason the school has procedures in place for when parents have a concern or a complaint.
- 1.3 The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

2. Aims and objectives

- 2.1 Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 Parents/carers, staff and members of the Governing Body were consulted in drafting this policy.

4. The complaints process

- 4.1 If a parent/carer is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at the school, or their child's experience of school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy in school, and is making good progress. They always want to know if there is a problem so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress. Parents/carers are

invited to be accompanied by another parent or one of the school governors when they discuss their concern with the class teacher.

- 4.2 Where a parent/carer feels that the situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher. The Headteacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. The Headteacher will make and retain written notes of any meeting. Most complaints are resolved at this stage. Parents/carers are invited to be accompanied by another parent or one of the school governors when they discuss their complaint with the Headteacher.
- 4.3 If the parent/carer is not satisfied with the action taken by the Headteacher, or the complaint is about the Headteacher, they should make contact with the Chair of Governors through the school office.
- 4.4 The Chair of Governors will ask the parent/carer to put their complaint in writing using the official complaint form (appendix 1) stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far. The Chair of Governors will acknowledge receipt of the complaint letter within three school days of the Chair receiving it. The Chair of Governors has the right to refer the matter to the Education Service, or relevant issues to the Clifton Diocese, if this is deemed preferable to it being dealt with by the Governing Body.
- 4.5 The Chair of Governors will convene a complaints panel of two or three school governors who have no prior knowledge of the complaint and no prejudice in the matter. Within ten school days of the chair receiving the letter the panel will invite the complainant to attend a meeting to discuss the complaint. This gives the opportunity to explain the complaint in more detail. Within fifteen school days of the meeting with the parent/carer the panel will gather information as it deems necessary.
- 4.6 After collating and hearing all the evidence, the complaints panel will consider their decision and inform the parent/carer about it in writing. The parent/carer will receive notification of the outcome within twenty school days of the meeting.
- 4.7 Parents/carers will be advised if there is to be any unavoidable delay in dealing with any aspect of the complaint at any stage, and a reason given. It is not always possible to meet the above deadlines bearing in mind Governors are all volunteers.
- 4.8 The outcome and any recommendations made by the Complaints Panel will be reported in confidence to the Governing Body at their next full Governing Body meeting, and the governors will ensure that the recommendations are carried out in full.

- 4.9 All discussions and meetings with the Complaints Panel will be recorded in writing by one of the Panel, and will be retained by the clerk to the Governors for six years from the date of the complaint.
- 4.10 If a parent/carer is not satisfied with governors' response to a complaint then they will be referred to the DfE.
- 4.11 Where a parent/carer approaches the LA with a complaint about the school, they will be advised to first contact the school and to follow the school's complaint procedure.
- 4.12 South Gloucestershire Council Policy states 'A complaint may become vexatious when it has been properly considered and dealt with but the complainant is not prepared to accept the conclusion or persists in making the same or substantially the same complaint'. Continuing with such complaints can unreasonably take up time and resources and detract from the responsibility to others in the school community. The decision regarding whether a complaint has become vexatious will be made by the Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing Body.

5. Access to this policy

- 5.1 A copy will be made available to all existing staff, governors and parents/carers.
- 5.2 A copy of the policy will always be available from the school office for staff, governors and parents/carers to refer to as and when necessary.

6. Exclusions to this policy

- 6.1 This policy does not relate to complaints which fall into the following categories:
- (i) complaints about admission to the school – refer to the Admissions Policy.
 - (ii) complaints about failure to assess a child's special educational needs – refer to Care Officer in SEN Team – Education Service
 - (iii) exclusion of pupils from school – refer to Education Service (Access and Social Inclusion)
 - (iv) Child Protection – will be referred immediately to the Education Service.
 - (v) Any complaint about the governing body.

7 Monitoring and review

- 7.1 The governors will monitor the complaints procedure to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher will log all complaints received by the school, verbal and written, and record how they were resolved.

- 7.2 The Headteacher will report the number and nature of complaints to the Governing Body on a termly basis.
- 7.3. Governors will take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications to this policy as and when necessary. Staff and parents/carers will be informed of any such changes.

Author	Head Teacher	Review Frequency	Every 2 years Subject to local education authority and/or national policy change
Date of Ratification	February 2016	Related Policies	
Review Group	Finance & Staffing Committee	Ratified at Full Governing 23.03.16	
Review Date	February 2018		

Equality Impact Assessment -Groups that may be affected:

Are there concerns that the policy could have a different impact on any of the following groups? (please tick the relevant boxes)	Existing or potential adverse impact	Existing or potential for a positive impact x or n.a.
Age (young people, the elderly; issues surrounding protection and welfare, recruitment, training, pay, promotion)		x
Disability (physical and mental disability, learning difficulties; issues surrounding access to buildings, curriculum and communication)		x
Gender reassignment (transsexual)		
Marriage and civil partnership		
Pregnancy and maternity		
Racial groups (consider: language, culture, ethnicity including gypsy/traveller groups and asylum seekers)		x
Religion or belief (practices of worship, religious or cultural observance, including non-belief)		x
Gender (male, female)		x
Sexual orientation (gay, lesbian, bisexual; actual or perceived)		x



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Formal Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to the chair of the governing body, who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:

Relationship with school [e.g. parent/carer of a pupil on the school roll]:

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Pupil's name [if relevant to your complaint]:

.....

Your Address:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Email address:

Please give concise details of your complaint, [including dates, witnesses names etc.]
To allow the matter to be fully investigated.

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.
Number of Additional pages attached =

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? [i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?]

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature:

Date:

Governor use:

Date form received:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Complaint referred to: