

St Giles' C of E Primary School Complaints Policy (Parents/Carers)

Date:

Ratified:

Review Date:

Christian Ethos

As a Church of England School, all of our policies take into consideration and reflect the Christian ethos of our school.

ECM: Be safe, Make a positive contribution

Introduction

This policy has been approved by our Governing Body. It is written in conjunction with guidance from Hertfordshire Children's Services

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

The Local Authority is required only to deal with complaints stage 4 dealt with in accordance with statutory provision i.e.

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

Advice and guidance for parents/carers

Children's Services 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.

At St. Giles' we aim to deal with all worries and complaints in a positive and supportive manner. We 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

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.

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 or her representative 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.

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

Stage 2: Formal Consideration of your complaint

You will be asked to confirm the complaint in writing to the Headteacher (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.

The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will carry out a full investigation of all matters relating to your complaint. Where necessary he/she 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.

The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will keep written/typed, signed and dated records of all meetings and telephone conversations, and other related documents.

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

Stage 3: Consideration by the Governing Body

If your concern has already been through Stage 1 and 2 and you are not happy with the outcome, the next step is to make a formal complaint to the Governing Body. 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
St. Giles' C of E Primary School
Blanche Lane
South Mymms
Hertfordshire
EN6 3PE

The Chair of Governors has discretion to agree to a complaint review panel if she/he feels it would be helpful in resolving the complaint.

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 will be for you to attend, to present your case and allow the Governing Body to take evidence. A separate meeting will then take place to allow the school staff to follow the same steps.

Should the Governing Body 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.

Stage 4: Complaints to the Local Authority

The Governing Body's decision will usually be final. However, if you wish to pursue the matter further, you can ask Children, Schools and Families whether your complaint is one that can be heard by them. 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 (LA).

If the LA receives an anonymous complaint, the details will be passed to the school, but it will be at the school's discretion as to whether this will be investigated, except in relation to issues connected with Child Protection.

Stage 5: 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 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.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.