



## Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School

### Complaints Policy and Procedure

*Joyfully, unique in Jesus' family we learn to use our special gifts  
to love, serve and make the world a better place.*

Complaints Policy and Procedure			
Approval	Board of Governors		
Headteacher	Simon Lennon	Chair	Anna Murphy-Sullivan
Date of last review	March 2023	Date of review	March 2024
Date of next review	March 2025	Maintenance	SSD Committee

### **Purpose**

Based on our Gospel Virtues and Mission Statement the aim of this policy is to resolve concerns at the earliest opportunity, and effect reconciliation if there has been friction.

This procedure contains advice for resolving complaints; time limits; and advice on the conduct of meetings. Every attempt will be made to adhere to the time limits specified in the detailed procedures, which follow but these may in exceptional circumstances be exceeded. In such cases the School or Governors will advise the reasons and set a new time-scale.

A complaint will usually be considered as 'out-of-time' if it is raised more than **3 months** after the matter is known to the complainant. Anonymous complaints will not be investigated, except for exceptional reasons – such as child protection issues.

### **Possible resolutions (Please refer to the flow diagram for procedural purposes)**

Your child's teacher is the person in school who is closest to your child's learning needs and their day to day life in the school. Accordingly, any concern or complaint you may have should be directed to your child's teacher in the first instance.

Many concerns may be resolved by explanations, others by a simple apology. Other complaints may result from a school procedure which could have been handled differently. Such an acknowledgement would be an appropriate resolution, as would assurances that events complained about, (if justified) will not recur. Others may be resolved by an undertaking to review school policies in the light of a complaint.

You can make an appointment to speak with your child's teacher by contacting the school office on 01202 427544.

### ***Complaints to Deputy Headteacher***

If you have raised a concern or complaint with your child's teacher but you do not think the issue has been resolved, or if you have a concern or complaint which you feel uncomfortable raising with your child's teacher, you should contact the Deputy Headteacher via the school office.

### **Next stage in the Process**

Where concerns are not resolved within an early timescale, the procedure allows for formal consideration by the Headteacher, and later still, by a Governors' Complaints Panel.

### **Complaints to Governors**

If you have followed the complaints procedures (see complaints stages) up to and including stage 2 but you do not think the issue has been resolved, you can contact the chair of the school's governing body either via the Governor site on the school website or by sealed letter left at the school office or posted to the school. In most cases, any concern or complaint sent to the school's governing body which has not previously been raised with the SLT will be referred back to the SLT before it is addressed by the school's governing body.

If you raise a concern or complaint with the school's governing body in accordance with this policy, it will be considered by the school's complaints panel. In order to ensure that all complaints are dealt with fairly and impartially, the complaints panel is then formed on a case by case basis of the three most appropriate governors to hear any particular complaint.

## **Complaints about the headteacher or the governors**

Where a complaint is about the headteacher, the complainant should notify the clerk to the governors (see contact details at the end of the document). The stage one process (see the formal stages below) will then commence, but with the chair of governors as the individual responsible for the investigation, rather than the headteacher.

Where a complaint concerns a governor the complainant should contact the clerk to the governing board. The clerk will then determine the most appropriate course of action, seeking advice as appropriate. This will depend upon the nature of the complaint.

## **Serial, persistent and unreasonable complaints**

For the purpose of this procedure a complaint may be viewed as serial and/or persistent if it relates to the same issue that was the subject of a previous complaint (made by the same complainant) which has already been through a formal complaints procedure in which the complainant has been notified of the outcome. In such cases it is likely that the complainant will be informed that the matter is now closed and that Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School will provide no further response.

For the purpose of this procedure a complaint may be viewed as unreasonable if it contains threatening, abusive or offensive language and conveys unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason. In such cases the headteacher/chair of the governing board/clerk to the governing board (as appropriate) will consult with relevant parties and may decide that the complaint is not considered under this procedure. The complainant will be notified in writing that this is the case and that Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School will provide no further response.

Queries regarding any aspect of the complaints procedure should be directed to the clerk to the governing board at the following email address [clerk@cccpschool.com](mailto:clerk@cccpschool.com)

## **Unresolved Complaints**

Occasionally, a complainant may remain dissatisfied, even though this procedure has been used through all its stages. However, it will not normally be possible to re-open the same issue. In such circumstances, the Chair of Governors will inform the complainant that the procedures have been exhausted and that the matter is closed. At that point the complainant has the option to seek advice from the Local Authority and/or Ofsted.

### **School Complaints Stages in Detail - [See Flowchart](#)**

## **Stage 1 (Informal)**

Where any member of staff becomes aware of a voiced concern, they should deal with it themselves if it is appropriate, and they feel comfortable in doing so. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information. It is anticipated that most concerns can be readily resolved at this informal stage. Where the person approached feels uncomfortable with dealing with the matter directly, they should involve, for example, their line manager.

In the case of serious concerns it may be necessary to refer these matters directly to the Headteacher.

It is not appropriate for a complaint to be directed through a Governor. Any Governor receiving a complaint will give advice that there is an established procedure, and refer the complainant to the appropriate person. (This is because a Governor acting unilaterally could prejudice the involvement of Governors at a later stage)

Where informal attempts by the school have failed to bring about a satisfactory resolution for the parent or carer, the parent or carer is entitled to request that the complaint be treated more formally by submitting a

letter addressed to the Headteacher. Unless the complaint directly concerns the Headteacher, it will be him or her who deals with this next stage (Stage 2).

Where the complaint is specifically about the Headteacher, the parent or carer may wish to discuss this with him or her at stage 1. If the complainant has chosen not to discuss the matter at stage 1 the parent or carer can then directly write to the Chair of Governors ( [clerk@cccpschool.com](mailto:clerk@cccpschool.com) ) and move to Stage 2 of the complaints process.

## **Stage 2 (Formal) Dealt with by Deputy Headteacher, Headteacher or Chair of Governors**

If the complaint concerns the Headteacher the Chair of governors deals with this stage (see Appendix 1 stage 2 process). If the complaint concerns the Headteacher the Chair of Governors is personally responsible for following the procedures in Stage 2 and in the following text, ' Headteacher' should be read as 'Chair of Governors'. Otherwise, the Headteacher deals with this Stage.

This stage can be initiated if or when dissatisfaction with the outcome of stage 1 is received by the school. At this point, a copy of this Policy will be sent to the complainant within 3 school days. The complainant is invited to make her or his complaint in writing.

After the formal complaint in writing is received by the school, it will be acknowledged within 3 school days and the investigation will commence.

This is the first stage of the formal complaints process and as a result, all communications between parties will be recorded and filed appropriately.

Before proceeding with a formal investigation, the Headteacher may wish to meet with the individual and discuss his or her concerns and wishes. It may still be appropriate and satisfactory to reach an informal resolution at this point. If such a resolution proves to be successful and acceptable to both parties, the Headteacher will follow up the meeting with a letter confirming that the complaint has been resolved and describing the agreed outcomes. If not, the Headteacher will decide whether the individual's complaint will be dealt with by this policy or another statutory procedure. In the latter case, the Headteacher will advise the complainant on what will need to be done.

The Headteacher may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member, but not the decision on the action to be taken. The investigation should involve the review of any relevant documentation and information. If necessary, witnesses will need to be interviewed and statements taken from those involved. If the complaint centres around a pupil, the pupil will also usually be interviewed. Any such interviews will if appropriate be conducted under Child Protection or Safeguarding guidance.

The outcome of the investigation should be communicated to parents or carers, either at a meeting (followed up in writing) or as a written response. This response should explain the outcome and should be supported by reasons for reaching this decision and what action, if any, will be taken. If management action is subsequently required against an employee of the school, the parents/carers will not have access to this information. This response should be provided within 10 school days of the start of the formal investigation.

If the complaint is against a staff member other than the Headteacher, if the complainant is still dissatisfied with the response given and would like to take the complaint further, they should make this clear in writing to the Headteacher. On receipt, she or he will send on the complaint and all associated information to the Chair of Governors.

In the case of the Headteacher, if the complainant is still dissatisfied, and wishes to take it further, the Chair should initiate Stage 3 of this procedure.

### **Stage 3 (Formal) Dealt with by Governors' Panel**

Unless the complaint is about the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will verify that the parent or carer has properly exhausted all stage 2 procedures. If not satisfied, the Chair will refer the matter back to the Headteacher. When satisfied, the Chair will contact the Clerk and liaise with him or her to make preparatory arrangements for the Governors' Complaints Panel Meeting.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will move directly to the procedures given below.

The Clerk may be the Clerk to the Governing Body, or, in exceptional circumstances, another Governor acting as Clerk, over and above those selected for the Panel.

The Chair of Governors will identify three governors to form the Complaints Panel, and the Panel will appoint its own chair.

The Chair of Governors or Clerk to the Governors' Complaints Panel will acknowledge the complainant's receipt of the information from the Headteacher within 5 school days.

This letter will inform the parent or carer that the complaint will be heard by the Complaints Panel within 15 school days. In exceptional circumstances, the parent or carer will be notified where this timed period will need to be extended and the reasons for this.

The Clerk of the Panel will convene a meeting of the Complaints Panel, (as identified by the Chair of Governors), and arrange a time and date for the meeting. All relevant documentation from the Headteacher and the parent or carer will be distributed to all parties, (including the Panel members) in advance of the meeting.

The Chair of the Panel needs to ensure that the parent/carers is notified of the Panel's decision in writing within 5 school days of the meeting. The response will include action (if any) that needs to be taken and where appropriate, suggest changes to, or review of, the school's systems or procedures to ensure that similar problems do not happen again.

### **Stage 4 (Formal) The Role of the Local Authority**

If Complainants are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Governors panel, they should approach the Local Authority and / or Ofsted for further advice.