



St Joseph's RC VA School Highfield Complaints Policy

Introduction

In a small school, such as ours, we wish to resolve any complaints, issues, disputes or problems, as informally as possible and in ways that are; fair, impartial, simple, confidential, non adversarial, fast, effective and appropriate.

Only if the complaint cannot be resolved to everyone's satisfaction will more formal action be needed.

Stage one

All complaints in relation to the day to day running of the school, the treatment of an individual pupil, or the implementation of school policies, should initially be made to the Head Teacher. However, it is recognised that some Parents/Carers may prefer to raise any complaint with their child's Class Teacher first. In this instance the teacher will hear the complaint and will then report it to the Head Teacher.

Within 5 working days of receiving a complaint, either directly or via a class teacher, the Head Teacher will convene a meeting with the Parent/Carer to discuss the issue. The Head Teacher may also involve the Class Teacher in this meeting. The Parent/Carer will be advised that another person may also accompany them.

A written record will be made of the complaint and of the proceedings of the meeting.

Hopefully any complaint can be settled at this stage and the Complainant should be asked what outcome they wish to see.

The type of outcome agreed could be:

An acknowledgement that the complaint is valid; An explanation; An apology; An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better; An assurance that the event complained of will not recur; An explanation of the steps to be taken to ensure the situation will not happen again; An undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint; An explanation of why the complaint is not valid and agreement on a way forward.

However, if the Parent/Carer feels that a satisfactory outcome has not been achieved they may move to stage 2 in the Complaints Policy.

Stage 2

If a failure to agree has been recorded the Parent/Carer should be given an official complaints form and this should be sent with a covering letter to the Chair of Governors.

The Chair of Governors will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days and will arrange for a Panel of the Governors to hear the complaint by writing to the Clerk to the Governing body.

A panel of the Governors will be organised by the Clerk to the Governing body at a mutually convenient time for all parties, including the Parent/Carer, but within 10 working days of being contacted by the Chair of Governors. Once again the Parent/Carer will have the right to be accompanied by another person.

In the interim the Chair of Governors, acting as Complaints Convenor, will interview the Head Teacher and Class Teacher. Also the Parent/Carer will be interviewed separately.

The Chair of Governors will prepare a written report, which with the notes of previous meetings, will be forwarded to the Clerk for presentation to the Panel

Roles and Responsibilities of the Panel

The Role of the Chair of the Governing Body

- Check that the correct procedure has been followed
- Notify the Clerk to arrange a Panel
- Interview relevant parties and prepare written information for the Panel

The Role of the Clerk

- 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 Panel

The Chair of the Panel will be the Vice Chair of the Governors who 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

Notification of the Panel's decision

- The complainant will be notified of the Panel's decision in writing within 5 working days of the hearing

Reviewed annually This policy was last reviewed in June 2024 Next review: June 2025