



## St. John's Walham Green CE Primary School

Policy Name	<b>Complaints Policy</b>		
Date:	May 2018	Review Date	May 2019
Responsibility	FGB	Curriculum	Resources
FGB agreed/ratified on:		Signed by:	

*St. John's Walham Green Church of England Primary School aspires to develop young people who are successful students, independent learners and confident individuals. We strive to ensure that our pupils become responsible citizens with a concern for the well-being of all God's creation.*

As a Church of England School, Christian values are at the heart of all we do. We value our relationship with parents and all members of the school and local community.

### Overview

Under section 29 of the Education Act 2002, governing bodies of all maintained schools and nursery schools are required to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints about services the school provides. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 also requires the procedure to be publicized.

The School's Complaints Procedure is devised with the intention that it will:

- ◆ Usually be possible to resolve problems by informal means;
- ◆ Be simple to use and understand;
- ◆ Treat complaints confidentially;
- ◆ Allow problems to be handled swiftly;
- ◆ Inform future practice so that the problem is unlikely to recur;
- ◆ Reaffirm the partnership between parents, staff and governors as they work together for the good of the pupils in the school;
- ◆ Ensure that the school's attitude to a pupil would never be affected by a parental complaint;
- ◆ Discourage anonymous complaints;
- ◆ Actively encourage strong home-school links;
- ◆ Ensure that all staff have opportunities to discuss and understand the school's response to concerns and complaints made by parents;
- ◆ Ensure that any person complained against has equal rights with the person making the complaint; and
- ◆ Regularly review its system for monitoring concerns and complaints received from parents.

### EXPRESSING A CONCERN: NOTES FOR PARENTS

#### The difference between a concern and a complaint

A 'concern' may be defined as '*an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought*'. A complaint may be generally defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action*'.

Depending upon the nature of the complaint and/or who the complainant is, consent may be required from the individual/individuals who have parental responsibility of the child before any action is taken or information disclosed as per the Data Protection Act 1998.

#### If you have a concern

We would like you to tell us about it so that we can talk with you and see how best to resolve your concern. The majority of concerns can be resolved informally by speaking to a member of staff. We welcome suggestions for improving our work in the school. Whatever your concern, please know that we shall treat it as strictly confidential.

There are occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. In these cases, the school's formal procedure will be invoked through the stages outlined within our procedure.

A complaint may be made in person, by telephone, or in writing. In order to prevent any later challenge or disagreement over what was said, brief notes of meetings and telephone calls will be kept and a copy of any written response added to the record.

Be assured that no matter what you wish to share with us, our support and respect for you and your child in the school will not be affected in any way; please do not delay telling us of your concern. It is difficult for us to investigate properly an incident or problem which is more than a day or two old.

Please contact your child's class teacher or other appropriate member of staff, and arrange a time when you can discuss your concern. It may be possible for you to see the member of staff straight away but normally it is better to make an appointment so that you can sit and talk things through. When addressed in the early stages, concerns can be dealt with swiftly.

The school will ask complainants at this early stage what they think might resolve the issue. It may be possible to give a response immediately, but where any investigation or information is required, a response will be given within 5 school days.

After hearing your concern we will act as quickly as we can; we will let you know the timescale within which you may expect a response. Please allow time for any action we may take to be effective.

Anonymous complaints will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

## **The Procedure**

### **Stage 1- Informal Complaint**

This is when a parent/carer contacts the school because they are unhappy about something that has happened or is happening in school. At this stage the class teacher, phase leader, Assistant Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will usually be able to resolve the concern. The school will identify the outcome the complainant is looking for in order to tackle minor concerns swiftly and promptly.

The response will be provided within 15 school days upon receipt of receipt of the complaint.

If, for any reason, we are unable to respond within the time scale, we will inform the complainant before the deadline, giving reason for the delay and issue a new reasonable deadline for reply.

The Headteacher may escalate the complaint to any stage of the process if it is felt appropriate to do so.

A complainant's unreasonable refusal to attempt a local resolution may result in the procedure being terminated and this will be confirmed in writing.

### **Stage 2 – Formal complaint to the Headteacher**

If you are still unhappy, please ask for an appointment with the Headteacher. It is helpful if you can give a brief outline of your concern on the School's complaints form (**Appendix 1**) when you make the appointment. Every effort will be made to resolve the situation as quickly as possible and the Headteacher will send you a written response within 5 school days of your meeting.

If the Stage 2 is at the complainant's request, the complaint must be taken up by the complainant within 10 school days following the informal Stage 1 response.

The complainant will receive oral or written acknowledgement of the complaint within 2 school days of the receipt of the complaint and will include a target date for response. This will normally be within 20 school days of receipt of the complaint.

If it is not possible to resolve matters within this timescale, an explanation will be given with a revised target date.

The problem will normally be resolved by Stage 2. However, if you still feel the situation has not been resolved you may ask for your complaint to be considered by the complaints panel of the Governing Body by writing to the Chair of Governors c/o The School.

### **Stage 3- Formal Complaint to the Governing Body**

Complaints rarely reach Stage 3, but governing bodies should be prepared to deal with them if necessary.

If the Chair of Governors receives a written complaint directly from a parent they should consult with the Headteacher before taking any action. It is important to ensure that the earlier stages of the procedure have been exhausted and it may be more prudent that the Chair carry out an investigation or review.

Complainants will be advised that complaints at this stage should usually be made in writing and addressed to the Chair Governors no later than 10 school days following receipt of a written outcome at Stage 2.

Written acknowledgement of the complaint will be made within three school days of receiving the complaint. The written acknowledgement will inform the complainant is to be heard by the panel within 20 school days of receiving the complaint.

The complaint panel meeting will be arranged, with enough notice given so that everyone, including the complainant, can make arrangements to attend. This notice period is usually at least 5 school days prior to the date of the panel meeting.

A complaints panel will be formed of 3 governors who have had no prior involvement in the complaint, they will listen to you, to the Headteacher and, if appropriate, any others involved and come to a decision. You may bring a friend to the hearing if you wish.

A written response to the complainant will be made as soon as possible but within a maximum of 15 school days from the date of the panel meeting.

Complaints against the Headteacher are usually first dealt with by the Chair of Governors. Complaints against the Chair of Governors or any individual governor should be made by writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body.

**Mrs E. Skinmore-Harris**  
**Clerk to the Governing Body**  
**St. John's Walham Green CE Primary School**

If the complainant is still not happy by this stage, an appeal can be made to the Department for Education (DfE) on the following grounds:

- The Governing Body is acting or proposing to act unreasonably
- The Governing Body has failed to discharge its duties under the 1996 Education Act.

### **Complaint Handling**

The school will monitor complaints. Details to include in the monitoring records are:

- Names of the complainant
- Details of the complaint

- A brief categorisation of the type of complaint
- How the complaint was investigated and by whom
- When the complaint was made
- The results and conclusion of the investigation(s)
- Any action taken as a result
- Any follow-up action taken

Gender, ethnicity and any disability of complainants will be monitored in order to address any possible equality issues.

As per the Data Protection Act 1998, the details of the complaints and their resolution will not be shared beyond those individuals directly involved. This includes school governors.

### Complaints not in scope of the procedure

The exceptions to this Complaints Policy are listed below:

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions to schools</li> <li>• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)</li> <li>• School re-organisation proposals</li> <li>• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</li> </ul>	Concerns should be raised direct with the Local Authority. For school admissions, it will depend on who is the admission authority (either the school or the LA). Complaints about admission appeals for maintained schools are dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion of children from school</li> </ul>	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a> .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whistleblowing</li> </ul>	Schools have an internal whistleblowing procedure for their employees and voluntary staff. Other concerns can be raised direct with Ofsted by telephone on: 0300 123 3155, via email at: <a href="mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk">whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk</a> or by writing to: <b>WBHL, Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD</b> . The Department for Education is also a prescribed body for whistleblowing in education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures</li> </ul>	These matters will invoke the school's internal grievance procedures. Complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities.</li> </ul>	Providers have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. They should be contacted direct.

## Appendix 1

### St. John's Walham Green CE Primary School

#### Complaint Form

If you are not satisfied or feel that you have been unfairly treated, we would like you to indicate your concern. It is, however, important that you attempt to resolve any difficulties in the first instance by discussing your concerns/complaint with a member of staff or the Headteacher at the school. If you have tried this and are still not satisfied with the response then please fill in all the sections of this form and return it to the Chair of the Governing Body, c/o the school address. Please note that should the complaint refer to more than one incident, you should complete a separate form for each incident; this is to clarify individual responsibility and maintain confidentiality, should the case result in a formal hearing.

<b>Parent/Carer Name:</b>		
<b>Address:</b>		
<b>Telephone:</b>		
<b>Home:</b>	<b>Work:</b>	<b>Mobile:</b>
<b>Child's name:</b>		<b>Date of birth:</b>
<b>Brief description of complaint:</b>		
<b>When did you report this to the school:</b>		
<b>Did you speak to the class teacher:</b>		
<b>Did you meet with the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher</b>		
<b>What steps do you feel should have been taken by the school?</b>		
<b>What steps would you like to be taken to resolve the matter?</b>		
<b>Signature:</b>		
<b>Date:</b>		

**FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY**

**Date form received by school:**

**Parent/Carer Name:**

**Parent/Carer Address:**

**Child's Name:**

**Child's Date of Birth:**

**Child's current Year group:**

**Your complaint:**

**Outcome of complaint:**

Your signature:

Date:

**Monitoring**

Are you  Male  Female

Do you have a disability  Yes  No

**White**

- British
- Irish
- Greek or Greek Cypriot
- Turkish or Turkish Cypriot
- Albanian (excluding Kosovan)
- Kosovan
- Any other White background

*Specify if you wish*

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**Mixed**

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed background

*Specify if you wish*

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**Asian or Asian British**

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Any other Asian background

*Specify if you wish*

**Black or Black British**

- Caribbean
- African:**
- Nigerian
  - Somali
  - Congolese
  - Any other African background

*Specify if you wish*

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**Chinese**

- Chinese

**Any other ethnic category**

- Any other group

*Specify if you wish*

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