

**St. George's Primary &
Nursery School**



Complaints Policy

Date Submitted to Governors: 11/5/20

Date Agreed by staff: 16/3/20

Date for Review: Summer 2024

Policy Aims

The school's values are based around meeting the needs of pupils, parents/carers and others who have a stake in the school. St. George's wants pupils to be healthy, happy and safe in an environment that enables them to achieve and reach their potential.

The governing body believes that constant feedback is an important ingredient in self-improvement and raising standards. Pupils, parents, carers, or other adults who have concerns or complaints should feel that they can be voiced and will be considered seriously. All complainants have the right to be accompanied when making the complaint, and pupils may be accompanied by a parent, another adult or another child if they wish.

There are various principles behind this procedure:

- We will seek to resolve complaints by informal means wherever possible.
- Investigations will be full, fair and swift, and people will be kept informed of progress and the decisions reached.
- Every effort will be made to respect confidentiality (within safeguarding guidelines).
- Feedback will be actively sought from those voicing complaints in order to minimise complaints and maximise accountability.

Complaints Procedure

In consideration of future relationships and the well-being of everyone concerned it is in the interests of all parties to negotiate an agreement and concentrate on finding a resolution to an issue as quickly as possible.

STAGE 1 Informal Level:

If parents/carers, pupils or others have concerns they should:

- 1 discuss their concerns with the member of staff most directly involved and, if not satisfied then
- 2 discuss their concerns with a senior member of staff and, if not satisfied then
- 3 discuss their concerns with the Head Teacher.

At each stage in the procedure we will attempt to resolve the complaint or concern. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the concern or complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology
- an explanation
- 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 that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

Complainants will be encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage. An admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence. Equally, an effective procedure will identify areas of agreement between the parties.

If a resolution to the issue is proving difficult to find, the Head Teacher can speak to one member of the Governing body about the issue who may be willing to offer informal intervention. However, there is no obligation on any Governor to become involved at this point and any Governor involved at this point cannot then be involved in a formal hearing of the complaint at a later stage.

Stage 2 Formal Complaint – registered with the Head Teacher

This is a serious step to be taken.

Only after following all of the steps in the informal level of complaint can an issue that has not been resolved be taken by the complainant to the formal level of complaint. The parent, carer or guardian must write a formal letter of complaint to the Head Teacher. The letter will need to set out clearly the issues which have previously been discussed and why the parent, carer or guardian considers the issue to be unresolved.

The Head Teacher will offer a resolution to the complaint in writing within 10 school days of receipt of the letter.

If the complaint remains unresolved complainants can take their complaint to the final stage of the procedure Stage 3 – formal complaint to Governors.

Stage 3 Formal Complaint – registered with the Governors

Complainants need to write to the Chair of Governors to request a Governors' Complaints Panel meets to hear the complaint. This formal complaint letter MUST be received within 10 school days of the final meeting/receipt of the letter with/from the Head Teacher in respect of Stage 2.

The school will provide the Chair of Governors name and the complainant should write to the Chair at the school address marking the envelope 'urgent, private and confidential'. The letter will need to set out the complaint that has previously been formally discussed with the head teacher and show why the matter is not resolved.

The Chair of Governors will acknowledge receipt of the letter in writing within 5 school days.

A complaints panel will meet within 15 school days (excluding holiday periods).

The Head teacher will be requested to provide written documentation relating to the issue and steps taken to resolve it.

The complainant, panel members and the head teacher will be sent all written documentation 5 school days before the meeting.

Complaints Panel Process

The complainant and Head teacher will be invited to attend the Governor's complaints panel meeting to give a verbal statement in support of their documentation. Each of them can bring someone to support them if they wish.

The complainant and Head teacher (or their representative) should provide all the relevant information they wish and the Governor's Complaints Panel members should clarify any points. After the complainant or Head teacher (or his representative) have provided all the information they wish, the chair will ask all parties to leave except the panel members and the clerk.

The Governors' Complaints Panel will write to all concerned within 10 school days to explain their decision and suggest a resolution to the problem, if appropriate.

The end of the process

The decision of the Governors' Complaints Panel IS FINAL. Once a Governor's Complaints Panel has heard a complaint and correct procedures have been followed that specific complaint is closed and cannot be reopened.

The decision of the Governors' Complaints Panel will not be investigated. If however, the complainant feels that the School and Governors have not followed the schools' complaints procedure correctly, he/she can contact a Childrens Services Officer for assistance on 0844 800 8001

Concerns or Complaints specifically about the Head Teacher

If the concern or complaint is specifically about the Head Teacher and is unable to be resolved at the informal stage, then the complainant needs to formally complain to the Chair of Governors. The school will provide the Chair of Governors name and the complainant should write to the Chair at the school address marking the envelope 'urgent, private and confidential'. The Chair of Governors should acknowledge the complainant's letter in writing within 5 school days of receipt and contact Governor Support Service for advice.

IT SHOULD BE NOTED: The decision that the Head teacher has made as a result of a complaint about anything other than the Head teacher themselves, DOES NOT become a complaint about the Head teacher. If the complainant feels the complaint has not been resolved he/she should proceed with the formal complaint to Governors stage.

Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher will ensure that:

- this complaints policy and the procedures are made known to all stakeholders
- all complaints are dealt with following the policy and procedures

All staff are expected to encourage pupils, parents and carers who have concerns to follow the complaints procedure.

The governing body will ensure that:

- it has identified members of the governing body who will hear a complaint should it not have been resolved by the Head teacher
- at least one of the panel has received training/guidance on how to conduct a hearing
- where there is evidence that the complaint is justified appropriate action is to taken to prevent a recurrence.

Relationship to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies.

Signed _____

Date _____

Chair of Governors