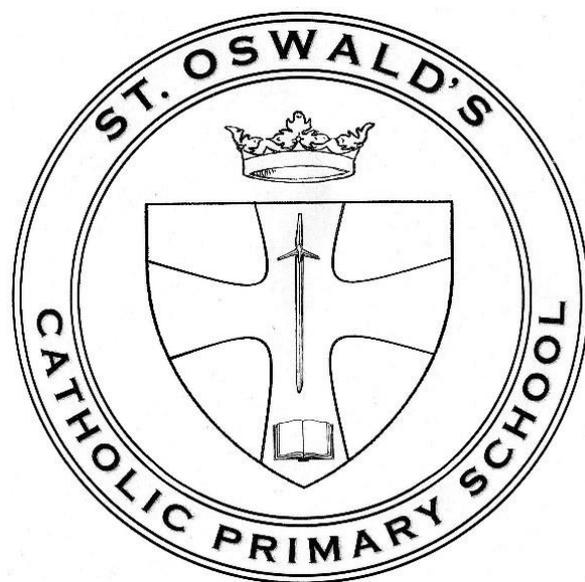


# **St Oswald's Catholic Primary School**



## **Complaints Policy & Procedure**

# **St Oswald's Catholic Primary School**

## **Parental Complaints Policy & Procedure**

### **Mission statement**

This is St Oswald's Catholic Primary School's policy for Parental Complaints and is set within the context of the whole school aims and Mission Statement:

*"Together with Jesus, we will learn and Grow in Faith".*

This procedure is intended to allow concerns or complaints to be raised relating to the St Oswald's Catholic Primary School or the services that it provides. (Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016 – DFE)

St Oswald's Catholic Primary School aims to work in partnership with parents in the best interests of the children. Any concern or complaint will be given careful consideration and will be dealt with fairly and honestly. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and aim to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

If complainants wish to raise their concerns formally, the formal procedure will be invoked through the stages outlined in this policy.

### **Concern or 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'.

### **Who can make a complaint?**

Any person, including members of the public may make a complaint about any provision, facilities or services that a school provides.

St Oswald's Catholic Primary School is not responsible for the actions or behaviour of pupils outside school hours. Certain areas remain the responsibility of the LA and these matters should be referred to Children's Services. An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances.

To allow for a proper investigation concerns or complaints will be raised as soon as possible. In general, any matter not raised within three months from the incident being complained of will not be considered.

The Chair of Governors will deal with complaints against the Head teacher. Complaints against the Chair of Governors or any individual governor should be made in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body.

### **Actions before making any complaint**

Our complaints procedure is not intended to replace the normal informal discussions which take place between parents, staff and the Headteacher on problems and concerns as they arise. Most issues can be resolved through this dialogue. These concerns might include such matters as your child's work or progress, relations with staff, relations with other pupils including bullying, or your child's personal welfare.

School realises that parents/carers can get emotional over issues to do with their children but all discussions should take place in a calm, respectful manner. The Head teacher and governors of the school will not accept rude, offensive or aggressive behaviour, verbal or physical towards any member of staff.

The first point of contact regarding concerns should always be the class teacher. Appointments to see the class teacher are available both before and after school and may be made via the office. Please bear in mind though that teachers require time immediately before school to prepare for the day, and may have involvement with clubs or staff meetings after school, so may not always be available at short notice.

When meeting with the class teacher to raise your concerns, please be patient, the class teacher may need time to perform an investigation or put corrective measures in place and then determine their effectiveness. If a parent feels that a concern has not been solved through discussions with the class teacher, or that it is of a sufficiently serious nature, then an appointment to discuss it with a senior leader should be made. The parent should indicate that the appointment is regarding a complaint or concern. At this stage (Stage 1) it should still be regarded as being dealt with at an informal level.

### **Stage 1 - The Informal stage**

Most concerns can be resolved informally. There are many occasions where the Year Head, Assistant Head, Deputy Head or the Head Teacher, Mrs Walsh, can resolve concerns straight away. The member of staff dealing with the concern can be contacted either in person, by telephone or in writing to ensure that the concern is resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or with the provision of information and it is anticipated that most concerns will be resolved by this informal stage.

In the case of serious concerns it may be more appropriate to address them directly to the Head Teacher, Mrs Walsh (or to the Chair of Governors if it is about the Head).

The Head will make sure that the complainant is asked what they would like to happen to resolve the issue. The emphasis at this stage must be on resolving the issue quickly and informally for the benefit of staff, pupils and parents.

The complainant should receive a response as soon as possible and within a maximum of 10 school days. At this stage, the response may be given verbally or in writing. The complainant will be given information on how to proceed if they are not satisfied and where to get independent advice.

## **Stage 2 - Formal stage**

If the concern or complaint is not resolved at the informal stage it must be put in writing and passed to the Head Teacher, Mrs Walsh, (or to the chair of Governors if the complaint is about the Head) who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated properly. The correspondence should include details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of relevant documents. It should also include a clear statement of actions that the complainant would like the school to take to resolve the concern.

The Head Teacher, Mrs Walsh will acknowledge the complaint within three school days. The acknowledgement should include a summary of the complaints procedure and a target date for providing a response. This should be within 10 school days. If the date cannot be met, the complainant should be contacted and given a reason for the delay and a revised target date.

The Head Teacher, Mrs Walsh, will provide an opportunity for the complainant to meet to discuss their concerns and find solutions. A friend may accompany the Complainant if they wish and Mrs Walsh may have another member of staff present to observe and record the meeting.

The Head Teacher, Mrs Walsh, shall make whatever enquiries considered necessary including interviewing staff/pupils, reviewing minutes of meetings and reviewing school records. Pupils should be interviewed in the presence of another member of staff, or in the case of serious complaints (e.g. where the possibility of criminal investigation exists) in the presence of their parents.

The Head Teacher, Mrs Walsh, will investigate complaints thoroughly and objectively. If this is not possible, or if a conflict of interests is identified then responsibility will be delegated to another member of the management team. A full record should be kept of all interviews and telephone conversations.

Once all the relevant facts have been established, the Head Teacher, Mrs Walsh should provide a written response to the complainant. This should include a full explanation of decisions taken and the reason for them. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the school will take to resolve the complaint.

### **Stage 3 - Review Process**

A letter received by the school notifying that a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint at Stage two must be passed to the Chair of Governors within 3 school days. Any complaint received by an individual governor must be passed to the Chair of Governors within 3 school days. Complainants have the right to request an independent panel, if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. School will consider the request but ultimately, the governors make the decision.

In the case of a written complaint received directly by the governing body, the Chair of Governors should first ensure that:

1. The complaint has first been dealt with at stage 2
2. The complaint is covered by the school's complaints procedure

If the governors feel that the complainant has not exhausted stage 1 & 2, it should be referred back to the Head Teacher, and the representative for the governors should write to the complainant advising them of the correct procedures.

Upon receipt of the letter notifying that the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of a stage 2 investigation, a representative of the Governors should write acknowledging that the complaint has been received. The letter should explain that the complainant has the right to submit any further documents or information relevant to the complaint. A deadline for the submission of these documents will be given. This will be at least 5 days before the hearing.

The Head Teacher will also be invited to submit a written report to the committee hearing the complaint. This may be a copy of the stage 1 or 2 response. The Head Teacher, Mrs Walsh may also invite members of staff directly involved in matters raised by the complainant to respond personally or in writing.

The Clerk to the Governors should convene the complaints committee elected from the governing body. The committee will be comprised of a panel of three members of the governing body. The complaints committee will set a timetable for the investigation and should notify the complainant of this. This will usually take place within 10 days of receipt of the request. The committee will be independent and should have no prior knowledge of the complaint.

The Business Manager will write to inform the panel, Head Teacher, complainant and any relevant witnesses of the date and time of the hearing, giving a minimum of 5 working days' notice. All documents submitted will be circulated in advance of the hearing. The complainant will be notified of their right to have a friend, family member, advocate or interpreter present if they so wish.

The Chair of Governors should ensure that the hearing is minuted. The aim of the hearing is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the

complainant. However, it may sometimes only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations that satisfy the complainant that their concern is taken seriously.

At each stage in the procedure, schools will keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part.

The decision of the appropriate committee will be final. However, parents/carers will retain the right to pursue their complaints to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

### **Complaints not in the Scope of the Policy/Procedure**

Complaints for which there are separate statutory procedures are not covered as part of this policy (see below).

For all matters relating to:

- Admissions to schools concerns should be raised with Liverpool Archdiocese or Liverpool Education Authority
- Statutory assessments of Additional Educational Needs (AEN)
- School re-organisation proposals
- Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation
- Exclusion of children from school , additional information can be found at: [www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions](http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions).
- Whistleblowing, school has internal whistleblowing procedures for staff. Other concerns can be raised via phone on 0300 123 3155 or [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk)

### **Serial and Persistent Complaints**

At St. Oswald's we aim to do our best to be helpful to people with a concern or complaint. However, if an individual repeatedly contacts us making the same points or asking us to reconsider our position on issues already addressed, we will act appropriately by following our Unreasonable Complaints Policy.

Policy agreed: November 2017

It will be reviewed: November 2018

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**St Oswald's Catholic Primary School  
Parental Complaints Procedure**

**FORM TO REGISTER A FORMAL COMPLAINT**

**Personal Details:**

Name .....

Address: .....

.....

Tel Number:

..... (work) .....(home)

**Pupil Details  
(if applicable):**

Name of Pupil:.....

Class/Form:.....

Date incident took place.....

Name of any witness(es):.....

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**Details of Complaint [Please state clearly the nature of complaint]:**

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**What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint?  
[i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?]**

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.....  
.....  
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**What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?**

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.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

[If necessary, additional information may be included on a separate sheet, which should be signed and attached to this form]

**Signed:** ..... **Date:**.....

\*Persons making a complaint must register the complaint within 3 months of the incident.

**Note** This form should be returned to the head teacher, unless the complaint is against the head teacher, in which case it should be forwarded to the Chair of Governors.

In compliance with the Equality Act 2010, the school will consider alternative methods of contact