

# St. Mary's Community Primary School

## Complaints Procedure

<b>INFORMATION</b>	Author:	J Balado <b>Based on the NAHT model:</b>
	Date completed:	January 2016
	Date approved by Governors:	March 2016
	Next review date:	March 2019

Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 states that governing bodies are required to have in place a procedure for dealing with complaints.

All schools want their pupils to be healthy, happy and safe, and to achieve. At St Mary's Community Primary School we recognise that parents, guardians or carers play an important part in making this happen. Cooperation between parents, staff and governors leads to a shared sense of purpose and a good atmosphere in the school.

Relevant information:

Headteacher	Mrs Jessica Balado
Chair of Governors	Mrs Clare Hedges
Clerk to the Governors	Mr Colin Hawgood

### **Raising Concerns and resolving issues**

From time to time parents, and others connected with the school, will become aware of matters which cause them concern. To encourage resolution of such situations the Governing Body has adopted a "School Complaints Procedure".

The procedure is devised with the intention that it will:

- Usually be possible to resolve problems by informal means
- Be simple to use and understand
- Be non-adversarial
- Provide confidentiality
- Allow problems to be handled swiftly through the correct procedure
- Address all the points at issue
- Inform future practice so that the problem is unlikely to recur.

### **General Principles:**

- This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the services that it provides.
- An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- To enable a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than 3 months after the event being complained of, will not be considered.

### **Raising a concern or complaint**

#### **1) Informal Stage**

Parents, carers or guardians should, in the first instance, make an appointment to speak directly to the class teacher or the member of staff concerned about the concern. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment, requested via the school office. There is a **Meeting Request Form** (Appendix 1) that you **may** use when requesting a meeting.

Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage.

In the case of serious concerns it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Head Teacher (or to the Chair of the governing body, if the complaint is about the Head Teacher).

If you are uncertain about who to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the governing body.

## **2) Formal Stage**

If your concern or complaint is not resolved at the informal stage you may choose to put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Head Teacher, who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. If the complaint is about the Head Teacher, your complaint should be passed to the Clerk to the governing body, for the attention of the Chair of the governing body.

A Complaint Form is provided to assist you (Appendix 2)

You 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 is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like the school to take to resolve your concern. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.

Please pass the completed form, in a sealed envelope to the school office. The envelope should be addressed to the Head Teacher, or to the Clerk to the governing body, as appropriate.

The Head Teacher (or Chair) may invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to explore the possibility of an informal resolution. If you accept that invitation, you may be accompanied by a friend, if you wish, to assist you in explaining the nature of your concerns.

It is possible that your complaint will be resolved through a meeting with the Head Teacher (or Chair). If not, arrangements will be made for the matter to be fully investigated, using the appropriate procedure. In any case you should learn in writing, usually within 5 days of the school receiving your formal complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. This notification should include an indication of the anticipated timescale.

Any investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, you will be informed in writing of its conclusion.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, you may request that the governing body reviews the process followed by the school, in handling the complaint. Any such request must be made in writing to the clerk to the governing body, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure. The procedure described below will be followed. A Review Request form is provided for your convenience.

## **Review Process**

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of three members of the governing body. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of your request. (Appendix 3)

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests to make oral representations should be considered sympathetically.

## **Governing body meetings**

### **a) Complaints panel**

If the school receives a formal complaint about one of the limited number of matters, that is not dealt with by another statutory process, it may be necessary to convene a governing body panel to consider the matter and formulate a response. No member of the panel should have previous involvement with the complaint.

The complaint is likely to relate to matters such as:

- the content or the application of a governing body policy;
- school facilities;
- services that the school provides.

If a governing body committee already has delegated power with respect to a policy that is being complained of, a panel of members from that committee should be convened. Otherwise the clerk should convene a panel of 3 governors, who have not previously been involved with the complaint.

The complainant should submit the details of their concerns, in writing, to the clerk. The clerk will seek similar written responses from the school, where this is necessary.

A meeting of the panel will take place, usually within 10 school days, to consider the matter. The complainant (who may be accompanied by a friend if they wish) and representative(s) from the school (who may also be accompanied by workplace colleagues or representatives from their professional associations) may be invited to attend this meeting in order to clarify the matter.

As the panel meeting is intended to be investigatory, rather than adversarial, the persons giving evidence or making representations to the panel will normally attend separately.

When the panel has collected sufficient information, it will deliberate and then inform the complainant, the head teacher and the governing body of the outcome, in writing within 10 school days.

Consideration of the complaint by the governing body and the school, save for any actions that are agreed, will terminate at this point. The decision of the Complaint Panel is final.

However, if the complainant is not satisfied that the appropriate procedure has been followed, they may request a review of that process by another panel of the governing body.

### **b) Review meeting**

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of 3 members of the governing body. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of a written request.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests, from any of the parties, to make oral representations should be considered sympathetically.

The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant.

The panel will then invite representatives of the school (usually the head teacher or the chair of the governing body panel that has considered the matter), as appropriate, to make a response to the complaint.

The panel may also have access to the records kept of the process followed.

The complainant and the school representative(s) will be informed in writing of the outcome, usually within 5 school days of the panel meeting.

The matter will then be closed as far as the school is concerned.

## Meeting Request Form (Appendix 1)

### St Mary's Community Primary School

I wish to meet \_\_\_\_\_ to discuss the following matter:

Brief details of topic to be discussed:

Dates/times when it would be most convenient for a meeting:

Your name:	
Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school roll):	
Pupil's name (if relevant to the matter to be discussed)	
Your Address:	
Daytime telephone number	Evening telephone number
e-mail address:	

**Signed** .....

**Date** .....

(Please complete this form and return it to the school office)

#### School use:

Date Form received:

Date response sent:

Received by:

Response sent by:

## Appendix 2: School Formal Complaint Form

### St Mary's Community Primary School

Please complete this form and return it to the school office or to the Head Teacher who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name: .....

Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school roll):

.....

Pupil's name (if relevant to your complaint): .....

Your Address: .....

.....

Telephone numbers

Daytime:

Evening:

E-mail address:

Please give concise details of your complaint, (including dates, names of witnesses etc...), to allow the matter to be fully investigated:

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

*Number of Additional pages attached =*

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?)

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

**School use:**

Date Form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to:			
Date:			

### Appendix 3: School Complaint Review Request Form

#### St Mary's Community Primary School

Please complete this form and return it to Head Teacher (or Clerk to the governing body), who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:		
Your Address:		
Telephone numbers:	Daytime	Evening:
E-mail address:		

Dear Chair of Governors

I submitted a formal complaint to the school on ..... and am not satisfied that the procedure has been followed appropriately.

My complaint was submitted to ..... and I received a response from ..... on .....

I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the response(s) from the school.

I am dissatisfied with the way in which the procedure was carried out, because:

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of Additional pages attached =

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

Signature:

Date:

**School use**

Date Form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Request referred to:			
Date:			