

ST TERESA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

This Complaints Procedure sets out the school's procedures for handling any complaints. All maintained schools in England are required, under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides. The law also requires the complaint procedure to be publicised.

Certain forms of complaint, e.g. staff grievance or disciplinary procedures, fall outside the scope of these general complaints procedures.

DCSF guidance on developing and applying complaints policies and procedures strongly encourages schools and governing bodies to differentiate between concerns and complaints, and in both cases to keep procedures for dealing with them as informal as possible.

This complaints procedure is set out under the following headings:

- Stage 1: Resolving concerns or complaints informally

- Stage 2: Referral to the Assistant Headteachers or Headteacher

- Stage 3: Review by the Chair of Governors

- Further Recourse

Stage 1: Resolving concerns or complaints informally

Concerns should be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. Many of us are parents too and know how little things can worry children. A conversation with us will often sort out any problem before it becomes too large to cope with. If your child or you are unhappy or worried about something that has happened at school, the first person to talk to is the class teacher.

Teachers bring their class out to the school playground so that they are available to you to discuss any minor problems after school. It is difficult for them to speak to you before school as they are making final preparations for the teaching day. A note would help at this time or a telephone message that we can pass on. You can also email staff your concerns directly, or via the school office at school@st-teresas.merton.sch.uk.

If the matter is private, please arrange an appointment. Staff will always try to see you when you ask. However, they do run clubs both at lunchtimes and after school as well as have professional meetings that they must attend. Wherever possible they will meet with you within three working days. If you make an appointment, please tell us the nature of your concern as this does help. Please do not feel that we will think that your question, worry or concern is silly.

The school will respect your views if you indicate that you would have difficulty discussing a concern or complaint with a particular member of staff. In these cases, you may take up your complaint with another staff member or directly with Mrs Druce.

Where the complaint concerns the Assistant Headteachers, the complaint should be addressed to the Headteacher. Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher, the complaint should be addressed directly to the Chair of Governors and will automatically be dealt with under stage 3.

If the member of staff to whom you have addressed your complaint feels too compromised to deal with a complaint, the complaint may be referred to another staff member to ensure objective and impartial handling of your complaint. Whoever is handling your complaint will acknowledge receipt and provide you with an estimated time within which you can expect a response.

We are all here to work together to help your child. Whatever your concerns are, we can only deal with them if we know about them. The Headteacher, Assistant Headteachers and teachers will always make time to see you if there are urgent matters to deal with.

Stage 2: Referral to the Assistant Headteachers or Headteacher

If your concern cannot be resolved informally, you may request that your complaint be referred to the Assistant Headteachers:

Mrs Druce– email danielle.sedgwick@st-teresas.merton.sch.uk or
Mrs Aransiola – email vanessa.atkinson@st-teresas.merton.sch.uk and or
The Headteacher Mr Dachtler – email head@st-teresas.merton.sch.uk.

They will make sure that they:

- establish **what** has happened so far, and **who** has been involved;
- clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- meet with or contact you (if unsure or if further information is necessary);
- clarify what you feel would put things right;
- interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- conduct the interview with an open mind; and
- keep notes of the interview.
- feedback to you as to what actions have been taken as a result

You will be encouraged to set out your complaint in writing. A useful format is provided as appendix 1 to this complaints procedure.

Stage Three: Review by the Chair of Governors

If you are not satisfied with the response that you have received from the school at Stage 2, please put your concern in writing to the Chair of Governors, at the school address or email school@st-teresas.merton.sch.uk for the attention of the Chair of Governors. The school will ensure that the letter reaches the Chair of Governors as a matter of urgency, or in his/her absence the deputy chair of governors. An acknowledgement will normally be provided within three working days of receipt of the complaint by the Chair of Governors. Each complaint will be considered on its own

merits, and a written response reviewing the complaint will normally be provided within 20 working days of receipt by the Chair of Governors.

The Chair of Governors may consult with a panel of governors to decide on the appropriate action to be taken. This could include to: dismiss the complaint in whole or in part; uphold the complaint in whole or in part; decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint; and recommend any changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur

At any stage the person handling your complaint may consider it appropriate that one or more of the following be offered:

- 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.

Further Recourse

If you are not satisfied with the response resulting from Stage 3 or if your complaint is about the Governing Body, you are entitled to make a complaint to the Secretary of State for Education <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

The Department for Education will look at a complaint about a maintained school, academy or Free School from anyone who is unhappy with the way in which a school is acting.

For the Secretary of State to intervene in a maintained school following a complaint he needs to be sure either that the school has acted or is proposing to act unreasonably in the exercise or performance of its functions under certain legislation; or that the school has failed to discharge a duty at all under certain legislation.

The DfE governors' handbook may be a helpful reference for complainants and can be located at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governors-handbook--3>

For your information, the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) and local authority will continue to accept complaints directly from young people and their parents or carers about other school related issues. They can consider complaints about:

- school transport services
- special educational needs
- school admissions
- permanent exclusions from a school
- children who are out of school

Approved by the Full Governing Board
at its meeting **Summer 2021**

Chairs of Governors

Date of next review: **Summer 2022**



St Teresa's Catholic Primary School – Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the school. We will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint.

**What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.
(Who did you speak to and what was the response)?**

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

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official Use: Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date: