

# **St. Raphael's Catholic Primary School Complaints Procedure**



Policy Reviewed Autumn 2025

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# **St. Raphael's Catholic Primary School Complaints Policy**

## **Introduction**

This policy supports the work of the school in promoting its mission statement, aims and values.

## **Purpose of the Policy**

This document has been written to clearly outline to parents, carers or any other persons the procedures to follow if they have concerns about any aspect of school and wish to complain about it. A brief outline of the proceedings can be found at the end the policy.

This is written in accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act 2002. It is also written with reference to Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016.

For the purpose of this document 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 defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.

For a brief overview of the procedures please see Appendix 1.

For exceptions to these procedures please see Appendix 2.

## **Agreed Procedure**

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal procedures. St Raphael's take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

There are occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. *It is the responsibility of the complainant to express that the concern has become a formal complaint.* In those cases, the school's formal procedure should be invoked through the stages outlined within their procedure.

Any person, including members of the general public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides. At all stages the complainant will be asked what they think might resolve the issue.

To facilitate a swift resolution to the concern/complaint it is expected that it will be raised within a few days of the instance. There is no cut off time to a complaint, however the longer it takes for a concern to be raised, the more difficult it will be to investigate thoroughly and accurately.

Depending on the complaint or the nature of the concern then they should discuss the matter in the first instance with either the headteacher or class teacher as appropriate. Following this the member of staff will investigate the concern in a timely way.

If further discussion is required or if there is no satisfactory outcome then parents should contact the Chair of Governors via the school office.

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### **Further Governing Board Review**

In case complaints need to go to an appeal, complaints should not be shared with the whole governing board, except in very general terms, in case an appeal panel needs to be organised;

If the whole governing board is aware of the substance of a complaint before the final stage has been completed, schools should arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint. In this instance, the GB will approach a different school within the Diocese for support.

Complainants have the right to request an independent panel if they feel that the complaint has not been dealt with to their satisfaction.

Complainants who wish to pursue a complaint further in respect of the child's legal entitlement under the Education Reform Act (1988) have recourse to the Tameside LA's formal complaints procedure.

### **Anonymous complaints**

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

### **Withdrawal of a complaint**

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

### **Monitoring of the Policy**

The process of listening to and resolving complaints can contribute to school improvement and therefore the nature of concerns/ complaints raised will be monitored by the Headteacher and Governing Board.

Governors will monitor the nature of complaints to ensure that persistent complaints are addressed and vexatious complainants are tackled through St Raphael's Policy for Unreasonable Complaints.

### **Appendix 1 - Overview of the proceedings:**

1. In the first instance the complainant must decide if they wish to raise a concern or a complaint. If it is a concern then move to 2 and if it is a complaint then move to section 6.
2. Speak to the appropriate member of staff about your concern- class teacher, school office, or Inclusion Manager.
3. The member of staff agrees a timescale with the complainant and ascertains from them what the complainant thinks might resolve the issue.
4. If the matter is not resolved to a satisfactory level the complainant will contact the headteacher either in person, via telephone or via email to discuss the concern.
5. By Headteacher as stage 2.
6. At this time the headteacher will discuss the above procedure and if the complainant is not satisfied then the complainant will inform the headteacher that they wish to register the matter as a formal complaint.

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7. For accountable documentation purposes, the headteacher will ensure the complaint is clear by either accepting this in writing or ensuring a report is kept of the complaint that the complainant agrees with (see appendix 3).
8. The Headteacher will ensure a full investigation has taken place and respond to the matter by a further meeting.
9. If the complainant does not wish to deal with the headteacher, then they can contact the Chair of Governors through school.
10. Although the complainant does not need to put in the complaint in writing (as per Equality Act 2010) they must make themselves available to be contacted by the Chair of Governors at a mutually agreeable time.
11. By Chair of Governors as stage 8.
12. If the complainant is still unhappy, the matter can be referred to the Governing Board for an independent hearing, as per GB constitution in an agreed timescale. If the GB has no members appropriate then another Diocese school will be contacted to help form an independent panel.  
  
In this instance the details of the complaint must be given to the chair of governors at least 5 days before the independent hearing.
13. If the complainant requests an independent panel, the GB will consider this request.
14. If the matter is still not resolved then the complainant can contact the Tameside Local Authority for further consideration. Details of the person to contact will be available through school.

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### Appendix 2 - Exceptions from Complaints Procedure

| <b>Exceptions</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Who to contact</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <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 local authorities (LA). 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: WBHL, Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD. 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 and disciplinary 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 should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. They should be contacted directly.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

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### Appendix 3- Record Of Parent Concern/ Complaint Form

This form does not have to be filled in for each concern but may be filled in as evidence of support/ follow up action, as part of the Complaints Procedure

|                                                      |  |                  |  |
|------------------------------------------------------|--|------------------|--|
| Date                                                 |  | Child/Year Group |  |
| Reported by:                                         |  |                  |  |
| Reported to:                                         |  |                  |  |
| Concern, or Complaint?                               |  |                  |  |
| Description of concern/ complaint                    |  |                  |  |
| Follow Up Action                                     |  |                  |  |
| Outcome                                              |  |                  |  |
| Date                                                 |  | Signed           |  |
| Will this need to be reported to GB and if so, when? |  |                  |  |

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May God's love shine in our lives as we care, share and learn together.