



# ST PAUL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY

## Complaints Policy

Updated by	Mrs Dennis
Updated when	March 2026
Ratified by	Mr Arnold
Ratified when	March 2026
Signed by	<i>Edward Arnold</i>
Next Review Date	March 2029
Statutory Policy	Yes
On school website	Yes

**TOGETHER WE ARE**  
Growing in **STRENGTH**      Growing in **WISDOM**      Growing in **FAITH**

**COURAGE**

**RESPECT**

**HOPE**

**ENJOYMENT**

**COMMUNITY**

This document sets out the school's procedure for addressing complaints. It should be used only when informal attempts to resolve problems have been unsuccessful.

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'. If you have any concerns about the school or the education provided, please discuss the matter with your child's class teacher at the earliest opportunity. The school considers any concerns seriously and most problems can be resolved at this stage.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, you will be referred to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, you will be referred to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

The school will give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them 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.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, St Paul's will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

### **Scope of this Complaints Procedure**

Please note that this procedure does not apply to issues concerning the curriculum, collective worship, admissions, exclusion appeals, decisions about your child's special educational needs or grievances by school staff. These are the subject of separate complaints procedures. More information can be obtained from the school.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Admissions to schools</li><li>• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs</li><li>• School re-organisation proposals</li></ul>	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with the School according to a separate complaints procedure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</li></ul>	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our Safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). <a href="https://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/concerned-about-child/">https://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/concerned-about-child/</a>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion of children from school*</li> </ul>	<p>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>.</p> <p>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure. <a href="http://www.stpaulsschool.co.uk/policies/">http://www.stpaulsschool.co.uk/policies/</a>.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whistleblowing</li> </ul>	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff grievances</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff conduct</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities</li> </ul>	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Curriculum - content</li> </ul>	<p>Please contact the Department for Education at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a></p>

All other complaints are handled by the school according to the arrangements set out below.

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to St Paul's about any provision of facilities or services that we provide.

### **How to raise a concern or make a complaint**

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher or headteacher. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 of the procedure.

Complaints against school staff (except the headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to the Headteacher via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the headteacher should be addressed to Jane Anderson, the Chair of Governors, via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

### **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.

### **Time scales**

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against St Paul's in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

### **Complaints received outside of term time**

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

## **Resolving complaints**

At each stage in the procedure, St Paul's wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

## **Withdrawal of a Complaint**

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

## **Formal Complaints Procedure**

### **Stage 1**

Formal complaints must be made to the headteacher (unless they are about the headteacher), via the school office. This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form), or by telephone (Appendix 1). If you would like help completing the form, the school will be happy to provide the assistance of someone unconnected with the complaint.

The headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within three school days. Within this response, the headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The headteacher can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Note: The headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, the headteacher (or investigator) will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the headteacher will provide a formal written response within ten school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason/s for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the School will take to resolve the complaint.

The headteacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

If the complaint is about the headteacher, or a member of the governing body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1.

Complaints about the headteacher must be made to the Chair of Governors or about a member of the governing body must be made to the Clerk, via the school office.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body or the Oxford Diocese. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

If the matter is about:

- the day-to-day running of the school
- the interpretation of school policies
- the actions or inactions of staff or volunteers at the school

it will be investigated by the headteacher.

If the matter is about:

- school policies as determined by the governing body
- the actions or inactions of the governing body
- the headteacher

it will be investigated by the Chair of Governors or a governor nominated by the Chair.

In this instance the completed complaints form should be sent to the Chair of Governors, care of the school.

The person carrying out the investigation will review the way in which the complaint has been handled by the school and ensure that the issues have been dealt with properly and fairly. He/she will normally write to you with the outcome of this process within 15 working days of receiving the complaint.

If it becomes apparent that the complaint is a disciplinary or capability issue, then the matter will be dealt with by following the appropriate procedure rather than the complaints procedure. You will be notified if this is the case with your complaint, but you are not entitled to know which procedure or the final outcome.

## **Stage 2**

If you are not satisfied with the result from Stage 1, you may choose to refer your complaint to Stage 2 of the procedure. This must be done in writing to the school within 15 working days of the completion of Stage 1.

At this Stage, the complaint will be considered by either the Chair or nominated governor, or a panel of 3 governors depending on who carried out the investigation in Stage 1: -

- A. If Stage 1 was investigated by the headteacher, the Chair or nominated governor will consider the manner in which the complaint was addressed and decide whether it has been properly dealt with. The general principle is that the school should be able to produce documentary evidence to show that the complaint has received fair and proper consideration within the school's procedure. If they have any concerns, they may ask the headteacher to re-open the investigation. The complainant will be kept informed of any delay.

If the complainant is not satisfied after the Chair or nominated governor has completed their review, a panel of 3 governors will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision about it on behalf of the governing body.

- B. When Stage 1 has been investigated by the Chair or nominated governor, Stage 2 will be carried out by a panel of 3 governors, who will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision about it on behalf of the governing body.

In either A or B, the panel will consist of governors who have no detailed prior knowledge of the complaint, or connection with the complainant. If three governors do not meet this criteria, the school will request that governors from another school's governing body form this panel. The meeting will normally take place within 15 working days of your request.

The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from

Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and the School with a full explanation of their decision and the reason/s for it, in writing, within five school days.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

Stage 2 will be heard by a committee of independent, co-opted governors.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason/s for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the School will take to resolve the complaint.

The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

The decision of the panel is final. If you are still not satisfied, you may wish to put your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the School. They will consider whether the School has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus), by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD.

### **Serial or Persistent Complaints**

Unfortunately, in a small minority of cases, people pursue their complaints in a way which can either impede the investigation of their complaint or can have significant resource issues for the school. In such cases, the school will follow advice from the Department for Education.

### **Recording Complaints**

A record of the progress of complaints and the final outcome is held.

To avoid any subsequent challenge or disagreement about what was discussed, the school keeps brief notes of meetings and telephone calls and a copy of any written response.

Complainants may request access to these records through the Freedom of Information Request.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The governing body monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The headteacher logs all formal complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis and consider the need for any changes to the procedure.

### **Availability**

A copy of this policy is available to all parents on request and is published on the school website.

## Summary of Model Complaints Procedure for Areas of: Headteacher's Responsibility

### **Informal**

Complaint at school level – complainant should try and resolve the problem with the school (See Appendix One).



Resolved ?



**Yes.** No further action



**No.** Complainant is given copy of the complaint form and offer of support in completing it



### **Formal – Stage 1**

Form received by school

Is complaint about areas of headteacher's responsibility or governing body's



Headteacher's responsibility –

headteacher deals with matter or designates senior member of staff



Resolved ?



**Yes.** No further action



**No.** Complainant wishes to move to Stage 2 of the procedure and notifies the school in writing within 15 working days



**Formal – Stage 2**

Complaint form passes to the Chair or nominated complaints governor to review whether the complaint has been properly dealt with



**Resolved ?**



**Yes.** No further action



**No.** A governor complaints panel is set up to consider the complaint within 15 working days of the complaint being passed to the governing body. It consists of 3 governors, with no prior knowledge of the complaint, who will consider written and verbal submissions from the complainant and the headteacher.



The panel meets to consider the complaint and make a final decision on behalf of the governing body.



Panel writes to complainant with its conclusion within 5 working days of the meeting



**Resolved ?**



**Yes.** No further action



**No.** The complainant may decide to write to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, if they feel the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures

## Summary of Model Complaints Procedure for Areas of: Governing Body Responsibility

### Informal

Complaint at school level – complainant should try and resolve the problem with the school



Resolved ?



**Yes.** No further action



**No.** Complainant is given copy of the complaint form and offer of support in completing it (See Appendix One)



### **Formal – Stage 1**

Form received by school

Is complaint about areas of headteacher's responsibility or governing body's



Governing body's responsibility -

Chair deals with matter or designates a governor



Resolved ?



**Yes.** No further action



**No.** Complainant wishes to move to Stage 2 of the procedure and notifies the school in writing within with 15 working days



**Formal – Stage 2**

Complaint form passes to the governing body



A governor complaints panel is set up to consider the complaint within 15 working days of the complaint being passed to the governing body. It consists of 3 governors, with no prior knowledge of the complaint, who will consider written and verbal submissions from the complainant and Chairman of Governors (or designated governor)



The panel meets to consider the complaint and make a final decision on behalf of the governing body



Panel writes to complainant with its conclusion within 5 working days of the meeting



**Resolved ?**



**Yes.** No further action



**No.** The complainant may decide to write to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, if they feel the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures



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

**Signature:**

**Date of submission:**

**Official use**

**Date complaint received:**

**By whom:**

**Date acknowledgement sent:**

**By whom:**

**Complaint referred to:**

**Date:**