



St Chad's
CofE Nursery and Infant School

Complaints Policy

School Leader: K Leach

Link Governor: Rev. A Ward

Policy Approved **Signed: Rev. A Ward** **Date: 07.06.17**

Policy Reviewed Signed: Rev. A Ward Date: 06.06.18

Policy Reviewed Signed: Date:

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School Complaints Procedure

At St Chads CE (Cont) Nursery and Infant School, we undertake to provide a friendly and safe environment in which pupils will be helped to achieve their potential, both academically and socially.

We recognise that sometimes things can go wrong and parents, carers and members of the public may need to make a complaint or raise concerns they have with the school.

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 allow for a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, the school will not consider any complaint that was raised more than 12 months after the event
- all complaints should be resolved as quickly as possible
- if a complaint is not from a parent/carer of a pupil of the school (an example being a member of the public) these should be made directly to the Headteacher, preferably in writing.
- all complaints will be recorded formally by the school in a central log.

Raising a concern or complaint

Informal Stage (2-3 school days)

- In the first instance speak directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment. Many concerns can be resolved by at this informal stage.
- In the case of serious concerns, it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Headteacher (or to the Chair of the Board of Governors, if the complaint is about the Headteacher).
- If you are uncertain about whom to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the Board of Governors.

Formal Stage – there are three formal stages:

Stage 1 – Headteacher (10 days – acknowledge receipt of complaint within 3 to 5 school days)

- If your concern is not resolved at the informal stage you may put the complaint in writing or complete a complaints form and pass it to the Headteacher, (or to the Clerk to the Board of Governors, for the attention of the Chair, if the complaint is about the Headteacher) who will be responsible for ensuring that your complaint is investigated appropriately. If you require support to do this you may request help from the school.
- Please include details that will help the investigation, such as names of potential



witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents.

- It is important that you tell us what you would like to happen to put things right.
- All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 3-5 school days, a copy of the complaints Procedure will be included.
- The Headteacher (or Chair) should invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint. A friend, interpreter or advocate may accompany you if you wish, to help you in explaining your complaint. **Any complaint about the Headteacher will start at Stage 2.**
- It is possible that your complaint will be resolved through a meeting with the Headteacher (or Chair). If not arrangements will be made for the matter to be referred to the Chair of Governors.

Stage 2 Chair of Governors (15 school days)

- The Chair of Governors may invite you to a further meeting to discuss your complaint and to seek a resolution. Again, if you accept that invitation, a friend, interpreter or advocate may accompany you to help you explain your complaint.
- The Chair may also appoint a governor to be an Investigating Officer to undertake a detailed investigation of the complaint. If the complaint requires the appointment of an Investigating Officer, the timescale can be extended, and you will be informed of this.
- If the Headteacher is the subject of the complaint, the complaint should go straight the Chair of Governors and miss out Stage 1.
- If your complaint cannot be resolved with 15 days the Chair will inform the complainant and explain why it is taking longer. Reasons for this may be that the complaint is complex and needs more time or someone involved is absent through sickness or holidays. The Chair of Governors should give a realistic timescale for when your complaint should be resolved. The Chair will inform you when it is expected that the investigation should be completed.

Stage 3 Complaints Panel (28 school days)

- If you remain dissatisfied, you can request that the Board of Governors conduct a review into the process followed by the school in dealing with your complaint.
- A panel of three members of the Board of Governors will form the Complaints Panel.
- The panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and:
 - reach a unanimous, or at least a majority decision, on the complaint
 - dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
 - uphold the complaint in whole or in part
 - decide on any appropriate action, if any, to be taken
 - where appropriate, suggest changes to, or request a review of, the school's systems or procedures to ensure that the problems of a similar nature do not happen again.
- When the complaint has been fully investigated and the hearing has taken place, you should be notified of the **findings** in writing by the Chair of the Panel hearing the complaint or the Governor responsible for the investigation within five school days of the hearing date. You will also be informed how you can take your complaint further if still dissatisfied.
- The report, with findings, should, at the same time, be published to the Chair of Board of Governors who will report back to the Board of Governors with a table of



recommendations taken from the report.

- Any complaint about the Board of Governors should be delegated to a named governor (e.g. the Chair of the Board of Governors), or to a complaints panel previously convened by the full Board of Governors.

Handling Unreasonably Persistent, Harassing or Abusive Complaints

- The Headteacher and Board of Governors are fully committed to the improvement of our school. We welcome feedback and will always try to resolve concerns as quickly as possible. There is a procedure for parents and other stakeholders to use if they wish to make a formal complaint.
- Sometimes, however, individuals treat staff and others in a way that is unacceptable in the pursuit of complaints or other issues. Whilst we recognise that some complaints may relate to serious and distressing incidents, we will not accept threatening or harassing behaviour towards any members of the school community.

What do we mean by 'an unreasonably persistent complaint'?

- An unreasonably persistent complaint may be anyone who engages in unreasonable behaviour when making a complaint. This will include persons who pursue complaints in an unreasonable manner.

Unreasonable behaviour may include:

Actions that are

- Out of proportion to the nature of the complaint, or
- Persistent – even when the complaints procedure has been exhausted, or
- Personally harassing, or
- Unjustifiably repetitious
- An insistence on
- Pursuing unjustified complaints and/ or
- Unrealistic outcomes to justified complaints
- Pursuing justifiable complaints in an unreasonable manner e.g. using abusive or threatening language or making complaints in public, or refusing to attend appointments to discuss the complaint

What is 'harassment'?

We regard harassment as the unreasonable pursuit of issues or complaints, particularly if the matter appears to be pursued in a way intended to cause personal distress rather than to seek a resolution.

- Behaviour may fall within the scope of this policy if:
- It appears to be deliberately targeted at one or more members of school staff or others, without good cause.
- The way in which a complaint or other issues is pursued (as opposed to the complaint itself) causes undue distress to school staff or others
- It has significant and disproportionate adverse effect on the school community



What does the school expect of any person wishing to raise a complaint?

The school expects anyone who wished to raise a complaint with the school to:

- treat all members of the school community with courtesy and respect
- respect the needs of children and staff within the school
- avoid the use of violence, or threats of violence, towards people or property
- recognise the time constraints under which members of staff in schools work and allow the school a reasonable time to respond to a complaint
- follow the school's complaints procedure

Schools' responses to unreasonably persistent complaints or harassment

In cases of unreasonably persistent complaints or harassment, the school may take some or all of the following steps, as appropriate

- Inform the complainant informally that his/ her behaviour is now considered by the school to be unreasonable or unacceptable, and request a changed approach
- Inform the complainant in writing that the school considers his/ her behaviour to fall under the terms of the Unreasonably Persistent Complaints/ Harassment Policy
- Require all future meetings with a member of staff to be conducted by a second person present. In the interests of all parties, notes of these meetings may be taken
- Inform the complainant that, except in emergencies, the school will respond to written communication and that these may be required to be channeled through the Board of Governors
- It would be advisable to take legal advice about the wording. If schools have bought into the Local Authority Legal Package contact the appropriate persons.

Physical or verbal aggression

The Board of Governors will not tolerate any form of physical or verbal aggression against members of the school community. If there is evidence of any such aggression the school may:

- Ban the individual from entering the school site, with immediate effect
- Request an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO)
- Prosecute under the Anti-Harassment legislation
- Call the police to remove the individual from the premises, under powers provided by the Education Act 1996.

Legitimate new complaints will always be considered if the person making them is (or has been) subject to the Unreasonably Persistent Complaints/ Harassment Policy. The school nevertheless reserves the right not to respond to communications from individuals to the policy.



Annex 1 – Model Paragraph for Inclusion on Website

Raising Concerns and Resolving Complaints

From time to time parents, and others connected with the school, will become aware of matters that cause them concern. To encourage resolution of such situations the Board of Governors has adopted a 'School Complaints Procedure'.

The procedure is devised with the intention that it will:

- usually be possible to resolve issues 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.

Full details of the procedure may be obtained from our website, the School Office or from the Clerk to the Board of Governors.



Annex 2 – Complaint Form

St Chads CE (Cont) Nursery and Infant School Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to the Headteacher (or Clerk to the Board of Governors), who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in this procedure

Your Name	
Your Address	
Email Address	
Daytime telephone number	
Evening telephone number	

Relationship with school e.g. Parent of a child on the school's roll	
Child's name (if relevant to your complaint)	
What is it you want to complain about?	

Have you complained to the Headteacher?	Yes	No
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When did you do this?		Date:	
What happened when you complained to the Headteacher?			
What would you like us to do to put things right?			
Signature:		Date:	



School use			
Received by		Date	
Acknowledgement sent by		Date	
Complaint referred to			
Name		Date	
Name		Date	
Name		Date	
Number of additional pages attached			



We aim to work closely with parents and carers so that all children can play and learn happily at school. We view all complaints in a positive way, as it helps the school to improve its practices.

However.....sometimes problems do occur and the best person to talk to first is usually your child's class teacher.

If you are still worried or concerned, the Headteacher will be happy to talk to you at a mutually convenient time.

The chair of governors is and s/he can be contacted via the school.

Full details of our complaints procedure are in a leaflet available from the office.

We welcome discussions with all visitors but rudeness or aggression towards any school staff will not be tolerated and may result in legal action.



Dear <insert name>

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated <insert date>.

Further to our meeting on <insert date>. I wish to confirm the outcome of our discussion.

<insert summary of discussion and outcomes>

I hope that you are satisfied that your concerns have been dealt with appropriately. However if you are dissatisfied with the outcome please contact me to discuss the matter further within 10 school days or you may express your concern in writing to the Headteacher with 10 school days (should you require assistance please contact the school office).

Yours sincerely



Annex 5 – Sample Letter – Acknowledgement and meeting offer by Headteacher

Dear <insert name>

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated <insert date>. <insert school name> takes all complaints seriously, please be assured that I shall investigate the matter fully and should be in a position to respond to you within 10 school days.

Optional Paragraph

It may be helpful if I could meet with you to clarify details of your concerns before my investigation. May I suggest we meet at school on <insert date> at <insert time>.
Please confirm you will be able to meet me with the school office. At the meeting a mutually agreed date will be agreed for my full response to your concerns.

You may wish to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend, representative or advocate. <insert school name> is committed to promoting equality and diversity; should you require further assistance please contact the school office. I would be grateful if you would confirm the name of any person who will accompany you and the capacity in which they are attending (e.g. friend, interpreter etc.).

I look forward to meeting you. Yours sincerely

<insert name>

<insert job title>



Annex 6 – Sample Letter – Final response to complainant by Headteacher

Dear <insert name>

Further to our meeting on <insert date> **OR** Further to your letter dated <insert date>, I have now had an opportunity to investigate your concerns and am able to report the following:

<insert a summary of concerns raised, investigation and outcomes>

I hope that you are satisfied that your concerns have been dealt with appropriately. However if you are dissatisfied with the outcome please contact me to discuss the matter further within 10 school days or contact the school office to obtain a Complaint Form that you must return to the Chair of Governors within 10 school days (should you require assistance please contact the school office).

Yours sincerely

<insert name>

<insert job title>



Annex 7 – Sample Letter – Acknowledgement and meeting offer to Complainant

Dear <insert name>

Thank you for the Complaint Form dated <insert date>. <insert school name> takes all complaints seriously, please be assured that I shall investigate the matter fully and should be in a position to respond to you within 10 school days.

I would like to meet with you at school on <insert date> at <insert time> to enable you to talk through your concern. If this is not convenient, please contact the school office to arrange an alternative appointment. At the meeting a mutually agreed target date will be arranged for my response.

You may wish to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend, representative or advocate. <insert school name> is committed to promoting equality and diversity; should you require further assistance please contact the school office. I would be grateful if you would confirm the name of any person who will accompany you and the capacity in which they are attending (e.g. friend, interpreter etc.).

I look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely

<insert name>

Chair of Governors/Investigating Officer (delete as appropriate)



Annex 8 – Sample Letter – Final response to complainant by Investigating Officer

Dear <insert name>

Further to our meeting on <insert date>. I have now had an opportunity to investigate your concerns and am able to report the following:

<insert a summary of concerns, investigation and outcomes>

I hope that you are satisfied that your concerns have been dealt with appropriately. However if you are dissatisfied with the outcome please contact the Chair of Governors via the school office within 10 school days to discuss the matter further or to request that your concerns proceed to formal stage 3 (should you require assistance please contact the school office). A Clerk and Complaints Panel will then be convened to review your complaint.

I look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely

<insert name>

<insert role>



Annex 9 – Sample Letter – Acknowledgement of request for formal stage 3 by Clerk

Dear <insert name>

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated <insert date> indicating that you wish your complaint to be reviewed by a panel of school governors.

A panel of three governors who have had no prior involvement with your complaint will be convened. When the planning has been completed I shall contact you again to invite you to attend a Complaints Panel meeting, this meeting will take place within the next 28 school days.

Yours sincerely

<insert name>

Clerk to Governors



Annex 10 – Sample Letter – Request for information to Headteacher

Dear <insert Headteacher name>

I have received a letter dated <insert date> from <insert name> stating a wish for his/her complaint to be reviewed by a panel of school governors. I enclose a copy of documentation relating to the complaint for information.

A panel of three governors who have had no prior involvement with the complaint will be convened. When the planning has been completed I shall contact you again to invite you to attend a Complaints Panel Meeting, this meeting will take place within the next 28 school days.

I would be grateful if you could send me a written statement responding to the complaint. You will have the opportunity to expand on your statement at the Complaints Panel Meeting but it would be useful if you could submit your initial statement within the next 10 school days.

Finally, please may I point out that the complainant, you and everyone else involved should treat all the related documentation as confidential.

Yours sincerely

<insert name>

Clerk to Governors



Annex 11 – Sample Letter – Letter to Complainant with Complaints Panel details

Dear <insert name>

The Governors Complaints Panel will be held on <insert date and time> at <insert location>.

Please could you send me any additional information or documentation relevant to your complaint at least 10 school days before the Complaints Panel Meeting. Only in exceptional circumstances will new documentation and/or information be accepted after this time and this is at the discretion of the Chair of the Complaints Panel.

The Complaints Panel will start at <insert time> you are asked to report to the <insert location>. You will be shown to a waiting area. I will collect you and the Headteacher from the waiting area to be introduced to the panel at the same time.

The Complaints Panel will be attended by:

<insert names and roles>

You are entitled to be accompanied by a friend or representative if you wish. I would be grateful if you would:

- confirm your attendance at this meeting
- let me know the name of any friend or representative who will accompany you by <insert date>. Please also let me know the capacity in which any additional person is attending (e.g. interpreter or friend etc.).

All documentation will be sent to you five school days before the Complaints Panel Meeting. Finally, please may I remind you that the consideration of this complaint and all related documentation should be treated as confidential.

Yours sincerely

<insert name>

Clerk to Governors Complaints Panel



Annex 12 – Sample Letter – Letter to Headteacher with Complaints Panel details

Dear <insert Headteacher's name>

Thank you for providing the information requested.

I am now in a position to provide full details of the Complaints Panel Meeting to be held on <insert date and time> at <insert location>.

The Complaints Panel will start at <insert time>. You are asked to report to the <insert location>. You will be shown to a waiting area. I will collect you and the Complainant from the waiting area to be introduced to the Complaints Panel at the same time.

The Complaints Panel will be attended by:

<insert names and roles>

The following information is enclosed:

<insert details>

Any additional information sent by the Complainant will be sent to you by <insert date>.

Finally, please may I remind you that the consideration of this complaint and all related documentation should be treated as confidential.

The Complaints Panel look forward to meeting you on <insert date> Yours sincerely

<insert name>

Clerk to the Governors Complaints Panel



Annex 13 – Sample Letter – Final details to Complainant of the Complaints Panel

Dear <insert name>

Thank you for providing the information requested. The following information is enclosed:

<insert details>

Finally, please may I remind you that the consideration of this complaint and all related documentation should be treated as confidential.

The Complaints Panel look forward to meeting you on <insert date>. Yours sincerely

<insert name>

Clerk to the Governors Complaints Panel



Annex 14 – Sample Letter - Out of time letter

Dear <insert name>

COMPLAINT

Thank you for your letter dated <insert date> which we received on <insert date>.

Unfortunately we are not able to consider complaints made more than one year after the ground to make the complaint arose, because at this stage, we are unable to carry out a thorough and detailed investigation into something that took place after this length of time.

Yours sincerely

<insert name>

<insert job title>



Annex 15 – Sample Minutes of Complaints Panel Meeting

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

(To be treated as Part 2 Minutes)

Board of Governors of <insert school name> Complaints Panel Meeting

Minutes of proceedings at a meeting of the Complaints Panel held at <insert location> on <insert date>.

PRESENT

<insert names and roles>

The meeting was held in accordance with the Board of Governors's complaints policy and procedures.

The Chair welcomed all parties to the meeting and introductions were made. S/he outlined the procedure for the meeting.

<insert name> was asked to outline the complaint s/he had made against the school. The complaint was centered on:

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

Members of the Panel asked questions to clarify the complaint. The Headteacher was invited to questions of <insert name>.

<insert name> responded to the complaint on behalf of the school.

Members of the Panel asked <insert name> questions to clarify the school's response to the complaint. <insert name> was invited to ask questions of <insert name>.

When all aspects of the complaint had been addressed, <insert name> was invited to make a brief summary to the meeting. This was followed by a similar invitation to the Headteacher.

At the end of the summaries, the Chair asked <insert name> if s/he was satisfied that s/he had had a fair hearing. <insert name> responded <insert response>.

The Headteacher was asked if they felt the school had a fair hearing and responded <insert response>.

The Chair explained that the Panel would consider the information presented and come to a decision on <insert name>'s complaint. The Chair explained that a letter outlining the Panel's decision would be sent by first class post within five school days.



All parties left the meeting, except members of the Panel and the Clerk.

The Panel then gave careful consideration to the information received, including documentation distributed before the meeting and the evidence and representations made at the meeting.

Members findings and recommendations:

That the Clerk prepares a letter to the complainant agreed by all panel members and signed by the Chair of the Complaints Panel explaining the Panel's decision.

The letter is to include details of who to contact if still dissatisfied.

That the letter be sent to <insert name> to arrive no later than <insert date>.

A copy of the letter outlining the Panel's conclusions is attached to and forms part of these minutes.

<insert signature>

Signed by Chair of Complaints Panel Dated <insert date>



Annex 16 – Sample Notice of recommendations to Board of Governors

To the Board of Governors of <insert school> Complaints Panel

Report to the Board of Governors of <insert school> of meeting held on <insert date>

The Complaints Panel met on <insert date> to consider a complaint made by parent(s) of a pupil at the school. The meeting was held in accordance with the Board of Governors's procedure for considering parental complaints.

The complaint was <insert summary>

The Complaints Panel concluded that the complaint be upheld/not be upheld.

The Panel make the following recommendations for consideration by the Board of Governors:

<insert recommendations>

The following were present at the meeting.

- The Panel <insert names>
- The complainant **[not to be named]**
- The Headteacher <insert name>
- Observers <insert names>
- The Clerk <insert name>



Annex 17 – Sample Letter – Final letter to Complainant

Dear <insert name>

Thank you for joining <insert names of other two governors> and myself on <insert date> to review your complaint against <insert name of school>.

I am grateful to you for the time and effort you have put into presenting your complaint.

I am writing to let you know the conclusions and recommendations we reached.

<insert summary of conclusions and recommendations>

I attach a copy of the minutes taken by the clerk at the Complaints Panel for your information.

A record of your complaint will be kept on file by the school.

Should you remain concerned that the governors have acted or are proposing to act unreasonably, or that the Board of Governors has failed to discharge its duties under legislation the final course of action available to you is to write to the Secretary of State, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, London, SW1P 3BT to ask for a review.

For your further information Ofsted can also investigate complaints relating to the work of a school as a whole but will not get involved in any matter that relates to individual pupils.

It is the Panel's hope that you will feel that your complaint has been heard and reviewed fairly and that all issues have been investigated appropriately.

Yours sincerely

<insert name>

Chair of the Complaints Panel

Cc Headteacher - <insert name of school>



Useful Addresses

Governor Support and Improvement - (advice and training for governors)

Derby City Council
The Council House
Corporation Street
Derby
DE1 2FS
Telephone: 01332 640364 or 640345
Email – governorenquiries@derby.gov.uk

Ofsted
Enquiries
National Business Unit
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA
Telephone: 08456 404045

The Secretary of State

Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
London
SW1P 3BT
Telephone: 0870 000 2288

EFA
Department for
Education Castle View
House
East Lane
Runcorn
Cheshire
WA7 2GJ

Further Guidance

Ofsted publication – '**Complaints to Ofsted about schools: guidance for parents and carers**' <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/complaints-ofsted-about-schools-guidance-for-parents>

DfE - School Complaints Procedure 2011
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedure-2011>

EFA – '**Procedure for dealing with complaints about academies**'
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complain-about-an-academy>



Derby City Council School Improvement and Governor Support: Every School Good or Better

Jayne Hadfield | Governor Support Manager | Children and Young People | Derby City Council,
The Council House, Corporation Street, Derby DE1 2FS | Email Jayne.hadfield@derby.gov.uk or
Telephone 01332 640364

Flowchart – Summary of Complaints Procedures

Concern raised and heard by staff member (informal stage – resolved 2-3 school days)
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Issue not resolved

Complaint heard by Headteacher (formal stage 1 – resolved 10 school days)

- Complainant invited to the meeting by letter
- Complainant informed of outcome of investigation in writing

- Complainant invited to the meeting by letter
- Complainant informed of outcome of investigation in writing

