

Parental Complaints Policy and Procedure



Policy Statement

At Holy Trinity CE Primary School we embrace the vision for a highly educated society in which opportunity is equal for children and young people – no matter what their background or family circumstances.

With Christian faith central to our ethos and teaching, we strive to provide a happy, caring environment to maximise learning and achievement.

Our aim is for this ethos to permeate every aspect of the curriculum – lessons, events, routines, out of school clubs, trips and visits – and this policy seeks to ensure that our vision is fully realised and adhered to by all members of the school community.

Governing Body

Lead Person	Pauline Thomas
Link Governor/Chair of Committee	Chris Tongeman
Committee	Pupils, Families and Community
Date Reviewed (incl. signature of Link Governor/Chair)	September 2024
Date Ratified	September 2024
Next review date	September 2026

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Excellence in how we worship, learn and work together

Every one of our children is unique and special. We are committed to providing an exceptional learning experience for all the children in our Holy Trinity family.

We strive to enable our children to acquire the knowledge, skills and characteristics they need to be successful in the wider world.

At Holy Trinity, we serve our community with compassion, empathy and kindness in all that we do.

1. RECEIVING A COMPLAINT

1.1 A complaint can be received by any member of the school staff who should then inform the head teacher of the nature of the complaint and the way in which it was dealt with. Every effort should be made to resolve the situation in an informal manner.

1.2 Upon receipt of a complaint an informal meeting to discuss the matter can be arranged between the complainant and an appropriate member(s) of staff, which may be the class teacher, key stage leader, Assistant/Deputy and/or Headteacher. At this informal stage, the complainant can be accompanied to the meeting by an immediate family member, i.e. parent, aunt, uncle or grandparent of the child.

1.3 If the complainant feels that their initial complaint has not been satisfactorily dealt with at this informal stage and wishes further consideration to their complaint to be taken, a formal complaint must be made in writing to the head teacher and should include the date, and the name and address of the complainant.

1.4 Where the complaint concerns the head teacher or a governor, the written complaint should be addressed to the Chair of Governors to be dealt with as outlined in paragraph 3 below.

2. FORMAL COMPLAINTS DEALT WITH BY THE HEADTEACHER OR THE HEADTEACHER'S REPRESENTATIVE

2.1 The written complaint should be promptly referred to the head teacher who will decide whether to delegate the investigation of the complaint to another member of staff or whether to undertake the investigation him/herself.

2.2 Where an incident has resulted in personal injury, the head teacher must inform the Chair of Governors.

2.3 The member of staff investigating the complaint will ensure that a written acknowledgement is sent to the complainant within 3 working days of receiving

the complaint. The acknowledgement will give a brief explanation of the school's complaints procedure and will give a target date for providing a response, which should normally be within 7 working days. If this target is subsequently not going to be met, a letter should be sent within the 7 working days explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised response date.

2.4 The investigating officer may speak, or meet separately, with all appropriate parties, including the complainant, in order to establish all the facts relating to the complaint. Where a child is involved, the child's parent/guardian should be notified and allowed to be present if wished.

2.5 Once all the relevant facts have been established to the satisfaction of the investigating officer, a written response to the complaint should be produced. This will include an outline of the complaint, the main findings of the investigation and the decision reached, and where appropriate, what action the school is proposing to take to resolve the complaint. Where the investigation has been delegated to an investigating officer, the resultant report must be endorsed by the head teacher. The response should also inform the complainant that should they remain unsatisfied, they would have a right of appeal to the Governing Body.

2.6 If the complainant wishes to pursue the complaint further, a written request stating this must be sent to the Headteacher within 10 working days after receiving the response.

3. COMPLAINTS REFERRED TO THE GOVERNING BODY

3.1 If the Chair of the Governing Body receives a written complaint from a parent, s/he should consult with the head teacher before taking any action and should acknowledge complaint within 3 working days. It would be important to ensure that the informal stages of the procedure have been exhausted. If this is not the case, the Chair would advise the complainant to follow the procedures as described above.

3.2 Where the complainant is still dissatisfied with the outcome of the school's investigation, the complainant should send a written request within 5 working days of receipt of letter, for the complaint to be heard by the Governing Body's Complaints Committee.

3.3 Where the complaint concerns a head teacher or a governor, and has been directly addressed to the Chair of Governors, it is the responsibility of the Chair to appoint a designated investigator and acknowledge the complaint.

3.4 An acknowledgement should be sent within 5 working days of receiving the complaint and should inform the complainant that a panel of three governors would be set up to hear the complaint within 15 working days from the date of the acknowledgement.

3.5 The Chair of governors will appoint a Complaints Panel to hear the complaint. The panel should ideally comprise the Chair or Vice-Chair and two other governors (not including the head teacher or school staff governors).

3.6 The Chair/Vice-Chair will write and inform the complainant, head teacher and other appropriate parties, of the date, time and place of the meeting at least 5 working days in advance of it. The complainant may be accompanied by a representative and must inform the investigating officer who they would like to bring with them. Any relevant documentation relating to the complaint should also be issued to all parties at this time.

4. COMPLAINTS HEARING

4.1 The aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant.

4.2 The conduct of the meeting would be as follows:

(i) The Chair of the panel will: welcome the complainant
introduce the panel members and all other parties present explain the procedure to be followed.

(ii) The Chair of the panel will invite the complainant to explain the complaint.

(iii) The panel members may question the complainant about the complaint and the reasons why it has been made.

- (iv) The head teacher, or the designated investigator, will be invited by the Chair to question the complainant.
- (v) The head teacher, or designated investigator, will then be invited to make a statement in response to the complaint.
- (vi) The panel members may question the head teacher, or designated investigator, about the response.
- (vii) The complainant will be invited by the Chair to question the investigator.
- (viii) Any party has the right to call witnesses subject to the approval of the complaints panel. The panel members, the designated investigator and the complainant have the right to question these witnesses.
- (ix) The complainant will be invited by the Chair to make a final statement.
- (x) The head teacher or the designated investigator will be invited by the Chair to make a final statement.
- (xi) The Chair will explain to the complainant and the head teacher or designated investigator that the panel will now consider their decision and a written decision will be sent to both parties within 2 working days. All parties will then be asked to leave the room except for the panel members.
- (xii) The Complaints Panel will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and:
 - a) reach a decision on the complaint and the reasons for it;
 - b) decide upon the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
 - c) where appropriate, suggest recommended changes to the schools' systems or procedures to try to ensure that complaints of a similar nature are not made in the future.

4.3 The minutes of the meeting will be recorded and kept on file.

5. OUTCOME OF HEARING

5.1 The decision and recommendations of the Complaints Committee to all parties within 5 working days. The committee's decision is final.

5.2 The school must ensure that copies of correspondence and notes pertaining to the complaint are kept on file in the school's records. Records should be retained until the pupil has reached the age of majority PLUS 6: that is, until they reach the age 24. The DOB must be stated on the documentation. Should the school receive notification from the Authority that the complaint is to be investigated, a copy of all documents should be made available to the Authority.

6. MONITORING

6.1 A total of all complaints, the action taken, and the outcome is reported to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

7. If you feel that your issue has still not been resolved you should contact the DfE.

Please note: school days are when pupils are attending; staff INSET days are excluded. Counting begins on the school day after receipt.

Policy Adoption, Monitoring and Review

This policy was considered and adopted by the Governing body in line with their overall duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children as set out in the DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2022'

Policy Adopted by Governors in: September 2024

Policy Due for Review: September 2026