

St James Church of England
Primary School



Name of Policy	Complaints policy
Ratification	<i>November 2022</i> P Molyneux
Review Date	October 2022
Next Review Date	October 2024

St James' Church of England Primary School

Complaints Policy

General Principles

This policy sets out the procedures that the school will follow in the event that a complaint is made about a member of staff, the head teacher, or one of the governors.

Where ever possible:-

- The school will endeavor to resolve any issues informally. If this is not possible, complainants should follow the procedure set out below;
- Complaints will be dealt with within 15 school days of the complaint being raised;
- The complaint will be treated in confidence.

Complaints raised anonymously will not normally be investigated under this policy unless there are exceptional circumstances.

A Complaint about the actions of a member of staff other than the Head teacher

Informal stage

The complainant should communicate directly with the member of staff concerned, either by letter or in person by appointment.

Formal Stage

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal stage, the complainant must put the complaint in writing (if possible) and pass to the Head teacher who will be responsible for its investigation, such as names, dates and times of events and copies of relevant documents. The Head teacher will conduct the investigation and inform the complainant of the outcome, which may be one of the following:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion so the complaint cannot be upheld;
- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence;
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full (some details may then be given of the action the school may be taking to review procedures, but details of any disciplinary procedures will not be released).
- The matter has been fully investigated and that appropriate procedures are being followed, which are strictly confidential (e.g. where staff disciplinary procedures are being followed).
- If the complainant is still unhappy about the complaint, he/she may ask the governing body to review the handling of the complaint as set out at paragraph C below.

B Complaints about the actions of the Head teacher

Informal Stage

The complainant should arrange to speak directly with the Head teacher.

If the matter is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, and if both parties agree, then a third party (e.g. the deputy) could be invited to act as mediator at a further meeting.

Formal Stage

If not resolved at the informal stage, the complaint should be put in writing (if possible) and passed to the chair of the governing body who will investigate the complaint.

The complainant should include all relevant details to assist the investigation. In addition, the complainant may be invited to meet the chair to present oral information or to clarify the complaint, or a discussion may be held by telephone.

Where appropriate the chair should interview witnesses and collect further information. The head teacher should be provided with a copy of the complaint and any additional evidence provided. The head teacher will then be invited to discuss the complaint with the chair.

Once the investigation has been carried out, all parties will be notified of the outcome in writing. The complainant will not be informed of any disciplinary action to be taken against any member of staff or the head teacher.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, or considers that the action of the chair is perverse, or that the chair has acted unreasonably, then s/he should request that the governing body review the chair's handling of the complaint.

C Review process

Any request for a review of a decision made under this policy by the head teacher or chair should be made in writing (if possible) within two weeks of receiving notice of the outcome from the head teacher/chair, and include a statement detailing the grounds for the review.

The review will be conducted by a panel of three members of the governing body. It will normally be a paper review, but reasonable requests for oral representation will be considered. No member of the panel should have had any previous involvement in consideration of the complaint.

The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant. The panel will invite the head and/or chair to respond in writing to the evidence. The panel may also access the records of the entire complaint.

All parties will be notified in writing of the outcome. This may be to the effect that:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion so the complaint cannot be upheld;
- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence;
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full, but the procedural failure did not affect the outcome significantly, so the matter is now closed;
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full, and governors will take steps to prevent a recurrence or to rectify the situation.