



# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

### Mission Statement:

Let it be known to all who enter here that Christ is the reason for this school, the unseen but ever present teacher in all its classes, the model for its children, the inspiration for its staff.

**Love and Learn in the Footsteps of Christ!**

### Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body.

<b>Review Frequency</b>	Annually
<b>Last Review Date</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>GB Adopted</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
<b>Next Review Date</b>	October 2022

Signature ..... *Linda Payne* ..... Date ..... 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Head Teacher

Signature ..... *Adrian Ramsden* ..... Date ... 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Chair of Governors



# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## How we will deal with your concerns

### HOW TO COMMENT OR COMPLAIN

#### We care about what you think

Each day this school makes many decisions and tries hard to do the best for all the children. Your comments - either positive or negative - are helpful for future planning.

You may want to talk to us about a particular aspect of this school, though not actually make a complaint - you just want to get something 'off your chest'.

If you are dissatisfied about the way your child is being treated or any actions or lack of action by us, please feel free to contact us using the details listed above.

#### Our aims

- Your complaint will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence.
- Your complaint will be looked into thoroughly and fairly.
- If your complaint is urgent we will deal with it more quickly.
- We will keep you up to date with progress at each stage.
- You will get an apology if we have made a mistake.
- You will be told what we are going to do to put things right.
- You will get a full and clear written reply to formal complaints within **28 school days (5½ weeks)**.
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### St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School  
Ainsdale Road  
South Oxhey  
Watford  
Herts, WD19 7DW

Website: [www.stjosephs.775.herts.sch.uk](http://www.stjosephs.775.herts.sch.uk)  
Email: [admin@stjosephs.775.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stjosephs.775.herts.sch.uk)  
Telephone: 0208- 4284-5371



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## **Who can make a complaint?**

This complaints process is not limited only to parents or carers of children that are registered on roll at the school. Other people, including members of the public, may make a complaint to our school, provided that the complaint relates to the provision of facilities or services that we provide.

Note that any issues for which a separate statutory process applies (such as appeals regarding exclusions or admissions) do not fall within the scope of this process.

The school will confirm to you upon receipt whether or not your complaint falls under this policy and procedure and what will happen next, if it does. For issues that fall outside of this policy and procedure, the school will confirm the correct process that applies instead.

## **The difference between a concern and a complaint**

We define a concern as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*.

We define a complaint as *'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action that requires an investigation and formal response, in writing'*.

It is in everybody's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved as swiftly as possible. Many issues can be resolved informally, without needing to escalate to the formal stages of the complaints process. St Joseph's takes concerns seriously and we will make every effort to resolve matters as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In such cases, you will be referred to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with your concerns, 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 the most important factor.

St Joseph's understands, however, that there are some occasions when people only wish to raise their concerns formally. In such instances, the school will attempt to resolve the issue(s) internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints policy and procedure.



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## **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, provided that the third party is able to demonstrate to the school that they have the appropriate consent to do so.

Concerns should be raised with either the Class Teacher or Key Stage Lead. 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 formal complaints process. In the event that a Governor is approached by a complainant, they should signpost the complainant back to the most appropriate person. This could be the Class Teacher, Key Stage Lead, Headteacher or Chair of Governors depending on which stage the complaint has reached.

**Complaints against School staff (except the Headteacher)** should be made in the first instance, to the Headteacher via the School Office. They should be marked Private and Confidential.

**Complaints regarding the Headteacher** should be addressed to the Chair of Governors and submitted via the School Office. They should be marked as Private and Confidential. The School Office will ensure that the Chair of Governors receives this promptly.

**Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual Governor or the whole Governing Body** should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body and submitted to the School Office. They should be marked Private and Confidential. The School Office will ensure that the Clerk receives this promptly.

For ease of use, a template complaint form has been included within this complaints policy and procedure (Appendix 2). If you require help to complete the form, you should contact the School Office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice Bureau or an Independent Advocate to help you. St Joseph's will ensure that all formal complaints are documented, in writing, to ensure that the issues being complained about and the complainant's desired outcomes are clear. Complainants will be asked to submit their complaint, in writing, either by sending an email or a letter via the School Office or by completing the School's formal Complaint Form.



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In accordance with Equality law, as outlined above, the school will consider making reasonable adjustments, if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints process. This includes providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

**If a complainant is unable to submit their complaint in writing**, the school will ensure that the issues being complained about and the outcomes being requested are documented in writing. The school may do this in either of the following ways.

- Invite the complainant to a meeting with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors (depending on what stage the complaint has reached) and a Notetaker. The Notetaker will document the issues being complained about and the complainant's desired outcomes, as discussed and agreed during the course of the meeting. At the end of the meeting, the complainant will be given a copy of the notes of the meeting containing this information and the school will retain the original copy for the purpose of investigating the complaint(s).
- Signpost the complainant to independent support, including Advocacy. Advocates provide qualified, independent support for people that have difficulty understanding information and advice or who would like support in communicating their views. Advocates can help complainants to formulate their complaint and then submit it on their behalf and support them through the complaints process. POhWER was founded in Hertfordshire in 1996. They deliver services in Hertfordshire as part of the HertsHelp service, in partnership with a wide range of voluntary sector organisations, including Advocacy. It is a free and impartial service. Their contact details are as follows:

POhWER

Telephone: 0300 456 2370

Text: send the word 'pohwer' with your name and number to 81025

Email: [pohwer@pohwer.net](mailto:pohwer@pohwer.net)

Skype: pohwer.advocacy

Post: PO Box 14043, Birmingham, B6 9BL



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## **Anonymous complaints**

St Joseph's will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. In such instances, the Headteacher and/or the Chair of Governors will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation and will ensure that this is completed, if so. The outcome of the investigation cannot be shared with the complainant, as the school will not know who they are and, therefore, the school cannot ascertain whether or not the person is entitled to have confidential information regarding the complaint investigation shared with them.

## **Timescales**

**All complaints must be raised within three months of an incident or event.**

Where a series of associated incidents have occurred, the complaint must be raised within three months of the last of these incidents.

St Joseph's will consider exercising the discretion to consider matters raised outside of this timeframe, only if the school deems that exceptional circumstances apply. To enable the school to make this decision, the complainant will be asked to explain their reasons as to why they have taken longer than three months to raise their complaint. If the complainant does not provide any explanation or the school deems that the explanation given is not compelling or exceptional enough to warrant the issue(s) being investigated as a late complaint, the school will confirm this, in writing, and take no further action.

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

St Joseph's will consider any complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first School day after the holiday period. The school will send the complainant an acknowledgement of their complaint, confirming the date of receipt, what will happen next and the timescale that applies. This will differ depending on what stage of the complaints process has been reached.

## **Scope of this Complaints Policy and Procedure**

This policy and procedure only apply to complaints about the provision of facilities or services by St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

Some examples of issues that may be complained about are as follows.

- Complaints from individuals, including members of the public, about the provision of facilities or services by the school.
- Issues from parents or carers of children who attend the school.



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- Complaints regarding pupil welfare and wellbeing.
- Complaints regarding bullying.
- Complaints regarding staff behaviour.
- A Governor complaining about a member of staff.
- A member of staff complaining about a Governor.
- A Governor complaining about another Governor.
- Complaints about the school's handling of a Subject Access Request (SAR) or a Freedom of Information (FOI) Request.

## **The following matters cannot be dealt with as a formal complaint.**

- Complaints about pupil behaviour outside of School hours, e.g. weekends and holiday periods – such issues are not the school's responsibility.
- Complaints regarding third parties using or hiring school premises – third party providers should have their own complaints process and you should contact them directly.
- Complaints about the school carrying out a statutory duty, e.g. making a Child Protection referral – the School's complaints process cannot be invoked to stop it from doing something it has a duty to do.
- Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation – Complaints about Child Protection matters are handled under the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.
- A member of staff complaining about another member of staff – refer to the School's Internal Grievance Procedures.
- A member of staff complaining about an action or a decision of the School's Full Governing Body - the Governing Body will have already given the matter full consideration.
- Whistleblowing – refer to the School's Internal Whistleblowing Procedure for all employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowing in education who do not wish to



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raise matters directly with their employer. Referrals can be made at [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus)

- Complaints regarding internal management decisions, e.g. Class and Teacher Allocations and School Session Time changes.
- National Curriculum content – contact the Department for Education at [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus)
- Complaints about a decision or process that has been subject to a full consultation and subsequently approved by the Full Governing Body – the Governing Body has already given the matter full consideration and respondents have had the opportunity through the consultation process to put forward their views.
- Unsuccessful School admission applications – may ultimately be appealed to an Independent Appeal Panel.
- Complaints about Fixed-Term or Permanent Exclusions – Permanent Exclusions may ultimately be appealed to an Independent Review Panel (IRP). For Fixed Term Exclusions, representations can be made to the Chair of Governors outside the provisions of the complaints process.

If other bodies are looking into aspects of a complaint, for example the Police, the Local Authority (LA) Safeguarding Teams or a Tribunal, this may impact on the school's ability to adhere to the timescales set out within this policy and procedure or may result in the process being suspended until the other relevant body has concluded its enquiries.

If a complainant commences legal action against St Joseph's in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints process until the legal proceedings have concluded. The school will only consider investigating the complaint after the conclusion of legal proceedings if those proceedings did not address the issues at the heart of the complaint.