



ST. PAUL'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE

Policy and Procedures for General Complaints

"Happy are those who work for God; God will call them his children." Matthew 5: 9

Drafted by: Headteacher
Approved by Governors: Learning & Ethos Committee
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To be reviewed by: Headteacher, Director of Professional Learning and Governors

Aim: Our principle aim is to deal with complaints, openly, fairly, promptly and without prejudice. Our procedures for dealing with complaints will:

- Be publicised on the School Website
- Be simple to understand and follow
- Be focused on outcomes
- Have established time limits for action
- Keep people informed at all stages
- Where necessary, respect people's desire for confidentiality
- Be carefully monitored and evaluated
- Provide information to the school's senior leadership team so that the school's procedures can be improved



**St PAUL'S
CATHOLIC
COLLEGE**
An Overview

Stage One

Discuss concerns informally with the relevant member of staff or team leader.

Stage Two

Discuss concerns formally with the Deputy Headteacher or member of the College Leadership Team. This may be referred to the Headteacher at this stage if unresolved.

Stage Three

Make a formal complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors or a nominated governor who will then convene a Complaints Panel.

There are three stages to this procedure:

- Stage 1 is **informal**
- Stages 2 and 3 are **formal**

Any person expressing continued dissatisfaction should be advised of the next stage in the procedure.

1. Stage One: Discuss concerns informally with the relevant teacher

- 1.1** Complainants are advised to speak to the teacher concerned so everyone has a clear picture of the situation from all points of view. Most problems can be resolved at this informal stage by quick face to face discussion. The College aims to respond to any communication within two working days.
- 1.2** If the complainant indicates that he/she would have difficulty in discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff, the complaint may be referred to another appropriate member of staff.
- 1.3** The member of staff who is dealing with the complaint should ensure that the complainant is reassured that the matter will be investigated and is clear what action has been agreed. All staff should be aware of the need for confidentiality.



- 1.4 A brief record of any telephone calls, meetings and agreed actions should always be kept although it is not always necessary to provide the complainant with a written record at this stage. An Assistant Headteacher should monitor these records.
- 1.5 If either the complainant or staff member feels the matter needs to be taken further, the Deputy Headteacher or a member of the College Leadership Team should be contacted.
2. **Stage Two: Discuss concerns formally with the Deputy Headteacher or member of the College Leadership Team.**
 - 2.1 More serious concerns which remain unresolved at the end of Stage 1 should be referred to the Deputy Headteacher or member of the College Leadership Team. He / she will then investigate the matter further. Any meetings that are held with the complainant in relation to the complaint should be arranged within 10 school days. However, more complex complaints may require an extension to this time limit.
 - 2.2 A log of all contacts relating to the complaint should be kept and all meetings should be minuted and action points clearly communicated.
 - 2.3 The Deputy Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher should communicate the outcome to the complainant either verbally or in writing. Any agreed actions should be put in writing.
 - 2.4 If the matter is unresolved the Deputy Headteacher may refer this complaint to the Headteacher at this stage.
 - 2.5 If, as a result of the investigation, issues arise relating to staff discipline or capability, details should be dealt with confidentially by the Headteacher. However, the complainant should be informed that the school has taken appropriate action. It may be appropriate for the Headteacher to involve appropriate senior colleagues.
3. **Stage Three: Make a formal complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors (or a nominated governor) who will then convene the designated Complaints Panel.**
 - 3.1 Governors should only proceed with this formal stage of the Complaint Procedure if they have received a complaint in writing addressed to the Chair of Governors and all previous stages have been exhausted.
 - 3.2 Acknowledgement of the written complaint should normally be sent by the clerk to the governing body within 5 school days.



- 3.3** It is essential that this process is fair and objective. To avoid a conflict of interest, it is vital that the full governing body does not hear the complaint at this stage. Any governor who has been involved with the complaint at an earlier stage would be unable to give objective consideration to the issue.
- 3.4** It is for the governing body to agree upon the procedures for the Complaint Panel meeting. However, the governing body will usually convene a small panel of 3 or 5 governors who have not previously been involved in the complaint. The panel will usually meet within 15 school days of receiving the complaint.
- 3.5** The Chair of the panel should notify the Headteacher and the complainant as to whether they will be invited to attend the panel meeting. Alternatively, the panel may decide to consider written material only. Both parties must be treated equally. For example, if the Headteacher is invited to the meeting, so must the complainant.
- 3.6** If the complaint relates to a staff disciplinary or capability matter about which the Headteacher has already taken action, the governors should focus on how the original complaint was managed to avoid prejudicing any on-going disciplinary or capability procedures.
- 3.7** The Headteacher and complainant should be informed of the Panel's decision in writing within 10 school days.
- 3.8** This is the final and binding stage in the College's Complaints Procedure.