

Complaints Procedure

St. Philomena's has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to all pupils. If, however, a parent has a complaint, it will be dealt with in accordance with the following procedure.

Stage 1 — Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be dealt with quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Class Teacher. In many cases the matter will be resolved straightaway (by this means) to the parents satisfaction. If the teacher can not resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Headteacher, or Deputy Headteacher.
- Complaints made directly to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will usually be referred to the relevant Class Teacher, unless the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Class Teacher will make a **written record of all concerns and complaints and note the date on which they were received**. Should the matter **not be resolved within 10 working days**, or in the event that the Class teacher/ Headteacher /Deputy Headteacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory conclusion, the **parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2** of this procedure.

Stage 2 — Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should **put their complaint in writing** to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headteacher will meet the parents concerned, (normally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint) to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headteacher to carry out further investigations.
- The Headteacher will **keep written records** of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headteacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headteacher will also give reasons for his/her decision. **All correspondence will be sent by Recorded Delivery.**
- **If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3** of this procedure.

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3, following a failure to reach an earlier resolution, they will be referred to the named Governor for complaints who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- **The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration.** The Panel will consist of at least two Governors not directly

involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and **one person whom shall be independent of the school. Each of the Panel Members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors.** The named Governor on behalf of the Panel will then acknowledge the complaint, and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable, and normally within 21 working days.

- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint, or any related matter, are to be supplied in advance of the hearing. If this is the case then copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties no later than 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- **Parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person.** This person may be a relative, teacher, or friend - legal representation will not be appropriate.
- If possible the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately, without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out after due consideration of all the relevant facts. The Panel will then reach a decision and may make recommendations which it shall complete within 5 working days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reason for it - the decision of the Panel shall be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations, will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headteacher, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of. It is available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Headteacher. A written record will be kept of all formal complaints and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing, and a record of the action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated **seriously and confidentially.** Correspondence, statements, and records will all be kept confidential, except in so far as required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003 — where disclosure is required in the course of the School Inspection, or where any other legal obligation prevails.

(October 2016 – to be reviewed November 2019)