

**“With the help of God, working
together for success”**

St Michael's C of E (C) Primary School



Concerns and complaints Policy

Ratified by the Governing Body on: 18/11/24

Review date: November 2028

Introduction

The majority of issues raised by parents, pupils or the community are concerns rather than complaints. The school is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. The primary aim of the school's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible.

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints;

This Complaints Policy has three main stages;

- **Stage 1** – A concern is raised informally with a staff member or Headteacher
- **Stage 2** – Formal complaint is heard by Chair of Governors
- **Stage 3** – Complaint is heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel.

Who can raise a concern or make a complaint?

This policy is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to St Michael's Primary School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this policy.

Stage 1: Raising a concern

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will usually result in a speedy response, which will resolve the concern. The school requests that parents make their first contact with class teacher or head teacher. Sometimes the concern raised will require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an initial response within a day or two and, if required, a subsequent substantive response.

Because we consider that it is important to address problems in a timely manner, you must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will only consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 1, please write to the Chair of Governors within 10 days as set out below.

Note: Concerns or complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this policy. If appropriate, complainants will be advised that any staff conduct concerns or complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

If you wish to make a formal complaint, please write to the Chair of Governors stating that you wish to make a formal complaint. Your letter should state details of the complaint and the outcome that you are seeking. The Chair will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and will then investigate the complaint with the school.

The investigation will be undertaken by the chair or a person appointed by the chair and acting on the chair's behalf. The nature of investigation will vary according to the complaint but may involve:

- Establishing **what** has happened so far, and **who** has been involved;
- clarifying the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- meeting with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary);
- clarifying what the complainant feels would put things right;
- interviewing those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- conducting the investigation with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keeping notes of the interview.

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- The chair will write to the complainant following the investigation and will outline her / his findings.

If you remain dissatisfied you will need to let the school know within 10 school working days of receiving the chair's findings on the complaint. Your complaint will then be considered by a panel of governors.

Stage 3 – Formal Complaint

The final stage will involve a panel of Governors, the Governors appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process. The aim of the appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. The hearing will normally take place within 10 school working days of the receipt of the written request.

The governing body will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 3 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed. If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

The committee will not review any new concerns or complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New concerns must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and the school with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 15 school days. The Governors appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.

If you believe that the Governing Body has acted unreasonably or has failed to carry out its statutory duties you may take your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education. The Secretary of State must be satisfied that a decision is unreasonable in the sense that no reasonable authority, acting with due regard to its statutory responsibilities, would have reached that decision.

Raising a concern or making a 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 procedure.

Concerns about school staff (except the headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to the Headteacher.

Concerns that involve or are about the headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, in writing via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Concerns about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body, in writing via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Anonymous concerns and complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous concerns or complaints. However, the headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Concerns or complaints received outside of term time

We will consider concerns or complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Scope of this policy

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by St Michael's Primary School, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
- Admissions to schools - Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs - School re-organisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Walsall Local Authority.
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions .
Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus. Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
National Curriculum content	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against St Michael's in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.