



*“Christ’s ministry, as recounted in the Gospels, and the values he promoted through his teachings are fundamental to the life of our school in fulfilling its purpose as a Catholic institution.” (Mission Statement)*

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **Introduction**

We want to work in partnership with you and we value the vital role parents play in our successful and happy school. Please tell us your concerns as soon as possible. It is difficult to investigate properly any incident or problem which has happened some time ago. Most concerns can be resolved informally. Where matters remain unresolved the law requires all schools to have a complaints procedure. Here is how parents/carers of pupils attending St Aidan’s School follow up a complaint.

### **Stage One: Informal Process**

#### **Your Concern is heard by a member of Staff**

Often your concern or complaint can be sorted out quickly. Please discuss the matter with your child’s class teacher. It is usually best to discuss the problem face to face. You will need to make an appointment to do this by ringing the school or calling in at the school office. We will seek to find a way of resolving the issue in a mutually satisfactory way and so avoid proceeding with a formal stage.

### **Stage Two: Formal Complaint**

#### **Complaint heard by the Assistant Head / Deputy Head**

If you remain unhappy with the response you receive you should make an appointment to meet the Assistant or Deputy Head to share your concern. Your complaint will be recorded when it is received and you will be required to submit it in writing.

(If your complaint is about the Assistant or Deputy Head you should contact the Head, if it is about the Head Teacher you should contact the Chair of governors, to make the Stage Two arrangements.)

The designated person will meet you at a mutually convenient time to discuss the complaint. You may bring a friend with you to this meeting. Your complaint will be investigated and you will then receive a written response to your complaint within 28 school days of the receipt of your formal complaint. If it is a particularly complex issue which requires more time to resolve fully, you will be kept informed of progress. In most instances the complaint will be resolved at this stage.

## **Stage Three: Final Appeal**

### **Review by the Governing Body's Complaint Appeals Panel**

If you remain dissatisfied, you should write to the Clerk to the Governors. You must do so within fourteen calendar days of the date of the written response dealing with the matter. You must give details of the complaint, the reason why you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage Two, and what you would like to see happen. New issues cannot be introduced at Stage Three.

The Clerk will arrange a meeting of the Complaint Appeals Panel within twenty school days of your letter to the Clerk, to review the written information and any written submissions. The members of the Panel will have had no prior dealing with your complaint. You will receive the Panel's written decision within twenty school days of the meeting. The decision of this Panel is final.

In exceptional circumstances the Panel may decide to hold a hearing. If this is the case, the Clerk will send you details of the procedure, and you may bring a friend with you to the hearing.

### ***How can a complaint be raised?***

#### ***A complaint may be made:***

- *in person, by telephone or in writing*
- *by a third party acting on behalf of the complainant (The school will need written consent from the complainant that the 3<sup>rd</sup> party is entitled to act on their behalf)*

Complaints can be made in writing. However, complainants may have communication preferences due to:

- disability
- learning difficulties
- difficulties using English

If this is the case the complaints process can be modified. Please speak to the clerk to the governing body in the first instance to discuss this. The school office can arrange this for you.

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

Complaints are not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Anyone can make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that the school provides, unless separate statutory procedures apply (such as exclusions or admissions). This includes:

- parents or carers of children no longer at the school
- members of the public'

### **Note**

This complaints procedure does not apply to issues where the law has made other provision, e.g. the curriculum and collective worship, staffing issues, school admissions or SEN assessments; nor does it apply when a pupil has left the school.

Note also that urgent or serious matters can be referred straight to the Head by members of staff, or to the Governors by the Head.

### **The Secretary of State**

Complaints can be taken to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills under Section 496 of the Education Act 1996, on the grounds that a Governing Body or Local Authority is acting or proposing to act unreasonably, or under Section 497 of the same Act, on the grounds that either the Governing Body or the LA has failed to discharge its duties under the Act. The Secretary of State may contact the Governing Body or the LA for more information in order to consider the complaint. You are advised to contact a solicitor or seek independent advice before taking this step.

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