

Complaints Policy



Christ Church C of E Primary School

At Christ Church Primary School, we strive to communicate effectively with parents and to resolve any issues quickly and efficiently. We would always encourage parents to come in and speak directly to the teacher, or the head teacher as soon as an issue arises. Our complaints policy is in place for those rare occasions when discussion has not yielded results.

1) CHRIST CHURCH SCHOOL SCHOOL COMPLAINTS POLICY

1a) General Principles:

- This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the services that it provides
- An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances
- To allow for a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, the school will not consider any complaint that was raised more than 3 months after the event

1b) Raising a concern or complaint

Informal Stage

It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage.

In the case of serious concerns, it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Head Teacher (or to the Chair of the Governing Body, if the complaint is about the Head Teacher).

If you are uncertain about whom to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the Governing Body. There are exceptions to the complaints concerns covered in these documents and how to deal with them, for these please see appendix 2.

Formal Stage

If your concern is not resolved at the informal stage you must put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Head Teacher, (or to the Clerk to the Governing Body, for the attention of the Chair, if the complaint is about the Head Teacher) who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. A Complaint Form is provided to help you (Appendix 3).

You should include details that might help the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents.

It is very important that you include a clear statement about what you hope might reasonably contribute to a resolution of the problem at this stage. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.

Please pass the completed form, in a sealed envelope to the Head teacher or to the Clerk to the Governing Body, as appropriate. If the concern is about a governor or the Chair of governors, then you should put your concern in writing and pass it on to the Clerk of the Governing Body.

The Head Teacher (or Chair) may invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint and to seek a resolution. If you accept that invitation, a friend may accompany you if you wish to help you in explaining the nature of your complaint.

It is possible that your complaint will be resolved through a meeting with the Head Teacher (or Chair). If not arrangements will be made for the matter to be referred to the Chair of Governors. In any case, you should learn in writing, usually within 5 days of the school receiving your formal complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. This notification should include an indication of the anticipated timescale.

The Chair of Governors may invite you to a further meeting to discuss your complaint and to seek a resolution. Again, if you accept that invitation, a friend may accompany you to help you explain the nature of your complaint. In any case, you should learn in writing, usually within 5 working days of the Chair of Governors receiving your formal complaint, of the outcome.

If you are not satisfied with the way in which the process has been followed, you can request that the governing body reviews the process followed by the school in handling the complaint. You must make this request in writing to the clerk to the governing body, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure. The procedure described below will be followed. A Review Request form is provided for your convenience.

1c) Review Process

A panel of three members of the governing body will conduct any review of the process followed by the school. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of your request.

The governors on the review panel will normally consider written submissions, but will sympathetically consider any reasonable requests to make oral representations.

The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant of perceived failures to follow the procedure.

The panel will then invite representatives of the school (Usually the Head Teacher or the Chair of the Governing Body panel that has considered the matter), as appropriate, to make a response to the complaint.

The panel may also have access to the records kept of the process followed.

You, and the school representatives, will be informed in writing of the outcome, usually within 5 school days of the panel meeting.

The matter will then be closed as far as the school is concerned. If complaints continue then please see Appendix 1 and 4 for details of the next steps.

If you believe that the Governing Body has acted illegally or arbitrarily in handling the complaint, then you may make representations to the Secretary of State for Education.

2) Useful addresses

2a) DFE – (advice and training for governors)

Department for Education
School Complaints Unit 2nd Floor,
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
Telephone: 0370 000 2288
Web address: <http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus>

2b) Ofsted

Enquiries
National Business Unit
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA
Telephone: 08456 404045

2c) The Secretary of State

Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT
Telephone: 0870 000 2288

Appendix 1

Policy for Unreasonable Complainants

Christ Church C of E Primary School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Christ Church C of E Primary School defines unreasonable complainants as *'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'*.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:-

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure (see main document);
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:-

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact <...School> causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from Christ Church C of E Primary School.

Appendix 2

<u>Exceptions</u>	<u>Who to contact</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admissions to schools• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)• School re-organisation proposals• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	<p>Concerns should be raised direct with local authorities (LA). For school admissions, it will depend on who is the admission authority (either the school or the LA). Complaints about admission appeals for maintained schools are dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exclusion of children from school	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whistleblowing	<p>Schools have an internal whistleblowing procedure for their employees and voluntary staff. Other concerns can be raised direct with Ofsted by telephone on: 0300 123 3155, via email at: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or by writing to: WBHL, Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD. The Department for Education is also a prescribed body for whistleblowing in education.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures	<p>These matters will invoke the school's internal grievance procedures. Complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities.	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. They should be contacted direct.</p>

Appendix 3

CHRIST CHURCH C. OF E. PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHALFORD



School Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to Head Teacher (or Clerk to the Governing Body), who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:	
Your address:	
Daytime telephone number:	
Evening telephone number:	
Relationship with school eg parent of a child on the school's roll	
Child's name (if relevant to your complaint):	
<p>Please give concise details of your complaint, (including dates, names of witnesses etc), to allow the matter to be fully investigated: You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.</p>	

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Number of additional pages attached :

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (ie whom have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)

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What do you hope might reasonably contribute to a resolution of the problem at this stage?

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Signature:

Date:

School use:

Received by:

Date

Acknowledgement sent by:		Date	
Complaint referred to:			
Name		Date	
Name		Date	
Name		Date	

CHRIST CHURCH C. OF E. PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHALFORD



Please complete this form and return it to Head Teacher (or Clerk to the Governing body), who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:	
Your address:	
Daytime telephone number:	
Evening telephone number:	

Dear Sir/Madam

I submitted a formal complaint to the school on

Date:

My complaint was submitted to

Name:

And I received a response form

Name:

On

Date:

I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the responses from the school.

I am dissatisfied with the way in which the procedure was carried out because:

You may continue to separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of additional pages attached:

What do you hope might reasonably contribute to a resolution of the problem at this stage?
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Signature:

Date:

School use:			
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Received by:		Date	
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Acknowledgement sent by:		Date	
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Complaint referred to:			
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Name		Date	
Name		Date	
Name		Date	