St Joseph's RC Primary

Complaints Policy & Procedure

November 2026

ST JOSEPH'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

WHOLE-SCHOOL COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

Clear, Transparent & Accessible Guidance for Parents, Carers, Pupils, Staff & Governors
Updated: November 2026 (Pending Governor adoption spring term 2027) | Next Review: September 2028

Our Commitment & Purpose:
St Joseph's RC Primary is committed to dealing effectively, fairly, and promptly with all concerns and complaints. We welcome feedback as an opportunity to clarify issues, resolve misunderstandings, put right any mistakes, and continuously improve. We maintain a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment, promoting respectful, collaborative relationships across our entire school community.

1. Scope & Definitions: When to Use This Policy

1.1 Definition of a Complaint: A complaint is defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to the school, any member of its staff, or the governing body that requires a response from the school.'

1.2 Scope of Policy: This policy applies to concerns or complaints raised by parents, carers, pupils, or members of the public regarding school provision, teaching, pupil welfare, or administrative procedures.

1.3 Exclusions & Alternative Statutory Procedures: Certain matters fall outside the remit of this policy because they are governed by specific statutory procedures. If your concern relates to any of the following, the school will direct you immediately to the appropriate process:

- **Child Protection & Safeguarding:** Handled under the School Child Protection Policy and statutory safeguarding guidelines.
- **School Admissions & Appeals:** Managed via the Local Authority / Diocesan Statutory Admissions Appeal Framework.
- **Special Educational Needs (ALN/ALNCo):** Handled through statutory ALN Framework reviews and tribunal processes.
- **Staff Grievance, Conduct or Discipline:** Managed internally under statutory School Personnel & Disciplinary Policies.
- **External Services / Premises Hire:** Complaints regarding third-party providers using school facilities must be directed to the provider directly.

1.4 Joint Complaints: If a complaint involves both the school and another body (such as the Local Authority or Diocesan Authority), the school will work collaboratively with the external body to agree a unified investigation process and response timeline.

2. Core Operating Principles & Rights

2.1 Fairness & Transparency: All concerns and complaints will be considered in an open, unbiased, and fair manner.

2.2 Confidentiality: Details of complaints will be kept strictly confidential among those directly involved in resolving the issue.

2.3 Support & Accompaniment: Complainants have the right to be accompanied by a companion or relative at any meeting. Complainants are expected to speak for themselves unless special assistance or advocacy is required.

2.4 Pupil Voice & Support (Under 16s): Pupils raising concerns may speak to their class teacher, or School Council representative. Before involving parents/carers of a pupil under 16 who raises a concern, the school will seek the pupil's permission. If a pupil under 16 is involved in a complaint investigation, parents/carers will be invited to attend.

2.5 Mutual Respect & Behavior: Complainants, staff, and governors are entitled to a safe, respectful environment. Aggressive, abusive, or unreasonable behavior, as well as vexatious or persistently repetitive complaints, will not be tolerated and will be managed under the School Unacceptable Behavior & Vexatious Complaints Policy.

2.6 Anonymous Complaints: Anonymous complaints will be logged and recorded, but full investigation remains at the Headteacher's discretion based on the nature and severity of the issue raised.

3. The 3-Stage Resolution Framework at a Glance

To ensure complete clarity, the table below summarizes the three resolution stages, responsible leaders, strict submission deadlines, and target response timeframes.

Stage	Focus & Description	Lead Person	Timeframe to Submit	Target Response / Outcome
Stage A (Informal)	Informal resolution through open discussion, clarifying facts, and swift problem-solving.	Class Teacher / Headteacher	Within 10 school days of incident	Initial response within 10 school days
Stage B (Formal)	Formal written complaint & thorough internal investigation if Stage A is unresolved.	Headteacher (or Chair of Govs if about HT)	Within 5 school days of Stage A outcome	Meeting within 10 school days; written outcome within 10 days of completion
Stage C (Governing Body Panel)	Formal hearing before an independent Governing Body Complaints Panel if Stage B is unresolved.	Governing Body Complaints Committee	Within 5 school days of Stage B outcome	Panel meeting within 15 school days; final outcome letter within 10 days of meeting

4. Step-by-Step Stage Guidance

Stage A: Informal Resolution (Concern)

• **Submission Window:** Concerns should be raised as soon as possible, normally within **10 school days** of the incident occurring.
• **How to Raise:** Speak directly or contact the class teacher or Headteacher. Pupils may speak to their class teacher or School Council representative.
• **Process & Outcome:** The school will discuss the matter with you, investigate the circumstances, and inform you of the outcome within **10 school days**. If a delay occurs, a revised timeframe will be agreed with you. A brief log of the concern is retained by the school.

Stage B: Formal Investigation (Headteacher / Chair of Governors)

• **Trigger & Deadline:** If you feel your concern was not resolved at Stage A, you should submit a formal complaint in writing within **5 school days** of receiving the Stage A response.
• **Addressee:** Addressed to the Headteacher. (If the complaint concerns the Headteacher, address it directly to the Chair of Governors via the school address).
• **Writing Support:** If you require assistance putting your complaint in writing, the Headteacher or school office will assist you.
• **Meeting & Outcome:** The Headteacher/Chair will invite you to a formal meeting (normally within **10 school days** of receiving your letter) to discuss your concerns. Following investigation, a written outcome letter detailing findings and actions will be issued within **10 school days** of completion.

Stage C: Governing Body Complaints Panel

• **Trigger & Deadline:** If you remain dissatisfied with the Stage B outcome, you must write to the Chair of Governors (via the school address) within **5 school days** requesting a Complaints Committee review. You do not need to rewrite your entire complaint; state clearly why you feel Stage B was unsatisfactory and what outcome you seek. (Oral transcription support is available if required).
• **Panel Hearing:** The Clerk to Governors will convene an independent panel meeting normally within **15 school days** of receiving your request. All documentation will be shared with all parties in advance.
• **Rescheduling Rule:** To ensure timely resolution, the panel meeting will not be rescheduled more than once. If a complainant asks to reschedule more than once, the committee may decide the complaint in their absence based on written evidence.
• **Final Decision:** A formal outcome letter will be sent within **10 school days** of the meeting. The Governing Body Complaints Panel is the final internal arbiter.

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5. Special Circumstances & Complaint Routing Matrix

When a complaint involves senior leaders or members of the Governing Body, specific routing rules apply to ensure impartial handling:

Subject of Complaint	Referred To / Investigated By	Procedure Applied
Individual Teacher / Staff Member	Headteacher	Stage A -> Stage B -> Stage C
Headteacher	Chair of Governors	Directly Stage B -> Stage C
Individual Governor	Chair of Governors (or delegated Governor)	Directly Stage B -> Stage C
Chair of Governors OR Headteacher & Chair	Vice Chair of Governors	Directly Stage B -> Stage C
Both Chair & Vice Chair of Governors	Clerk to Governors -> Chair of Complaints Committee	Directly Stage C
Whole Governing Body	Clerk to Governors -> Local Authority & Diocesan Authority	Independent External Investigation

6. External Advice, Advocacy & External Escalation

6.1 Support for Children & Young People: Children and young people raising concerns can access free, independent advocacy and advice from:

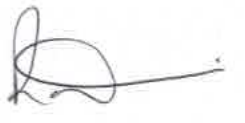
- **MEIC:** National Advocacy and Advice Helpline for Children and Young People in Wales (Freephone: 0808 802 3456 | Text: 84001).
- **Children's Commissioner for Wales:** Provides independent advice and support for children regarding their rights and concerns (www.childcomwales.org.uk).

6.2 External Escalation (Post-Stage C): The Governing Body Complaints Committee is the final internal arbiter. If a complainant believes that the school or governing body has acted unreasonably or failed to comply with statutory duties, they may contact external bodies once internal procedures are exhausted:

- **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales:** Investigates complaints of maladministration or service failure by public bodies in Wales.
- **Estyn (His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales):** Inspects educational quality and standards. (Note: Estyn does not normally investigate individual disputes, but monitors systemic compliance).

- **Welsh Government / Local Authority:** For matters involving breach of statutory duties or education regulations.

Policy Approval & Governance Sign-off: Shared with Governors on 4th November 2026
Date Approved by Governing Body: Pending Formal Governing Body adoption Spring Term 2027 (Updated November 2026).

Signed (Chair of Governors):  (Mr. R Davies)

Signed (Headteacher):  **(**Mr. J McMorrow)

Scheduled Policy Review Date: September 2028

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