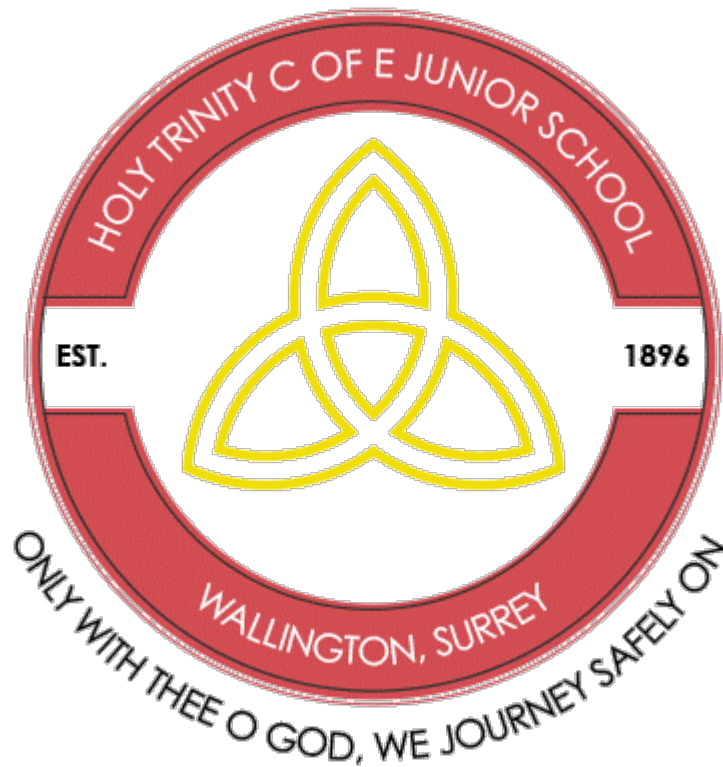


Holy Trinity CofE Junior School



Policy for:

Written by:

Date Adopted:

Review Date:

Complaints Procedure

**DFE Model Policy Au19, with
additions pertinent to the school.**

(2)

03/12/2019

Autumn 2022

Holy Trinity Church of England Junior School, Wallington Complaints Procedure

Motto	Only with Thee, O God, we journey safely on
Vision	Exemplary education for all, through God's amazing grace.
<u>4 year Vision target:</u>	By the end of July 2023: attainment and progress will remain above or within the national average; children will retain their knowledge securely; children will confidently articulate Christian values, children will be proactive learners and have aspirations for what they can achieve in life; children recognise how to behave towards one another in everyone's best interests; children will know how to be healthy, safe and enjoy life to the full!
<u>Values</u>	Learning, Dignity, Integrity, Confidence, Love
<u>Values statement</u>	Learning together, as we journey with God in Love, we act with Integrity, treat others with Dignity and grow in Confidence.
We Learn:	"Everything was created through Jesus and for him" Colossians 1.16. The sub values are: Curiosity, Wisdom, Teamwork, Hard Work and Failing Well
We Love:	"We love each other because he loved us first" 1 John 4.19. The sub values are: Community, being Non-judgmental, Forgiveness, Compassion and Kindness
We act with Integrity:	"People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" 1 Samuel 16.7. The sub values are: Faithfulness, Generosity, Honesty, Trustworthiness, Self-Control and Responsibility
Each person has Dignity:	Each person has Dignity: "So God created human beings in his own image." Genesis 1.27. The sub values are: Equality, The Whole Person, Every Person, Tolerance and Advocacy
We have Confidence:	We have Confidence: "Blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence." Jeremiah 17:7. The sub values are: Wholeheartedness, Hopefulness, Joy, Humility and Resilience

Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

The partnership between the parent and the school is integral to the ethos and mission of our Church of England school and should be characterised by a mutual respect by which parents feel they are able to bring their concerns to the attention of someone in the school, with the expectation they will be listened to and their concerns addressed.

Not all concerns are complaints. A concern is an issue raised by a parent, pupil or other person that is resolved quickly and informally. Most concerns are resolved by the person to whom the concern is addressed e.g. the class teacher, SENDCo or Behaviour Lead. Every effort should be made to allay concerns at this level and with the least possible formality. The ideal is that no concern should ever become a formal complaint. Occasionally, however, a concern will be too serious to be handled in this way, perhaps needing greater investigation; or the person concerned may not feel that the answers given so far have been acceptable or adequate. In such circumstances the concern will become a complaint and this document outlines the formal procedure that should be followed in such cases.

This policy is available from the school office and is published on our school website.

2. Aims

The two most important aims of a complaints procedure are

- I. that the person's concerns have been taken seriously and have been addressed in a fair, open and honest way and,
- II. that the resolution reached will enable relationships to be strengthened so that the school and those who use its services can continue to work together. It is important then, that the values of integrity, love, justice and reconciliation underpin the whole process.

3. Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children who are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to the 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 complaints procedure.

4. The difference between a concern and a complaint

A **concern** may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important, for which reassurances are sought'. (DFE)

A **complaint** may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'. (DFE) ***Please see Formal Complaints Process***

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. In our experience, most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Members of the school's Senior Leadership Team may be involved at this stage before a formal complaint is made. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Holy Trinity takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the SLT will refer you to another staff member. The member

of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand, however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Holy Trinity will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

5. How to raise a concern or make a complaint

At Holy Trinity C of E Junior School we endeavour to have two members of staff to meet with any adult raising a concern.

A concern or complaint can be made in person or in writing. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so. Concerns should be raised with either the Class Teacher, SLT or Headteacher. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

Queries or Concerns

The query or concern will be responded to by email or phone call within 2 working days.

This is because staff have teaching commitments, training and a range of other meetings that they have to attend.

Staff wish to provide parents with necessary information; it must be understood that the information may not be available immediately.

Before school

There is a member of SLT at the gate each morning as the school day begins at 8.45a.m. for most.

The purpose of this is to greet the children; gauge if everyone is settled as they come in or provide support for those who may need it.

If there are quick pieces of information to be passed on, i.e. that can be dealt with in under 5 minutes, it is appropriate to do so at this time.

Staff bring children out at the end of the school day.

The main purpose of this is to ensure that the children are given safely to their grown up so that they can go home; class teachers may then return to their classrooms to carry on with their work. Exit starts at 3.25pm and should be finished by 3.35pm at the latest.

Teachers and parents may wish to exchange short pieces of information. ***This may be positive information, or may be a query or may be a concern. This should take no more than five minutes.***

If the concern or discussion is to take longer, then

- a) The teacher will:
Request a mutually agreeable time to meet with the adult

- b) The parent will:

Request a meeting with the teacher, where the teacher will check availability and ask the office to support in liaising to make this happen, or send an email to the school office, clarifying the query in a respectful manner. (Office at Holy Trinity C of E Junior School: office@holytrinityjuniorwallington.com)

The query or request to meet will be responded to by email or phone call within 48 hours.

This is because staff have teaching commitments, training and a range of other meetings that they have to attend. Staff wish to provide parents with necessary information; it must be understood that the information may not be available immediately.

NB It is not acceptable for ANY heated discussion to take place in the playground. Emotional responses may be understandable but concerns should be dealt with in a calm and respectful manner.

If there is a concern from school over a child's behaviour or wellbeing, e.g. query regarding a consequence that a child has received, or a concern with one child's behaviour towards another, then, within the confines of the behaviour policy (i.e. a letter home for a 20 min RR, a phone call to parents if a child has been hurt, a phone call to parents if there is a concern re. bullying, inequality or safeguarding, including attendance, then :

- The Behaviour Lead will contact the parent to discuss the concern.

- The designated safeguarding lead or one of the deputy safeguarding leads will contact the parent to discuss the concern.

If there is a concern *from an adult over a child's behaviour*, e.g. query regarding a consequence that a child has received, or a concern with one child's behaviour towards another, then:

- The parent should address their query to the most appropriate member of staff via a concise query given to the office staff in person, on the phone, or an email to the school office which can be passed to the member of staff.

NB for time in RR of less than 20 minutes, the reasons for this are detailed in the behaviour policy.

Complaints

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.

Complaints against school staff (except the Headteacher) should be made, in the first instance, to Mrs Gruffydd (the Headteacher) via the School Office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, Mr Martin Hayward, via the School Office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole Governing Board should be addressed to the Clerk of the Governing Board, Ms Vanessa Skinner, via the School Office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template Complaint Form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the School Office. You can also ask third party organisations, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, to help you.

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.

6. Anonymous complaints

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

7. Time scales

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 consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

8. Complaints received outside of term time

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

9. Scope of this complaint procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Holy Trinity C of E Junior 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 the London Borough of Sutton
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>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). To make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), please email a LADO Referral Form to LADO@sutton.go.uk</p> <p>Current LADO Contact Details: Sima Hirani, London Borough of Sutton, Peoples Directorate, Civic Offices, St Nicholas Way, Sutton, SM1 1EA Tel: 020 8770 4776</p> <p>For urgent child protection matters requiring immediate attention, contact the Sutton MASH team. See our safeguarding policy for further details.</p>
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> <p>*complaints about the application of the Behaviour Policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</p>
Whistleblowing	<p>We have an internal Whistleblowing Procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus.</p> <p>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, depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>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.</p>
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 their 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 Holy Trinity C of E Junior School, 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.

10. Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Holy Trinity wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology

11. Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

12. The formal complaints process

Stage 1: Formal Complaint

Formal complaints must be made to the Headteacher (unless they are about the Headteacher), via the School Office. This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form), or via email.

The Headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 3 school days.

Within this response, the Headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Headteacher will consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Note: The Headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's Senior Leadership Team, but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, the Headteacher (or investigator) will:

- If necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish.
- Keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to the investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Headteacher will provide a formal written response within 15 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint. If the Headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Holy Trinity will take to resolve the complaint.

The Headteacher will advise the complainant on how to escalate their complaint, should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or a member of the Governing Board (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1.

Complaints about the Headteacher or member of the Governing Board must be made to the Clerk, via the School Office.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire Governing Board or
- the majority of the Governing Board

Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the Governing Board or a member of the Southwark Diocese Board. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

Stage 2. Governing Board.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 – a meeting with members of the Governing Board's Complaints Committee, which will be formed of the first three impartial governors available.

This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Clerk, via the School Office, within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 1 response.

The Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Clerk 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 2 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 Complaints Committee will consist of at least three governors, with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee. If there are fewer than three governors from Holy Trinity available, the Clerk will source any additional, independent governors through another local school or through their LA's Governor Services team, in order to make up the committee. Alternatively, an entirely independent committee may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 2.

The Committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate. If you wish to be accompanied by anyone, as stated above, then you are required to notify the school of who will be accompanying you in advance of the meeting, giving at least 24 hours' notice. Any persons accompanying the complainant to a meeting will be required to provide identification documents (ID). The complainant should also notify the school who is attending the meeting with them and in what capacity. Also, the complainant or a companion must obtain prior consent if they or a companion wish to take notes during a meeting. The school inventory will record those attending the meeting.

For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 5 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 3 school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 1 school day before the date of the meeting. The Committee will not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The Committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints 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 permitted unless a complainant's own registered 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 10 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education, if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Holy Trinity.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire Governing Board or
- the majority of the Governing Board

Stage 2 will be heard by a committee of independent governors.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Holy Trinity will take to resolve the complaint.

The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

13. Next steps

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Holy Trinity. They will consider whether Holy Trinity has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

14. Roles and responsibilities

Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- ask for assistance as needed
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on all forms of media, including social media and respect confidentiality.

Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
- interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
- consideration of records and other relevant information
- analysing information
- liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely, pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond
- prepare a comprehensive report for the Headteacher or Complaints Committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems. The Headteacher or Complaints Committee will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

Clerk to the Governing Board

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the committee and should:

- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example; stage 1 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale
- record the proceedings
- circulate the minutes of the meeting
- notify all parties of the committee's decision.

Committee Chair

The Committee's Chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- both parties are asked (via the Clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
- the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person
- the remit of the committee is explained to the complainant
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR.
- If a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting
- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- the Committee is open-minded and acts independently
- no member of the Committee has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- the meeting is minuted
- they liaise with the Clerk (and complaints co-ordinator, if the school has one).

Committee Member

Committee members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so
- no governor may sit on the Committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant
- we recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.
- many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting
- parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.
- extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting
- careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated.

- the Committee should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.
- if the child/young person is the complainant, the Committee should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the Committee should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend.
- however, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the committee considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.
- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

15. Monitoring and review

15.1 The Governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher logs all stage 1 complaints received by the school, and records how they were resolved and will share this at Governors' Meetings.

15.2 Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this Policy. This Policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

15.3 All SLT members will be fully aware of procedures and trained accordingly and are involved in reviewing the Policy. All staff to be aware that a member of the SLT will handle all formal complaints. This Policy is reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

16. Persistent/unreasonable complaints

Holy Trinity C of E Junior 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.

The 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'*.

Behaviours can be categorised as persistent or unreliable or both. A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable or persistent when the person making the complaint: -

- Acts in an obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious way.
- Engages in prolific correspondence or excessive e-mails or telephone contact about a concern or complaint.
- Insists upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes including a refusal 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.
- Insists upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner for example making 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.
- Repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed).
- 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.
- 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.

For the purpose of this Policy, harassment is the unreasonable pursuit of such actions listed above if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone, in writing- including electronically or using social media or networking sites, including but not limited to petitions and all social coms apps, including WhatsApp groups which:

- appear to be targeted over a significant period of time on one or more members of school staff;
- cause on-going distress to individual member(s) of school staff;
- have a significant adverse effect on the whole/parts of the school community.
- are pursued maliciously and/or aggressively.
- use threats, intimidation or violence.
- use abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or tone;
- are known to be false;
- use falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as the press, including newspapers.

Actions or behaviour that fall into any of the categories described above, or any other harassing or persistently unreasonable behaviour, may render an individual liable to become subject to the school's Persistent Complaints and Harassment Policy.

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 Holy Trinity causing a significant level of disruption, we will apply the school's Persistent Complaints and Harassment Policy.

School Complaints Procedure

In line with the school's policy on complaints, please complete the form and return to the Headteacher/Chair of Governors, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Date	Pupil's name
Name and relationship to the Pupil	Contact address
	Telephone
	E-mail

Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (who did you speak to and what was the response?)

What actions do you feel may resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature: _____ Date _____

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: