

# **ST VINCENT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**



## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

**Policy Date: September 2024**  
**Review Date: September 2026**

## **Mission Statement**

### **Caritas Christi Urget Nos**

***The love of Christ urges us to care for each other and strive for excellence in everything we do.***

### **Aims**

At St. Vincent's School we aim to address parental complaints quickly and efficiently. We believe that a climate of honesty, transparency and partnership between the school and parents is essential. This policy applies throughout the school. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach and we aim to bring all concerns about the setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved. We also aim to develop and sustain good relationships between all members of the community throughout the complaints procedure and to establish a renewed commitment to work together amicably. All correspondence, statements and records relating to a complaint are strictly confidential.

All providers must investigate written complaints relating to their fulfilment of the EYFS requirements and notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.

Throughout the complaints process the school endeavours:

- To listen to the complainant
- To learn
- To admit mistakes when appropriate
- To apologise if appropriate
- To address the issues raised
- To change school practice if appropriate

### **Responsibilities**

In using this procedure:

- Staff are asked to be aware that complainants may feel intimidated by the school as an institution and unsure whether they will be treated fairly
- Complainants are asked to be aware that those complained about, especially individual members of staff, may feel very vulnerable during this process.

Although we aim to address complaints via our school procedure, parents should be aware that they are at any time entitled to take complaints to OFSTED at: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

This complaints procedure **does not** apply to:

- Members of staff (who should use the staff grievance procedure)

- Procedures with their own appeal structures e.g: Admissions and Exclusions
- Concerns about the delivery of the National Curriculum

## **Method for Making a Complaint**

### **Stage 1: Informal Complaint and Resolution**

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. Anyone who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over, first of all, his/her worries and anxieties with the relevant member of staff. The teacher/s involved in the initial stage of resolution may be accompanied by a Senior Leader should a meeting be held with the complainant. In the event that the Head Teacher is involved with the complaint in any way, the complaint should be directed to the Chair of Governors. The member/s of staff hearing the complaint should make a note of the concerns raised and the resolution/ suggestions for resolution.

Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Should the matter not be resolved within one week or in the event that the relevant staff member or Head Teacher fails to reach a satisfactory resolution then the complainant will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

### **Stage 2: Formal Complaint**

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the complainant should put their complaint in writing to the Head Teacher, who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases, the Head Teacher will meet the parties concerned, normally within five working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the Head Teacher to carry out further investigations. The Head Teacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Head Teacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the complainant will be informed of this decision and reasons for the decision made, in writing.

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

### **Stage 3: Panel Hearing**

If a complainant seeks to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be invited to a hearing.

An external Panel will be invited to help settle the complaint. The Panel has no legal powers but can help to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.

The Panel will consist of at least three people who **have not** been directly involved with the matter detailed in the complaint, including the Chair of Governors and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school.

The Panel will schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen days of the referral.

If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties no later than seven days prior to the hearing.

The complainant may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

The panel keeps all discussion confidential. The panel can hold separate meetings with the setting personnel, if this is decided to be helpful. The Panel keeps an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice the panel gives.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it can be carried out.

After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within fourteen days of the hearing. The panel will write to the complainant, informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be **final**. The Panel's findings and recommendations will be sent in writing to the complainant, the Head Teacher and where relevant, the subject of the complaint.

### **Record Keeping**

Complainants can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be

kept confidential except as far as is required of the school in the course of the school’s inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT**

In making decisions about complaints, all staff will take into account any special educational needs, disabilities, gender, and cultural differences that may be relevant to the case and complaint.

**Monitoring and Evaluation of this policy**

The Curriculum Committee will, in consultation with the Head teacher/Deputy Head teacher monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy. It will be reviewed at least every 2 years to ensure it reflects current practice.

Member of staff with Responsibility for this policy:	Lead Marie Tuohy
Date of Policy:	September 2024
Date for Review:	September 2026

**Time Frames**

