



CHEW STOKE CHURCH SCHOOL

Complaints Policy

This policy is written with reference to the Christian Foundation of the school.

'Confident in Learning, Caring in Life'

Our vision has been inspired by Luke 10:27

This policy should be taken and used as part of Chew Stoke Church School's overall strategy and implemented within the context of our aims and values as a Church of England School.

Introduction

Our School aims to work in partnership with parents and the community in the best interests of the children. Any complaint will be given careful consideration and will be dealt with fairly and honestly.

We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and aim to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

Actions before making any complaint

This complaints procedure is not intended to replace the normal informal discussions that take place between parents/carers, staff and the Headteacher about problems and concerns as they arise. Most issues can and should be resolved through this dialogue. These concerns might include such matters as your child's work or progress, relations with staff, relations with other pupils including bullying, or your child's personal welfare.

The first point of contact regarding concerns should always be the class teacher. Appointments to see the class teacher are available and can be made by contacting the school office.

When meeting with the teacher to raise your concerns please be patient, the teacher may need time to perform an investigation or put corrective measures in place and then determine their effectiveness. This informal stage may require several discussions to reach a conclusion satisfactory to all parties.

If you feel that a concern has not been resolved through discussions with the teacher or that it is of a sufficiently serious nature, then an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher should be made. You should indicate that the appointment is regarding a complaint.

This policy does not cover complaints procedures relating to:

- Admissions
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- Safeguarding matters

- Exclusion
- Whistle-blowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline

Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaint.

General principles regarding any complaint

The following principles will apply to any complaint:

- The complaint will be handled with care and sensitivity.
- Confidentiality will be respected at all times
- Responses to any complaint will be prompt (timescale guidelines are detailed below)
- We will remain in communication with you during the investigation and you will be kept informed of timescales
- The handling of the complaint will be thorough and fair and address all the points at issue

Individual governors cannot act unilaterally by investigating a complaint or making any prior judgement about it. The governor can only refer you to the teacher, the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors as appropriate and in accordance with this policy.

It is important that the steps are followed in the complaints procedure. The Local Authority is unable to deal with complaints under the remit of this procedure and if there is escalation to the Educational Funding Agency before the formal school procedures have been exhausted it will result in you being referred back to the school's procedure.

Timescale Guidelines

Where it is not possible to respond to a complaint within the expected guidelines you will be informed in writing of the reason for the delay and given an anticipated response date.

Stage 1 - Informal

Your concerns/complaint should be directed to the class teacher unless they or the Headteacher are the subject of your complaint. If your complaint is regarding the class teacher then this should be directed to the Headteacher. If your complaint is regarding the Headteacher then this should be directed to the Chair of Governors.

The school will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that the provision or clarification of information will resolve the issue.

The complainant should raise the complaint as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff or the Headteacher, either in person or by letter, telephone or email. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the school office.

The informal stage will involve a meeting between the complainant and the class teacher and/or Headteacher. ***Consideration of the issues should normally take two weeks.***

Stage 2 - Formal

If your complaint has not been solved through informal discussion, or is considered to be of a sufficiently serious nature, then it will be investigated through the formal stage of the policy i.e. Stage 2. This will either involve:

- (a) Investigation by the Headteacher (where the Headteacher is not part of or subject of the complaint). OR
- (b) Investigation by Governors (where the Headteacher is part of or subject of the complaint) i.e. Where the complaint involves the Head then the complaint can be referred to the Chair of Governors who will make the decision whether it should be investigated by two governors at this stage. Where the complaint is about a Governor you should submit your complaint to the Chair of Governors; if the complaint is about the Chair of Governors then you should submit your complaint to the Clerk to the Governors.

You should set out your complaint in writing explaining:

- a) The precise nature of the complaint; and
- b) What you consider should be done to resolve the matter.

A form for submitting your complaint is attached to this Policy as *Annex 1*.

When we receive your complaint a letter of acknowledgement will be sent to you within 5 school days. We will arrange to meet with you to explore your complaint and what can be done to resolve your issues. You can be accompanied by a friend at this meeting. Notes will be taken of our discussion and you will receive a copy of these. Care will be taken in identifying an appropriate clerk. This will normally be the Clerk to the Governors, however it may be appropriate for a member of staff such as the school secretary to act in this capacity.

If you require any specific assistance in putting your complaint in writing or when asked to attend any meeting then please inform us so appropriate support can be put in place.

If we are unable to resolve your complaint at an initial meeting with you then the school may carry out an investigation of your complaint.

Please note that it may be necessary to suspend the complaints procedure in respect of a complaint which indicates that there may be a need for a disciplinary investigation in respect of a member of staff or that child protection procedures need to be followed. Advice from the Local Authority will be sought. In such circumstances you will be notified that the complaints procedure has been suspended and the likely timescale for its reactivation.

On completion of this Stage 2 investigation, when all relevant persons have been given the opportunity to give their response, we will send you a formal written outcome.

Consideration and investigation of a complaint at stage 2 should normally take four to six weeks.

Stage 3 (Formal) – Appeal Panel

You should write to the Chair of Governors if you consider your complaint remains unresolved through the earlier stages. You should do so, stating the grounds for your appeal, within 10 school days of receiving the outcome of the investigation at Stage 2.

When a formal complaint is received by the Chair of Governors, a letter of acknowledgement will be sent to you within 5 school days to confirm the appeal process.

An appeal panel will be convened. The panel must consist of at least 3 people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. At least 1 panel member must be independent of the management and running of the school. The panel cannot be made up solely of governing board members, as they are not independent of the management and running of the school. The panel will have access to the existing record of the complaint's progress.

The complainant must have reasonable notice of the date of the review panel; however, the review panel reserves the right to convene at their convenience rather than that of the complainant. At the

review panel meeting, the complainant and representatives from the school, as appropriate, will be present. Each will have an opportunity to set out written or oral submissions prior to the meeting.

The complainant must be allowed to attend the panel hearing and be accompanied if they wish.

At the meeting, each individual will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called, as appropriate, to present their evidence.

The panel, the complainant and the school representative(s) will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions. Once the complainant and school representative(s) have presented their cases, they will be asked to leave and evidence will then be considered.

The primary purpose of the appeal is to understand your continuing concerns and to consider the investigative process carried out at Stage 2 of this policy. Consideration will be given to the rigour and fairness of the process i.e.:

- Were you given the time and opportunity to clarify your complaint and explain the outcome you were looking for?
- Was the complaints policy applied appropriately in relation to your specific complaint?
- Did relevant interviews take place of those individuals involved in events to ensure a thorough understanding of all relevant issues?
- Was there a review of relevant school procedures and correspondence?
- Are conclusions and recommendations reasonable and do they flow from the evidence or facts arising from the investigation?

The panel will be determining one of the following outcomes:

1. Confirmation of the conclusions at Stage 2 on the basis of evidence indicating a full and fair investigation and outcome.
2. Identification of some procedural anomalies but confirmation that the overall conclusion was sound.
3. Identification of significant flaws in the investigation process which might lead to alternative conclusions and proposed remedies.

The decision reached by the panel will be notified in writing to you and other relevant parties. *The timescale for the appeal process is normally two to three weeks from receipt of the appeal.*

Stage 4 Appeal to The Education Funding Agency

If you have followed our complaints policy but still consider your complaint has not been appropriately resolved then you are able to take your complaint to the Educational Funding Agency (EFA). The EFA will consider complaints against academies that meet specific criteria.

Monitoring and review

The Governing Body will review this complaints policy on a regular basis. The School will log all formal complaints received by the school and will record how they were resolved. Governors will examine the complaints log on a regular basis and will consider the need for any changes to the complaints policy or other school procedures.

This policy was approved by the Governing Body in September 2022.

Review date: September 2024

Complaint Form

Personal Details

Your Name	
Pupils Name (if relevant)	
Your Relationship to the Pupil (if relevant)	
Your Address	
Daytime Contact Number	
Evening Contact Number	

Details of the Complaint

Please provide details of your complaint:
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint ? (please detail who you spoke to and what the response was)

Resolution

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

Evidence

If you are attaching any supporting paperwork, please give details:

Signature	
Date	

For Official Use Only:

Date complaint form received	
Date Acknowledgement sent	
By who	
Complaint referred to	



CHEW STOKE CHURCH SCHOOL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE



