The Key Educational Trust

CHRIST CHURCH C.E. FIRST SCHOOL

-Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy-

This is a Trust Policy adopted by all schools

Headteacher: Mrs A Graham
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Policy Agreed: October 2026
Review date: October 2028

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CHRIST CHURCH C.E. FIRST SCHOOL
COMPLIMENTS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

At The Key Educational Trust we are committed to providing a high quality service for all pupils.

We would like to hear from parents if:

- they are pleased with the service we provide and would like to compliment the staff and pupils;
- they have any suggestions about how we can improve the quality of our provision – at school or Trust level
- they have a complaint or concern. All complaints will be taken seriously and given full and proper consideration. Where things go wrong, we always endeavour to resolve concerns wherever possible without the need for a formal written complaint.

Paying a compliment
When things go well, it is helpful if parents express their approval. Maintenance of high levels of staff commitment, morale and motivation are important in ensuring the provision of the best possible education for all pupils.

Parents can express their approval through a telephone call, email, in writing or by speaking personally to staff concerned or the Principal/Headteacher/Head of School or the CEO or the Trust.

Raising a concern - A Guide for Parents and Carers
This document aims to help you in approaching the school when you feel you have a problem.

This process has been developed to enable the school and parents/carers to work together to resolve issues.

Introduction
At Christ Church First School, we make every effort to deal with any problems informally in a prompt and professional manner. The majority of issues raised by pupils, parents/carers or the community are concerns rather than complaints. Christ Church First is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of rectifying the issue wherever possible. It is our hope that by maintaining a good level of communication, the number of formal complaints is kept to a minimum without needing formal procedures. However, there may be times when it has not been possible to resolve a concern informally and you may wish to use the formal complaints procedure. Our procedure is as follows:

What should I do if I have a concern/complaint about the School?
The first step to resolving any concern or complaint is to discuss the issue with the School. It is important to be clear about the issue that you want to discuss before approaching the School.

Although you may want a decision or situation to change, it is best for all parties if the discussions can end on a positive note with no bad feelings. Talking with School staff can help you to understand how they see the situation and give you the chance to say what it looks like to you.

While some schools can see parents who just “pop in”, this is not generally possible. If you have a concern, make an appointment so you have enough time to talk things through. Please be aware that we aim to maintain professionalism and courtesy throughout the process and you may wish to reference the school’s policy on parent and visitor acceptable behaviour which can be found on the school website.

How to Proceed
Our schools’ complaints procedures have 4 in-school stages:

Stage 1 (Informal)
Complaint heard by staff member (although not if they are the subject of the complaint)
Timescale for response: 10 working days from receipt of complaint

Stage 2 (Formal)
Complaint made to Head Teacher (this can be in person but should also be written)
Timescale for response: 10 working days from receipt of complaint

Stage 3
Complaint heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel
Timescale for response: 20 working days from receipt of complaint

Step 4 – The Key Educational Trust
If the parent/carer is not satisfied that their complaint has been considered properly and reasonably by the Local Governing Body, then the matter can be raised with The Key Educational Trust. However, it should be noted that The Key Educational Trust will not, unless circumstances are truly exceptional, overturn a decision of the Local Governing Body. It is important to realise that this is not a general right for any parent who disagrees with the governors’ decision.

Although every effort will be made by the School to comply with the time limits specified under each stage of the procedure, it may not always be possible to do so, for example due to the complexity or number of matters raised, or due to the unavailability of the Complainant to attend a meeting, if offered**. In all cases, where a time limit cannot be complied with, the School will write to the Complainant within the specified time limit, setting out the reasons why the time limit cannot be complied with, and confirming the new time limit which will apply.**

Anonymous Complaint
The School will not investigate anonymous complaints under the procedure in this Complaints Policy. Anonymous complaints will be referred to the Head Teacher who will decide what, if any, action should be taken.

Confidentiality
All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where access is requested by the Secretary of State, a school inspector, or under another legal authority.

Publication
This Complaints Policy has been ratified by the Governing Body and will be reviewed annually. It will be published on the School’s website and provided to parents and pupils on request by the School’s office.

Whom should I contact?
This will depend on the situation. Often the class teacher will be able to deal with the matter. More serious issues will require the Head Teacher. There should always be a discussion in the hope of solving difficulties informally.

Stage 1
In the first instance, contact the school to discuss your problem or complaint; the school office will be able to assist you in making arrangements to see class teachers.

In most cases, your complaint will be dealt with to your satisfaction at this stage without the need to resort to a formal complaint.

What if I am still unhappy with the situation?

Stage 2
If the initial discussions do not resolve your complaint, then you may use Stage 2 of the school's formal complaint procedure by raising your complaint with the Head Teacher. At this point, a meeting will be arranged with the Head Teacher. Before attending the meeting, it would be useful to put down your concerns in writing as both you and the School can spend the meeting time looking for a solution to the problem. Appendix A may help you with this process.

Ask for an appointment with the Headteacher by calling 01785 336545.

It may help to give the School some days/times when you are available to help find the earliest possible appointment for both parties.

What should I expect to happen as a result of the meeting?
After the meeting, the Head Teacher may need to gather further information to inform her decisions and help achieve a resolution. If this is the case, she will write to you outlining how the information gathering will be progressed and giving details of any action to be taken.

What if I feel the Head Teacher has not answered my question or investigated my concern?

Stage 3
If you are still unhappy, you may, if you wish, ask the School's Governing Body to consider your concern/complaint. This is a formal process.

You will need to write to the Chair of Governors via the school, stating that you wish to make a formal complaint. Remember to make it clear what it is that you are complaining about and what you would like the governors to do.

What will happen next?
Normally, a small panel of governors will meet to consider your concern/complaint. The panel should consist of at least three people who have had no prior involvement in the complaint. One panel member must be independent of the management and running of the school. The independent member could be a governor from another school within the Trust but will not be a member of the Board of Trustees.

You will also be invited to meet the panel to present your case in person. You may choose to take somebody along to this meeting for support.

The panel of governors will then review and/or investigate the Head Teacher's handling of/response to your concern/complaint and decide if it was appropriate and fair.

The panel will write to you to explain its decision and, where relevant, the person being complained about.

What do I do if I am still unhappy?
If you are still unhappy, you may appeal to the Multi-Academy Trust Board.

You will need to write to the CEO of the Trust c/o Christ Church Academy stating that you wish your complaint to be reviewed.

What will happen next?
The Trust Board's role is to establish that due process has been carried out when dealing with your complaint. As stated above, The Key Educational Trust will not, unless circumstances are truly exceptional, overturn a decision of the Local Governing Body. It is important to realise that this is not a general right for any parent who disagrees with the governors' decision.

Stage 4 is the last step of the process that is managed within the school or by the school's governing body.

If your problem/complaint remains unresolved after stage 4, then you may raise your complaint with the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency.) This can be done via the schools complaints form, which can be found at:
https://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance/schoolcomplaints-form

This is the final stage of the complaints process.

Notes:

1. This document does not apply where the complaint may lead to disciplinary proceedings against a teacher or child protection procedures. These matters have separate procedures.
2. Whilst it is appreciated that matters may not come to light immediately, the Trust and its schools will be unable to effectively investigate and therefore resolve complaints relating to historical matters.
3. Complainants have a responsibility to act with civility and rationality before, during and after they raise a complaint. The Trust can invoke its Vexatious Complaints Policy in the event that a complainant falls short of these expectations.

Role of the Education and Skills Funding Agency

- The primary responsibility for resolving complaints rests with the Governing Body. (1998 Education Act, Part II, Chapter 3. Para. 39[1]) The Education Funding Agency role in School complaints is to provide advice to all parties
- When The Education Funding Agency receives a general complaint which does not come under one of the areas covered by statutory requirements, nor is obviously concerned with child abuse or staff disciplinary matters, the Complainant will be referred to the School's complaints procedure. The Complainant will be advised to contact the Head Teacher to take the matter further. If the complaint has already involved the Head Teacher but has not achieved a satisfactory resolution from the perspective of the Complainant, the Education Funding Agency officer may seek to resolve issues between the Head Teacher and the Complainant. If this is not possible or successful, the Complainant will be referred to the Chair of Governors. In this situation the Head Teacher will be notified of the referral and details of the complaint
- Education Funding Agency staff will give advice to the Head Teacher, Governors and parents on the use of complaints procedures. For serious or complex complaints this will be through a Senior Education Officer
- Where possible the Education Funding Agency will provide advice and appropriate support to complaints panels of Governing Bodies, including attendance of an officer at meetings to hear complaints

Complaints Regarding the Governing Body

If complaints regarding the Governing Body are received, these should be referred to the Diocese, who will appoint an impartial NLG (National Leader for Governance) or Chair of Governors from another school so the complaint may be dealt with impartially. Complaints regarding individual Governors should initially be dealt with by the Chair of Governors, or the Vice-chair if the complaint is regarding the Chair of Governors, following the procedures as described in the stages above.

Record-Keeping

- A written record of all formal complaints will be kept in line with GDPR, whether they are resolved at formal or panel hearing stage of the complaints procedure.
- The action taken as a result of complaints will be recorded regardless of whether the complaint is upheld.
- All correspondence, records and statements relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State requests access to them or as part of an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Education Act.
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Remember *the whole process exists so that everyone's views can be heard. The aim is that the complaint should be dealt with properly and fairly. Communications with the School are welcome and the latter stages of this complaints procedure are rarely used, but remain part of the process.*

Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body. This policy is due for review in June 2021.

Christ Church C.E. First School

Appendix A: Formal Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return to the school who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken:

Your name:

Pupil name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Pupil's DOB and class:

Address and postcode:

Daytime phone number:

Evening phone number:

Full details of the complaint *(including names of all persons involved and the dates of incidents referred to)*

What action have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? *(For example, who did you speak to and what was the response?)*

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

Are you attaching any paperwork/evidence? If so, please give details:

Signature: Date:

For official use only

Date of acknowledgement:

Name of person compliant referred to:

Signature: *Date:*