

St Nicholas C of E Primary School



Child Friendly Complaints Procedure

At St Nicholas C of E Primary School, we promise to listen to our children's' concerns and complaints. We want to make sure any problem you have is sorted as quickly as possible, so you can be happy and feel safe at school. This policy has been created to show you how you can make a complaint if you need to, who you can talk to and what will happen once you have complained.

If you need to make a complaint, read this policy and talk to a member of staff as soon as possible.

Remember that you won't get told off if you complain and we will take your complaint seriously.

Approved by:	Head teacher	Mrs S Rayson
	Chair of Governors	Mrs S Draper
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1. What does it mean?

A “**complaint**” is something you make when you are unhappy about something or someone.

A “**concern**” is when you have a worry or doubt about something or someone.

In this policy, complaint has been used to mean both a complaint and a concern.

Both a complaint and a concern can be told to anyone, e.g. your parents, teacher or friend. If you tell a teacher or another member of staff at school about a complaint, it will be taken seriously, and we will listen to what you have to say.

2. What do I have to do?

You might be thinking “what sort of thing would I complain about?” so listed below are some examples. If you are unsure whether you need to complain about something, talk to your class teacher to check.

You may need to complain about:

- ❖ An event – such as a school trip.
- ❖ Anything about your school life – such as homework, school uniform.
- ❖ The behaviour of an individual(s) – for example, another pupil or member of staff
- ❖ Something that affects you as a pupil – such as bullying.
- ❖ Something that has happened outside school but is connected to the school – such as the behaviour of pupils on transport or in the street.

If you ever need to complain about something like the examples above, you need to talk to somebody you trust. This could be anyone from the list below:

- ❖ Your parents
- ❖ The Head teacher
- ❖ Your class teacher
- ❖ Another member of staff

You can always talk to your friends about a problem, but if you want something done about it, it is important to tell an adult as well.

Of course, you should only make a complaint when you need to. When choosing whether to complain or not, ask yourself:

- Is my complaint about something which affects the whole school or a group of pupils?
- Could I solve the problem by talking to my class teacher, a teaching assistant, or someone else in school?
- Am I happy to ask an individual member of staff to sort the issue or do I want to use the steps in this policy?

Once you have thought about the questions above, you can make your complaint. When the complaint has been made, you should:

- ❖ work with the school adults to help with understanding and finding a solution to the complaint.

- ❖ Tell someone about the problem in lots of detail.
- ❖ Respond quickly to any questions the adult you told has asked.
- ❖ Ask for help when needed.
- ❖ Be respectful of the people involved.

As a result of your help, the Head Teacher will:

- ❖ Ensure you are involved in fixing the problem you are complaining about.
- ❖ Talk to you about the progress of the complaints process.
- ❖ Ensure your privacy and confidentiality is protected.
- ❖ Treat you with equality and fairness throughout.
- ❖ Tell you any information you need to know about what you have said or what will happen.

3. When should I complain?

Any pupil can complain if they need to. We will consider all complaints made.

When making a complaint, we ask that you make it as soon as possible so we can properly investigate it and resolve any problems you have. If you make a complaint 3 months after a problem happens, we may not be able to investigate your complaint. If this timescale changes, we will let you know.

When you make a complaint, you will be asked to complete a complaints form. You can find one at the end of this policy or you can ask at the school office and they will give you a copy. You will always be given the chance to complete this form and hand it in to your class teacher.

If you are making a complaint about the head teacher, you shouldn't complain directly to them – talk to your parents or another teacher. The governing board of the school will be also be told.

4. What will happen when I complain?

Stage 1 – meeting with a class teacher to explain the problem

In this stage, you will meet with a class teacher and you will be asked to complete a complaints form – you can fill it in by yourself or with a parent or teacher. Once you have finished the form, you should hand it in to your class teacher, your Phase Leader or the Deputy Head Teacher.

During the meeting your class teacher will take notes of what has been talked about, and notes of any additional discussions about the complaint will also be noted down.

If the complaint is about the head teacher, the governing board will deal with the complaint.

Within 7 school days of you first talking to an adult about your complaint, you and the adult dealing with the complaint will meet and discuss what will happen next. You will be asked your opinion on the resolution.

Stage 2 – formal complaint made to the head teacher

If the complaint is too complicated to be sorted out in 7 school days, then stage two will begin. It may take another 14 school days to try to resolve the complaint – you will be told by the head teacher if this needs to happen.

You will meet with the head teacher again, or, if the complaint is about the head teacher, the chair of the governing board. This meeting will be used to talk about the problem, and you will be told what has happened so far to help fix the problem.

During the meeting, notes will be taken of what has been talked about, as well as notes of any additional discussions that you have had with an adult about the complaint.

If, after an additional 14 school days, the problem has not been sorted out, stage three will begin.

Stage 3 – a meeting with the governing board

If the issue hasn't been resolved after stage one and two, the complaint will be given to the governing board.

The governing board will think about the complaint, talk about what has already been done to try and fix the problem and try and find a solution.

The problem will be looked at thoroughly and a solution will be found within 15 school days.

If a solution hasn't been found in 15 school days, or the solution found doesn't fix the problem, your parents can then appeal the decision. You will not be involved in this process, but you will be told about the outcomes of the appeal.

5. Who will talk to me about my complaint?

Once you have made a complaint, the adult you told will think of the best way to deal with it. This may include telling a more senior member of staff.

If it is really serious, someone from the local authority or the police might ask to talk to you.

You don't have to worry if somebody else is told about your complaint; you are not in trouble, it just means that the person you told thinks it is best to tell them to keep you safe and happy in school.

If one of the adults mentioned above wants to talk to you, you will always have another adult with you – this will likely be a parent / carer, unless you want someone else there.

You will be told what will happen during the interview before it starts and what you're allowed to do, e.g. have a parent / carer there.

When the interview has finished, a transcript will be made. A transcript is a piece of paper with everything that was said on it (a bit like a film script). You will be asked to read it, and if you are happy that it reflects what you said then you will be asked to sign it.

6. What will school ask me?

When you make a complaint, the adult you tell will talk to you about the following things:

- ❖ The main problems you have, your options and how it might be dealt with
- ❖ If the complaint will be resolved informally or by using the school's official complaints procedure
- ❖ If any actions will be taken by the school as a result of the complaint (even if the complaint was followed through or not)

When you make a complaint, the adult you talk to may record the conversation so that the full details of the complaint can be listened to at a later date. You will be told before being recorded and anything you say will only be listened to by the adult(s) dealing with the complaint.

We will look after personal information you give to us, and only share it if we have to or the law requires us to. If you want to hear what you said at a later date, you can ask school for a copy of the recording.

7. Serious complaints

If you have ever been physically or emotionally hurt by an adult or peer, it is important that you tell a responsible adult. They will ask you what has happened and if they think your safety is at risk, they might tell Social Care.

If this happens, the Social Care adults will take over the investigation of the complaint – you will be told what is happening at all times. If this happens, you can talk to your teacher if you have any worries.

8. Complaining about the same thing

Because we want to take every complaint seriously, it is important that you only tell us things you haven't complained about before unless the problem has not been resolved.

If we have found a solution to your complaint and told you what will happen to fix your problem, then the complaint is closed. If you complain about the same thing over and over again after we have fixed the problem, we don't have to discuss the issue anymore.

We don't want this to happen. So, to avoid any repeated requests, we will:

- ❖ Make sure we have done all we can to fix the problem.
- ❖ Make sure we have told you what we have done to fix the problem.
- ❖ Tell you when you are repeating a complaint and why we won't be responding to you.

If you feel you have not been listened to by the school, you and your parents can seek advice from organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.

We will let you see any information we have about you and the complaint.

Child Friendly Complaint Form

This complaints form can be used to submit a complaint to the head teacher, or the governing board if your complaint is against the head teacher. You can ask a parent or teacher to help you to complete this form. Please hand it in to your class teacher or Phase Leader once it has been finished.

Name:	Home address:
Teacher's name:	
Year group:	
Pupil's date of birth:	
Parent's telephone number:	
Parent's email:	Postcode:
What is your complaint about, and what would you like the school to do to fix it?	
When did you talk to your teacher about the problem you have?	
What happened after the talk? Was your problem solved?	
Signed (pupil):	Date:

