

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC SCHOOL



Complaints Procedure

October 2021

Holy Family Catholic School Complaints Procedure

1. Who can make a complaint?

Complaints can be made by parents/carers or by any other person about the services the school provides.

2. 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'
- A complaint may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or a lack of action.'

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Parents/carers are reminded that they can see the headteacher at parents' surgery every Thursday afternoon from 4pm to 5pm if they wish to raise a concern.

3. How to raise a complaint

A complaint made to the school should follow the staged process that is detailed below.

A complaint against school staff (except the headteacher) should be made in the first instance to the Headteacher via the School Office

Complaints about the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors via the School Office

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the governing body as a whole should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body via the School Office

The complaints procedure and policy of Holy Family Catholic School has 4 stages.

Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated. However, the headteacher or chair of governors will determine whether the complaint warrants investigation

Timescales

You must raise the complaint within three months of an incident or within three months of the latest in a series of related incidents. We will consider complaints outside this timeframe only in exceptional circumstances.

Complaints received out of term time will be considered to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

4. Stage 1 Informal

A concern is raised informally with a staff member.

As soon as you have a concern, please contact the teacher concerned. You may find this easiest to do by email or by phone call. Difficulties can often be sorted out very quickly in this way.

Many times in a school, problems can arise due to confusion or tension in a relationship. The best way of dealing with this is directly with the teacher concerned.

If you are unsure about who to contact and how to do this best, the first point of contact is the School Reception who will be able to provide contact details for the member of staff you wish to speak to. You will then need to make an appointment to see the member of staff concerned.

On some occasions, you may not wish to contact the teacher involved directly. At these times, please contact the relevant Head of Year or Head of Department. Contact details of staff can be found on the school website.

To help prepare for your meeting please let the school know what your meeting is about when you book the appointment and you may also find it helpful to review the school's website for school procedure and policy documents on the issues you want to discuss e.g. Bullying, Behaviour Policy etc. It is hoped you can reach an agreement that satisfies both you and the school.

If matters do not improve, or you are still unhappy, proceed to Stage Two.

5. Stage 2 Formal

A formal complaint is heard by an appropriate member of staff.

All formal complaints must be put in writing on the Complaints Form found in Appendix 1 of this Procedures and Policy document. This should then be delivered for the attention of the Headteacher.

The complaint will be logged, including the date that it has been received. The Headteacher will acknowledge receipt of the written formal complaint within 2 school working days. The Headteacher will respond, inform you of who is investigating the complaint and may also report on the action that the school has taken to resolve the issue that you have raised. However, a meeting may be arranged to discuss the matter further. This meeting will occur at the earliest opportunity and within 10 school working days.

As always, the aim is to resolve the matter as speedily as possible. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at Stage 2, you will need to proceed to Stage 3.

6. Stage 3 Formal

A formal complaint is heard by the Headteacher.

This stage (Stage 3) can only happen if you have been previously through Stage 1 and 2, however we do recognise that some complaints may need to be investigated directly by the Headteacher because of the nature or seriousness of the complaint. It will be for the Headteacher to decide who should investigate such a complaint.

Within 10 school working days you will need to tell the school in writing why you are still not satisfied and what you would like the school to do.

If the complaint is deemed not to be of a nature that the Headteacher should be dealing with initially and you did not previously utilise Stage 1 and Stage 2, the Headteacher will liaise with the most appropriate member of staff and organise a meeting.

Otherwise, the Headteacher's PA will arrange an appointment for you to meet with the Headteacher, who will then investigate the complaint.

The Headteacher will respond in writing within 5 school working days of your meeting, setting out the response. It is hoped that the decision will satisfy all parties.

It is important to be aware that if a complaint results in Disciplinary Action for a member of staff at the school, it is not always appropriate for a complainant to be aware of the details of this action.

Disciplinary Action using the Staff Disciplinary Procedures and Policy document can take an extended period of time, as it is essential to follow the appropriate Employment Legislation.

If after this Stage 3 you still feel the matter is unresolved, or you cannot accept the action taken by the school, you can then proceed to Stage 4.

7. Stage 4 Formal

A formal complaint is heard by the Chair of the Governing Body.

This Stage 4 can only happen if you have been previously through Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3.

If the complaint was deemed serious enough to be dealt with initially by the Headteacher, you must allow Stage 3 to be dealt with appropriately before proceeding to Stage 4.

Within 10 school working days of receiving the Headteacher's decision, you should write to the Chair of the Governing Body at the school address, detailing why you are still not happy with the school action.

The Chair of the Governing Body (or in their absence, another appropriate member of the Governing Body) will then;

- respond to the complaint based on all the evidence to hand.
- or convene a panel of governors. The formal Hearing in the presence of this panel will normally occur no more than 15 school working days from the receipt of the written request for Stage 4 investigation.

The aim of Stage 4 is to resolve the complaint impartially and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the decision in writing within 3 school working days after the date of the Hearing.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher then you should write to the Chair of the Governing Body detailing your complaint and the Chair of the Governing Body will investigate and respond.

7. The Governors' Hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.

8. If a complainant is still unhappy with the school's response then they may wish to make contact with the Department for Education after they have completed the school based stages.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of the complaints or overturn any decisions made by Holy Family Catholic School. They will consider whether Holy Family Catholic School 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 03700002288 or by writing to

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

Appendix 1

Holy Family Catholic School Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the headteacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:

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

What actions do you feel might 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: