



CURRY MALLET Church of England PRIMARY SCHOOL

Parental Complaints Policy

This policy should be taken as part of the overall strategy of Curry Mallet School and implemented within the context of our vision, aims and values as a Church of England School.

Introduction

We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and that the headteacher and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

If any parent is unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or has any concern relating to the school, we encourage that person to talk to the child's class teacher immediately.

Aims and objectives

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

The complaints process

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.

Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the headteacher. The headteacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly.

Should a parent have a complaint about the headteacher, or if an informal complaint fails to resolve the matter, a formal complaint should be made to the governing body. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far. The parent should send this written complaint to the Chair of Governors.

The governing body must consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. It arranges a meeting to discuss the complaint, and invites the person making it to attend the

meeting, so that s/he can explain her complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.

After hearing all the evidence, the governors consider their decision and inform the parent about it in writing. The governors do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction.

If any parent is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then s/he is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

Monitoring and review

The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The headteacher logs all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis.

Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

JANUARY 2016

***NOTE:**

The Authority has no power to inspect the provision or influence the content of collective worship in voluntary controlled or voluntary aided schools, or denominational religious instruction in voluntary aided schools or in those voluntary controlled schools where denominational religious instruction is provided in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school. There is a separate Procedure for considering such complaints and this is set out in Appendix 2.

PROCEDURE FOR REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS BY THE GOVERNING BODY

Upon receipt of a written request for a complaint to be reviewed by the Governors, the procedures outlined below should be followed.

1. The Clerk to the Governors should write to the complainant within 5 school days to acknowledge receipt of the written request. If the exact nature of the complaint, and/or the complainant's desired outcome(s), is not clear from their letter, clarification should be requested. (A pro forma drafted by the LA for use in this connection is at Appendix 1A). The acknowledgement should inform the complainant that the complaint will be considered by a panel comprising three members of the Governing Body, within 15 school days of receiving the complaint, and should provide details of the panel members and their status (eg parent governor, co-opted governor, etc). The complainant should be told what papers will be supplied to the panel (usually just the letter of complaint and/or the completed complaint pro forma) and should be afforded an opportunity to provide any further relevant papers for the panel's consideration if they so wish. The complainant should be given copies of any papers provided for the panel at this stage.
2. The Clerk to the Governors should arrange to convene the panel from members of the Governing Body. The panel members should be governors who have had no prior knowledge of the complaint. The Headteacher should not be on the panel and it would usually also be inappropriate for the Chair of Governors to be a panel member. The advantages of having a governor who is a parent on the panel should be borne in mind, as should the need to be sensitive to issues of gender, race and religious affiliation, if appropriate.
3. The advisability of including a teacher or staff governor on the panel, and whether such a governor would be compromised where the complaint is against a fellow member of staff at the school, should be carefully considered.
4. The complaint should be considered by the panel, preferably at a venue other than the school, within the period of 15 school days referred to in paragraph 1 above. Details of the date, time and location of the hearing should be agreed in consultation with, and confirmed in writing to, the complainant and panel members, at least 5 school days prior to the meeting. The letter should also outline in general terms how the hearing will be conducted (see paragraph 5 below) and confirm the complainant's right to be accompanied by a 'friend'.
5. The meeting must be properly minuted, either by the Clerk to the Governors or an independent clerk (not another governor) appointed for the purpose. **At the meeting, the following procedure should be followed by the Chair of the panel:-**
 - 5.1 Welcome all in attendance, and introduce panel members, giving their status (parent governor, etc).
 - 5.2 If the complainant is accompanied, check/clarify - if necessary - the name and status of the friend/representative.
 - 5.3 Explain purpose of meeting, ie
 - to provide the complainant with the opportunity to explain or clarify their written complaint, and to enable the panel to identify any issues for investigation; and

- to ascertain from the complainant what would, in their view, constitute a satisfactory resolution of the complaint.
 - 5.4 Invite complainant to explain their written complaint, with panel members asking questions and/or seeking clarification as necessary.
 - 5.5 Agree with complainant the issues to be investigated and/or considered by the panel.
 - 5.6 Explain that the panel will undertake any necessary investigations and make a written response to the complainant (copied to the school) within 15 school days.
 - 5.7 Thank the complainant for attending and seek confirmation that they feel they have had a full and fair hearing.
6. After the complainant has left the meeting, the panel should:-
- 6.1 Produce a letter to go to the complainant confirming the agreed issues for investigation/consideration (see paragraph 6.5 on page 8).
 - 6.2 Agree the nature/scope and a timetable for any necessary investigations.
 - 6.3 If appropriate/necessary, agree a date to meet again, to consider the results of investigations and to draft/agree a written response to the complainant.
7. **The Clerk to the Governors, or other person appointed to act as clerk to the complaints panel, should assist the panel in the production of their written response, once the complaint has been investigated. This response should confirm:-**
- 7.1 The date and venue of the hearing attended by the complainant;
 - 7.2 Membership of the Governors' panel;
 - 7.3 The issues mutually agreed to be the subject of the panel's investigations and/or deliberations;
 - 7.4 The methodology followed by the panel for their investigation; (eg interviews, written statements obtained, etc).
 - 7.5 The conclusions reached by the panel.
8. The nature of the complaint and the outcome of the panel's investigation should be reported, in general terms, to the next full meeting of the Governing Body, together with any implications for school policies or procedures which require further consideration/action.



Complaints Procedure

Governing Body Review - Request Form

When you have filled in this form, please return it to the Clerk to the Governors, at your child's school.

Your name:

Your address and postcode:

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Your daytime 'phone number:

Your child's name:

Your complaint about the school is:

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When did you raise this with Headteacher?

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When did you receive the Headteacher's response?

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Your reasons for requesting a review are:

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(If you run out of space, please use extra paper)

Complaints Procedure

Governing Body Review – Request Form (continued)

What do you want the School Governors' Panel to do?

- give an acknowledgement and/or apology
- give an explanation
- give an undertaking to recommend revision of school policies or practices
- give a commitment to recommend steps designed to prevent a recurrence
- other action (please specify)

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Your signature Date

What happens next?

- you will receive an acknowledgement that this form has been received
- you will be invited to discuss your complaint with a Panel of Governors
- within 15 school days of meeting the Governors' Panel you will receive a full reply telling you the Panel's conclusions/decisions, explaining their reasons and informing you of any action that has been taken/recommended.

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| Equal Opportunities | Strictly confidential |
| By answering the following questions, you will help us make sure we give a good and fair service to all the people in the community. (Please tick the relevant boxes.) | |
| Are you: | male? <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you consider that you have a disability? | female? <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If yes, please indicate the nature of the disability | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Physical Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Visual Impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> More than one <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are you: | White <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | White British <input type="checkbox"/> White Irish <input type="checkbox"/> White Other <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Black or Black British <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black African <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black Other <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Asian or Asian British <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian Other <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Mixed White & Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed White & Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed White & Black African <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed Other <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy <input type="checkbox"/> Other background <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> |
| This information will not affect the way in which your complaint is handled. | |

When you have filled in this form, please return it to the Clerk to the Governors at your child's school.

PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERATION OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND DENOMINATIONAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

This Procedure is to be used to consider complaints about:

- the daily act of collective worship in voluntary aided or voluntary controlled schools;
- denominational religious education in voluntary aided schools and in those voluntary controlled schools where denominational religious education is provided in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school.

The Procedure contains four stages at which a complaint can be considered.

STAGE 1 - INFORMAL CONSIDERATION

Many complaints can be resolved quickly in informal discussion between the complainant and the Headteacher, or other staff of the school. Unless there are very exceptional circumstances and, despite full discussion with the Head and/or staff of the school, the matter remains unresolved, complaints should not move to the formal stages. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the consideration of their concerns by the Head/staff, they should be informed that they have the right to put their complaint in writing and have it considered by Governors at Stage 2.

STAGE 2 - FORMAL CONSIDERATION BY FOUNDATION GOVERNORS

At this stage the complaint should be considered by those Governors of the school who are Foundation Governors. The following procedure should be followed:

- The Clerk to the Governing Body will make arrangements as quickly as possible for the complaint to be heard and considered at a meeting of the Foundation Governors convened for this purpose.
- The Clerk will invite the appropriate Diocesan Education Officer to attend the meeting and notify the LA of its date, time and place and the nature of the complaint.
- The Headteacher (who, ultimately, is responsible for investigating complaints at Stage 1) should attend the meeting.
- The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting of the Foundation Governors to explain the complaint in more detail and will be allowed to be accompanied by a friend.
- After the meeting, the Clerk will notify the complainant of the Foundation Governors' decision in writing within 7 days. The letter will include reference to any further steps (such as an appeal to the full governing body – see Stage 3 below) that are open to the complainant. The LA and the appropriate Diocesan Education Officer will be informed of the Governors' findings and any action proposed by them.

4. STAGE 3 - FORMAL CONSIDERATION BY FULL GOVERNING BODY

At this stage the complaint should be considered by the full Governing Body. The following procedures will apply:

- The Clerk to the Governing Body will make arrangements as quickly as possible for the complaint to be heard and considered at a meeting of the full Governing Body.
- The Clerk will invite the appropriate Diocesan Education Officer and a representative of the LA to attend the meeting.
- Where the Headteacher is not a Governor of the school then s/he will attend the meeting for the purpose of giving professional advice.
- The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting to explain, and answer any questions about, their complaints and will be allowed to be accompanied by a friend.

- After the meeting, the Clerk to the Governing Body will notify the complainant of the Governors' decision in writing, within 7 days. The letter will include reference to the further steps (such as an appeal to the relevant Church Authority – see Stage 4 below) that are open to the complainant. A copy of the letter will be sent to the LA and the appropriate Diocesan Education Officer.

5. STAGE 4 - FORMAL CONSIDERATION BY CHURCH AUTHORITIES

The final forum for consideration of complaints about the act of collective worship in VA and VC schools, and complaints related to denominational religious teaching, is the appropriate Church Authority. Complaints should be addressed to:

Church of England VA and VC Schools - the Bishop of Bath and Wells, The Old Deanery, Wells, Somerset, BA5 2UE.

It will be for the appropriate Church Authority to determine the membership of a Panel to consider the complaint but the following principles will apply:

- The Panel will consist of not less than three members.
- A representative of the school's Governing Body will be invited to attend the meeting arranged to hear and consider the complaint, and to address the Panel.
- The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting to explain their complaint in more detail and will be allowed to be accompanied by a friend.
- After the meeting the Clerk to the Panel will notify the complainant of the Panel's decision in writing, within 7 days and copies of the letter will be sent to the LA and to the Secretary of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).
- **The decision of this Panel will be final and will bring local consideration of the complaint to an end.**