



St Mary Abbots School

Complaints Policy

Last reviewed October 2022

This policy explains the procedures used by the school for dealing with complaints, problems or worries from parents, as approved by the Governing Body. When dealing with all complaints, problems and worries the school will respect confidentiality and be approachable, thorough and fair. It will keep all interested parties informed of any relevant developments, findings and decisions.

It is important for any parent who has a particular concern to let the school know at an early stage so that the issue can be dealt with fairly and quickly, enabling most problems to be solved through effective partnerships between the school and parent. It is not intended that this policy will replace the normal discussion which takes place on a day to day basis for dealing with problems and concerns as they arise. In the event of a formal complaint where the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcomes of such discussions that further steps may need to be taken, the school has adopted the guidance of the London Diocesan Board for Schools.

As a school, we acknowledge that:

- Pupils learn best when there is an effective partnership between school and parents
- All members of the school community are entitled to have their points of views heard
- Unresolved complaints can result in unhealthy conflict

From time to time parents will raise legitimate concerns about their child's education. Occasionally, a parental concern may become more serious and develop into a complaint. This may relate to a variety of issues including:

- The way in which a concern was handled
- The conduct or actions of pupils
- The action or lack of action of members of staff
- Inappropriate discipline
- Lack of information

A complaint can be made either by telephone, letter, email or in person and it is helpful to let staff know the nature of the complaint in order that they can investigate and take steps to deal appropriately with the concern. Written complaints received by individual members of staff will always be forwarded to the Headteacher.

Parents and carers with a complaint, problem or worry related to an aspect of school are encouraged to take the following steps:

1. Request a meeting with the class teacher at a mutually convenient time, if relevant to the issue, where the problem can be dealt with first hand. The class teacher should inform their Phase Leader and the Assistant Headteacher of the meeting as a matter of courtesy, observing confidentiality where necessary. If the problem does not seem to be addressed by the class teacher and there are ongoing concerns, the class teacher and/or parent should escalate the matter to the Phase Leader or the Assistant Headteacher. If the parent is escalating the matter, it should be addressed to the Phase Leader or Assistant Headteacher, in writing or by phone. The

Phase Leader/Assistant Headteacher will inform the Headteacher of the matter being discussed. The matter should be dealt with within 7 days and at the earliest possible opportunity whenever possible.

2. If the problem does not seem to have been addressed by the class teacher and the Phase Leader/Assistant Headteacher, and there are ongoing concerns, the parent can express these in writing or by phone to the Headteacher. In some instances, the class teacher and Phase Leader/Assistant Headteacher will escalate a matter directly to the Headteacher due to its nature. A meeting with the Headteacher will be arranged as soon as possible. The Assistant Headteacher will deputise on a matter for the Headteacher in his absence.
3. An acknowledgement of the complaint will be made within 2 working days whenever possible. The Headteacher will liaise with any staff as necessary, in order to solve the problem as fairly and quickly as possible and whenever possible within 5 school days. The length of time taken to investigate the matter will be as short as possible. When necessary, the school will endeavour to make a written response within 7 working days. Where additional records are requested these will be made available within 15 days.
4. If the parent or carer is still unhappy, a written complaint can be sent to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will respond within 2 school days to acknowledge receipt and will make a full response within 10 school days, having met with the complainant as soon as possible and having carried out an investigation of the matters raised in the complaint.
5. If the parent or carer is still unhappy they may request in writing that the Complaints Committee of the Governing Body considers that complaint. A meeting should be set by the Clerk to the Governing Body within 20 school days (giving at least 10 school days' notice to the school).
6. If this avenue fails then the parent/guardian also has the right to take the issue to the Department for Education. The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Useful contacts: Mr J Primrose, Headteacher: john.primrose@sma.rbkc.sch.uk
Mr P Bertlin, Co-Chair of Governors: piers.bertlin@sma.rbkc.sch.uk
Mother Emma, Co-Chair of Governors: vicar@stmaryabbots.org.uk