

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Rationale

St Mary's Catholic School seeks to maintain and develop its internal and external relationships. The success of the school is founded on the quality of those relationships. All stakeholders – be they parents, pupils, staff, governors, or others with an interest in our community – have a right to complain where concerns remain unresolved. This procedure does not apply to the areas of admissions and exclusions, which have their own statutory processes and structures.

Objectives

This procedure aims to:

- give a structured opportunity for those with concerns to voice complaints
- to improve the efficiency of the school by listening to those complaints, and instigating the appropriate process to deal with them
- to protect all stakeholders from complaints that are unfair, unfounded or malicious.

Procedures

1. Complaints by staff: these will follow the published grievance procedure of the Catholic Education Service, copies of which are available from the school office. Complaints which fall outside the remit of these procedures must be made through the line management system.
2. Complaints from other parties:
 - All complaints should first be made to the manager with responsibility for that curricular, pastoral or organisational aspect of the school. Though such complaints may be copied to the headteacher for information, it is unlikely that he/she will be directly involved in the first instance. However, he/she may well direct the complainant to the most appropriate school manager to deal with the complaint.
 - Should the complaint be unresolved after the efforts made by the appropriate manager, the matter can be referred by the complainant to the relevant senior manager of the school's leadership group.
 - In the unlikely event that the complaint remains unresolved, then it will be referred to the headteacher.
 - In the rare event where the complainant feels that the concern remains then the issue will be considered through:
 - (i) a meeting between the headteacher and the complainant in order to resolve the issue;
 - (ii) where necessary the appropriate panel of governors will hear the complaint as outlined in the Appendix.

3. Timescales

It is essential that school managers are given appropriate time to deal with complaints. The school operates a two-tier system for responding to parents:

- Minor pastoral issues, complaints and queries will receive a response within three school days.
- More complex complaints, or complaints that raise a number of concerns will, within three days, receive a response which outlines the likely timeframe required. This timeframe is unlikely to exceed thirty school days.

4. Evaluation, Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed every three years – both through the school's application for the Charter Mark award, and through its self-evaluation structure.

The next review is scheduled to take place in April 2009.

St Mary's Catholic School
February 2007