

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

"Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification."

(Romans 14:19)

Living in a fallen world, there are inevitably times when mistakes are made and a parent in the school has reason to complain. Complaints come in various forms and can refer to many different aspects of school life. Since they can damage relationships and become the source of division within the school, even the smallest complaint should be handled sensitively.

This policy applies to all sections of the School, including Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Introduction and Aims

Trinity Christian School highly values its partnership with parents and seeks to resolve any concerns or complaints, responding quickly, thoroughly and effectively when such concerns or complaints are raised.

A complaint is defined as any matter about which a parent of a pupil (or anyone with parental responsibilities for a pupil) is unhappy and seeks action by the School.

Even in the happiest and best run school communities, complaints are likely to be raised from time to time. It is the intention of this document, which is available to parents and prospective parents on the School's website and in hard copy on request, to set out the most appropriate ways in which such complaints can be addressed.

Trinity Christian School aims to respond to parents' concerns and complaints, and to improve the School's practice in the light of constructive criticism. Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the School, can be dealt with under the scope of this procedure which is only available to parents of pupils, meaning current registered pupils. This procedure will only apply to past pupils if the initial complaint was raised when the pupil was still registered as a current pupil.

This policy does not apply to complaints regarding admissions, exclusions or fees.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

It is generally in the interest of all concerned that complaints be resolved in as efficient and amicable a way as possible and this can usually be done in an informal fashion.

Where parents have a complaint, verbal or email contact in the first place is with class teacher, who will acknowledge receipt within three working days. This can often lead to the matter being rapidly resolved.

Early attention to concerns can prevent situations from escalating and parents are asked to raise concerns and complaints with their child's class teachers without delay. Where appropriate the class

teacher will arrange a meeting to discuss the parent's concern rather than exploring sensitive or complex matters by email.

The Head teacher can be contacted via the school contact details by any parent who wishes to arrange an appointment to discuss a concern or complaint.

Where such complaints are addressed by parents to the Head teacher, class teachers will in any case be involved.

A written record should be kept by class teachers of any such complaint and passed to the Head teacher, even where a complaint is rapidly and completely resolved.

The School aims to deal with complaints promptly and sets 14 working days as the target timescale within which Stage 1 complaints should be satisfactorily resolved.

Where complaints are not successfully resolved in this way, a more formal procedure is also available.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

Parents should now be asked to put their complaint in writing to the Head teacher. She will seek to respond to such complaints within three working days of receipt or, in exceptional cases of absence on her part, refer the matter to the Deputy Head who will respond to such complaints within three working days of receipt.

The Head teacher will carry out appropriate investigations and keep a written record of all meetings and interviews pertaining to the complaint. The Head teacher will then produce a decision in writing within 14 working days.

Copies of the written record and the proposed resolution to the complaint will be made available to the complainant. Although all formal complaints will be made in writing, this does not mean that the formal stage is automatically triggered whenever a concern is expressed in writing, for example, by email. Complaints will usually only progress to the formal stage after first being considered at the preliminary stage and only then if the complainant intends to escalate a matter to the formal stage. If parents remain dissatisfied they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

Parents will be referred to submit their complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors who has authority to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. The Chair will acknowledge written complaints within three working days of receipt.

The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel, which will comprise three individuals who were not involved in any aspect of the complaint and one member who is independent of the management and running of the School who has held a position of responsibility and used to scrutinizing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments.

Where a hearing is called, all relevant documentation should be sent to members of the panel within five working days of the hearing and the hearing itself will take place within ten working days of the complaint being raised with the Chair of Governors.

Parents may be accompanied to a hearing by one other person, perhaps a relative or friend. Legal representation at a hearing is not considered to be appropriate.

The Panel will carry out any further investigation which is deemed appropriate and will then reach a decision and inform parents in writing as soon as practicable thereafter and within five working days, other than in exceptional circumstances. Findings and recommendations of the Panel will be circulated to the complainant and where relevant, the person complained about. They will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the Governors and the Head.

Records of Complaints

A written record of all formal complaints will be maintained by the school. This record will include the stage at which they were resolved and include the action taken by the School as a result of these complaints, regardless of whether they are upheld. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and in confidence. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Additional requirements apply to a School's EYFS arrangements, beyond those which apply to the main school. Written complaints about the fulfilment of any EYFS requirements at the School will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days and a record of complaints will be made available to Ofsted and ISI on request.

In addition, parents can contact Ofsted and ISI as below:

Ofsted – Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD - Tel: 0300 123 1231

ISI – Cap House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA – Tel: 0207 600 0100

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