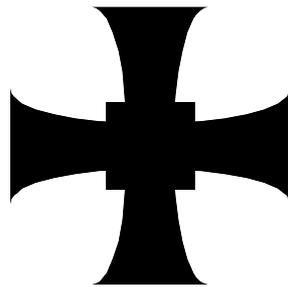


# TRINITY SCHOOL CARLISLE



A CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY

## GENERAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

**Full Governing Body**

**Reviewed:** November 2017

**Ratified by the full Governing Body:** December 2017

**Next review:** September 2018

The procedure below fulfils the requirements of current legislation requiring governing bodies to have a procedure to deal with complaints relating to aspects of the school and any community facilities or services that the school provides.

### **A statement for parents, carers, and other users of school services**

We very much hope that you and your child will be happy at our school, and that any concerns that arise are dealt with speedily by our staff. We recognise, however, that there may be an occasion where you are unhappy with an aspect of the service that we provide. This procedure sets out what the school will do if you wish to raise a concern or make a complaint.

### **Who can raise a concern or make a complaint?**

Anyone who has dealings with the school can use this procedure, whether a pupil, a parent or carer, a visitor, a neighbour, or a provider of a service to the school. If you wish to raise a concern or complain on someone else's behalf, the school will only deal with this if the person on whose behalf you are complaining is unable to do so for themselves. If this is the case, we may be able to direct you to or obtain support from a local advocacy service.

### **How will my concern or complaint be handled?**

The school will try to deal with your complaint as quickly as possible. We ask that concerns and complaints are brought to the attention of the school as quickly as possible. Complaints notified to the school after three months from the date of any incident will usually be ruled 'out of time', unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you report any of the concerns in the list below, this procedure will not apply and we will need to refer to the local authority or other adviser to ensure that the relevant statutory or local authority procedure is used.

- the admission of your child
- the exclusion of your child
- local authority processes for assessing children with special educational needs
- allegations against staff of child abuse or other disciplinary matters

Please be aware that if your complaint alleges misconduct by a member of staff, the separate procedure which must be used is confidential to the employer and employee. In this case you will not normally be given any details of the outcome and the right of appeal does not apply.

The Governing Body is not responsible for handling complaints about third party providers offering community facilities or services through our premises or using school facilities for external events. The Governing Body will however take reasonable steps to ensure that such providers have their own complaints procedures.

### **The procedure**

Our Complaints Procedure has three stages: an informal stage, a formal stage and a panel hearing stage. At any point in the procedure, there is also the possibility of a 'resolution' meeting.

## 1. Informal Stage

If your concern is about something that a person has or has not done, for example a member of staff, the Co-Headteachers, a governor, or a volunteer, you should make an arrangement through the school's main reception to discuss the concern with that person or their line manager. If your concern is about an aspect of school practice or policy, you should contact the Co-Headteachers. We want to respond to your concern as quickly as possible, but it may not be possible to arrange an immediate meeting: an appointment within a few days may be necessary. Please do not approach staff while they are 'on duty'. We will give you a verbal response, usually within 5 school days, and may confirm this in writing. We can reassure you that most concerns are usually resolved at this stage.

If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction by the staff you have contacted then you should take your concern to the Co-Headteachers who will arrange for it to be investigated and respond to you as soon as possible but within five working days.

## 2. Formal Stage

If you are still dissatisfied with the response from the Co-Headteachers, or your unresolved complaint is about the Co-Headteachers, you should make a formal complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors, who will ask a nominated governor to investigate and respond to you within ten working days.

## 3. Panel Hearing Stage

If you are still dissatisfied and wish to appeal against the outcome of the investigation, you should write to the Secretary to the Academy Trust and Governing Body.

The Governing Body will arrange for a panel of two governors to hear your complaint, not including the nominated governor who first investigated your complaint; the governors will be joined by a third panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school. You are entitled to attend this hearing and be accompanied if you so wish. After this hearing, the panel will notify you of their decision. This will include informing you that the school's procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed. There is no further right of appeal to the school against the decision.

The appeal process should take no longer than 20 school days. If there is likely to be a delay, the Secretary to the Academy Trust and Governing Body should contact you again to explain why and indicate a new timescale.

If you are not satisfied by the outcome of the appeal, then you have the right to contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complain-about-an-academy> using their complaints procedure for Academies.

### **Unreasonable, abusive or harassing complainants**

The school expects anyone who wishes to raise problems with the school to:

- treat all staff with courtesy and respect;
- respect the needs of pupils and staff within the school;
- recognise the time constraints under which members of staff in schools work and allow the school a reasonable time to respond to your concern;

Whilst we recognise that some concerns may relate to serious and distressing incidents, we will not accept threatening or harassing behaviour, and will take steps supported by legal action as appropriate to ensure that the school can continue its work safely and securely.

## **Vexatious complaints**

There may be an occasion where, despite all stages of the procedure having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If a complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Chair of the Governing Body is able to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed. If the complainant writes again on the same issue, then the correspondence may be recognised as vexatious and there will be no obligation on the part of the school to respond.