



# St Nicholas Priory CE VA Primary School

'I did not come to be served but to serve.' Matthew 20.28

## Complaints Policy & Procedure

All schools want their pupils to be healthy, happy, safe and to achieve. At St Nicholas Priory CE VA Primary School, we recognise that parents/carers play an important part in making this happen. Co-operation between parents/carers, staff and governors lead to a shared sense of purpose and a good atmosphere in the school. Each level of the procedure below offers the opportunity for concerns and complaints to be resolved as quickly as possible.

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to St Nicholas Priory CE VA Primary School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures including those listed below, we will use this complaints procedure.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions to schools</li> <li>• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs</li> <li>• School re-organisation proposals</li> </ul>	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Norfolk County Council.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). <a href="mailto:LADO@norfolk.gov.uk">LADO@norfolk.gov.uk</a>, 01603 307797/223473</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion of children from school*</li> </ul>	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a>.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whistleblowing</li> </ul>	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p>

	<p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff grievances</li> </ul>	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff conduct</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities</li> </ul>	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Curriculum - content</li> </ul>	Please contact the Department for Education at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against St Nicholas Priory CE VA Primary School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

### **Raising Concerns & Resolving Complaints**

From time to time, parents/carers and others connected with the school will become aware of matters which cause them concern. To encourage resolution of such situations, the Governing Body has adopted a school 'Complaints Policy & Procedure.'

The policy and procedure is devised with the intention that it will

- Usually be possible to resolve issues by informal means
- Be simple to use and understand
- Encourage all parties to work together co-operatively to reach the best resolution for all concerned
- Provide confidentiality
- Allow issues to be handled quickly through the correct procedure
- Address all points raised
- Inform future practice so that the issue is unlikely to recur

## Complaints Procedure

### General principles:

- This procedure is intended to allow a concern or complaint relating to the school or the services it provides to be raised
- We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the head teacher or chair of governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.
- To enable a proper investigation to take place, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any concern or complaint raised more than 3 months after the occurrence of the issue will not be considered

### Raising a concern or complaint

#### **1. Informal Stage**

It is anticipated that most concerns or complaints will be resolved at this stage. It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned in the first instance. This can be by letter, telephone or in person by. Appointments should be requested via the school office. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information.

In the case of serious complaints, it may be appropriate to address them directly to the head teacher (or to the chair of the governing body if the complaint is about the head teacher).

If you are unsure about who to contact, please ask advice from the school office or the clerk to the governing body.

#### **2. Formal Stage**

If you feel your concern or complaint has not been resolved at the informal stage, you may choose to put your complaint in writing for the attention of the head teacher who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately.

If the complaint is about the head teacher, your complaint should be addressed to the chair of governors.

A formal complaint form is provided to help you if you wish.

You should include details which might assist the investigation such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of relevant documents.

It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions you would like the school to take to resolve your complaint. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.

Please pass your letter or completed form in a sealed envelope to the school office. The envelope should be addressed to the head teacher or the chair of governors as appropriate and marked 'private & confidential.'

The head teacher (or chair of governors) may invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to explore the possibility of an informal resolution. If you accept that invitation, you may be accompanied by a friend if you wish, to assist you in explaining the nature of your concerns.

It is possible that your complaint will be resolved through a meeting with the head teacher (or chair of governors). If not, arrangements will be made for the matter to be fully investigated, using the appropriate procedure. In either case, you should be notified in writing, usually within

5 days of the school receiving your formal complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. This notification should include an indication of the expected timescale.

Any investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, you will be informed in writing of its conclusion.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, you may request that the governing body reviews the process followed by the school in the handling of the complaint. Any such request must be made in writing to the clerk to the governing body within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome. This should be passed to the school office in a sealed envelope and marked 'private & confidential.' You should include a statement specifying any perceived failures in following the procedure. The procedure described below will be followed. A Review Request Form is provided to help you if you wish to use it.

### **Review Process**

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of 3 members of the governing body. This will usually take place within 10 school days of your request having been received.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions but reasonable requests to make verbal representations should be considered sympathetically.

### **Governing Body Meetings**

#### **a) Complaints panel**

If the school receives a formal complaint about one of the limited number of matters that is not dealt with by another statutory process, it may be necessary to convene a governing body complaints panel to consider the matter and formulate a response.

The complaint is likely to relate to matters such as:

- The content or application of a school policy
- School facilities
- Services that the school provides

If a governing body committee already has delegated power with respect to a policy that is being complained of, a panel of members from that committee should be convened. Otherwise, the clerk should convene a panel of 3 governors who have not previously been involved in the complaint.

The complainant should submit details of their concerns, in writing to the clerk. These should be handed to the school office in a sealed envelope marked 'private & confidential.' The clerk will seek similar responses from the school where necessary.

A meeting of the panel will take place, usually within 10 school days to consider the matter. The complainant (who may be accompanied by a friend if they wish), and representative(s) from the school (who may also be accompanied by workplace colleagues or representatives from their professional applications) may be invited to this meeting in order to clarify the matter. As the panel meeting is intended to be investigatory rather than adversarial, the persons giving evidence or making representations to the panel will normally attend separately.

When the panel has collected sufficient information, it will deliberate and then inform the complainant, the head teacher and the governing body the outcome, in writing, within 10 school days.

Consideration of the complainant by the governing body and the school, apart from any actions that are agreed, will end at the point. The decision of the complaints panel is final. However, if the complainant is not satisfied that the appropriate procedure has been followed, they may request a review of that process by another panel of the governing body.

b) Review meeting

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of 3 members of the governing body. This will usually take place within 10 school days from receipt of a written request.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions but reasonable requests, from any of the parties involved, to make verbal representation should be considered sympathetically.

The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant.

The panel will then invite representatives of the school, usually the head teacher or the chair of the governing body panel that has considered the matter, as appropriate to make a response to the complaint.

The panel may also have access to the records kept of the process followed.

The complainant and the school representative(s) will be informed in writing of the outcome, usually within 5 school days of the panel meeting.

The matter will then be closed as far as the school is concerned.

### **Next Steps**

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by St Nicholas Priory CE VA Primary School. They will consider whether St Nicholas Priory CE VA Primary School has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://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.

**Date Approved by the Governing Body:** *21<sup>st</sup> December 2020*

**To be reviewed:** November 2023

Signed ..... Date .....  
**Chair of Full Governing Body**

Signed ..... Date .....  
**Headteacher**



## St Nicholas Priory CE VA Primary School – Formal Complaint Form

Please complete and return to Maria Grimmer, Head Teacher or in the case of a complaint against the head teacher, Dr Harry Taylor, Chair of Governors who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name (if relevant):

Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Email address:

Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to:

Date:





## St Nicholas Priory CE VA Primary School – Complaint Review Request Form

Your name:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Email address:

Dear Sir/Madam

I submitted a formal complaint to the school on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) and am dissatisfied by the procedure that has been followed.

My complaint was submitted to the head teacher/chair of governors (delete as appropriate) and I received a response from \_\_\_\_\_ (name) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the response(s) from the school. I am dissatisfied with the way in which the procedure was carried out because:

You may continue on separate sheets of paper or attach additional documents if you wish.

Number of additional pages attached:

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledged by:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to:

Date: