



## Pauntley C of E Primary School

### Complaints Policy

#### School Mission Statement Stepping out boldly with God

*'Jesus said, follow me.'* Matthew 9.9

Pauntley is an inclusive and caring school of choice. We are child-focussed, with core values to enable us all to follow Jesus's example and so flourish and contribute to the local community and the world God loves.

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the following policy is to establish a structure whereby complaints can be heard and resolved. It is not intended that the procedures in this document should replace normal discussion on day to day problems and concerns as they arise. It is only when a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of such discussions that further steps will need to be taken.

### AIMS

- To ensure the rapid and efficient processing of complaints by parents against members of school staff, the Head Teacher or a Governor;
- To maintain strong and positive relationships within the school community.

### PRINCIPLES

The following principles underpin the Complaints Policy:

- Everyone will have ready access to the complaints procedure.
- Complaints will be handled in a conciliatory, as opposed to a confrontational, manner.
- All parties involved have equal rights.
- The proceedings surrounding a complaint, both oral and written, will be recorded and handled confidentially. All meetings to be minuted.
- There will be close monitoring of all complaints, with results shared with the Governing body.

### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

There are 5 stages outlined in the complaints procedure:

Complaints Pre-stage: Complaint heard by staff member

Stage 1: Informal resolution by Head Teacher (within 28 days)

Stage 2: Formal referral to Head Teacher

Stage 3: Complaint referred to Chair of the Governing Body (within 28 days)

Stage 4: Governing body Appeal Committee

Stage 5: Referral to DFE & OFSTED complaints procedures

#### Stage 1

In the case of unresolved concerns relating to a member of staff or school procedure including those received by a governor from a parent, the complainant should make contact with the Head Teacher in the first instance.

A meeting will be arranged at the earliest convenient time to all parties where it is anticipated the complaint can be dealt with to the satisfaction of all parties. The Head Teacher will endeavour to resolve the concern informally, during the course of the investigation they may invite a third party in to observe any relevant meetings.

Any member of staff complained against will be kept fully informed of the content of the complaint and will be given an opportunity to explain their actions. It is anticipated that the majority of parental concerns relating to the school procedures, organisation or education provided can be resolved at this early stage with the class teacher, Head Teacher or if relevant governor.

In the event of this not being the case, the following procedure is available to the complainant.

**Stage 2:**

Should Stage 1 fail to resolve the problem to the complainant's satisfaction, a formal complaint should be made in writing, addressed to the Head Teacher.

Once a formal written complaint has been received, the matter will be investigated fully and a written response given by the head teacher with any actions taken clearly listed.

**Stage 3:**

Should Stage 2 fail to resolve the problem to the complainant's satisfaction, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Governing Body who will contact the complainant and arrange a meeting at the earliest convenience to both parties. This meeting will be minuted. A written response will be given with any actions taken clearly listed.

**Stage 4:**

Should Stage 3 fail to resolve the problem to the complainant's satisfaction, the matter should be referred to the appeal committee which will consist of not less than three members. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the panel may be members of the Governing Body (not the chair).

Receipt of the letter of complaint will be acknowledged within 10 working days.

**Role of the Complaints Appeals Panel**

The role of the Complaints Appeal Panel is to review the complaint made by an individual and the response of the school or individual to that complaint. It is NOT an adversarial process therefore there will not be an opportunity for either party to enter into a debate with the other over the information presented to the panel.

The panel will hear information from all parties and then reach a decision. A meeting will be arranged within 20 working days of receipt of the written complaint, at which the complainant will be invited to present his/her case.

See Appendix 1 for the conduct of the hearing.

The Complaints Appeal Panel will communicate its decision to all concerned parties, in writing, within 10 working days of the hearing. This communication will include:

- an explanation of how the decision has been reached
- any action to be taken fully recognises the responsibilities for Safeguarding Children.

**Stage 5:**

Should Stage 4 fail to resolve the problem to the complainant's satisfaction, the complainant should be referred to DFE & OFSTED complaints procedures.

**CONCLUSION**

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff of Pauntley CofE Primary School are always ready to listen to criticism and challenge from their parents and to respond positively to these in order to bring about improvement. They acknowledge that all members of the school community are entitled to have their points of view heard, and seek to ensure that complaints are resolved speedily and effectively.

It is anticipated that the implementation of this policy will be a significant aid in achieving these aims.

Other policies related to: Whistle Blowing, Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct

## **APPENDIX 1 FORMAL COMPLAINT TO SCHOOL'S GOVERNING BODY**

The procedure will be as set out below. The Hearing will be minuted.

### **1. Conduct of Hearing**

- I. The complaint will be heard by the panel. The Complainant, School's Representative or Person Complained About (PCA) will usually be present. All parties are able to bring a representative with them to support them. These representatives should not form part of the presentations of either party. The panel must be informed that a representative will be joining the meeting.
- II. Procedure explained, including the role of clerk.
- III. Complainant will present details of their complaint to the panel.
- IV. Questions to complainant by the panel in order to establish clarity.
- V. A representative of the school or Person Complained About will present details of the school's or their individual response to the complaint up to the point of the hearing.
- VI. Questions to the school's representative and/or PCA by the panel in order to establish clarity.
- VII. Concluding remarks by chair and explanation of what happens next.
- VIII. Conduct of all participants at the hearing:
- IX. It is expected that all participants will behave in a reasonable manner. The purpose of the hearing is to consider the facts and opinions presented by all parties and reach a decision. **THE PANEL ALONE HAS THE RIGHT TO QUESTION ANY PARTICIPANT.** This is not an adversarial procedure and each participant is reminded that they may only speak directly to the panel during their scheduled time. Any participant who behaves in an adversarial way or who does not follow the procedure laid down by the panel at the start of the hearing (ii) will be asked to leave and the hearing will be conducted without them.

### **2. The Decision**

- I. The committee can:
  - a. uphold the complainant in full
  - b. uphold it in part
  - c. dismiss it.
- II. The Complainant, School's Representative and/or PCA will be informed in writing as soon as possible, but no longer than ten days after the Panel's decision. The Head teacher and the governing body will also be informed of the decision.
- III. There is no further recourse to the school for the Complainant.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the findings of the Complaints Appeal Panel they will have recourse to the DFE & OFSTED.

## APPENDIX 2

The Education Reform Act 1988 requires the establishment of arrangements for the consideration of parental complaints relating to the school's provision for the National Curriculum.

If a parent wishes to register a complaint regarding the failure of the school to provide a curriculum in line with the Act, including religious education and worship, then the head Teacher, in the first instance, should be approached. The school's governing body and the Young Person's Learning Agency might also be involved.

On any other matter, and dissatisfaction should also, in the first instance, be expressed to the Head Teacher.

Complaints for which a Specific Procedure is laid down:

**a) Child Protection**

Any complaint involving an allegation of child abuse should immediately be referred to the Gloucestershire Local Authority. In cases where the allegation is against a member of staff, contact: Jane Bee, Assistant Education Officer – Tel 01452 426994 jane.bee@gloucestershire.gov.uk

**b) Complaints against failure to assess a child's Special Educational Needs.**

If the complaint is about the school's responsibilities at the Additional Needs Level, the Head Teacher should deal with the complaint. If the complaint concerns statutory assessment or children with an Education, Health and Care plan, the parent should contact Gloucestershire Local Authority – SEN casework.

**c) Complaints about non-availability of a school place**

If a place at the parents' preferred school is not available and parents are not prepared to accept the place offered at another school, they have the right to appeal to the school appointed appeals panel at the local authority. Contact the Head Teacher in the first instance.

**d) Exclusion of pupils from school**

Complaints about exclusion of pupils from school by the Head Teacher will be considered by the Governing Body Exclusion panel.

**e) Complaints about the curriculum**

Complaints within this category include those concerning: - provision of the National Curriculum - provision of Religious Education and worship - exemptions from the National Curriculum - operation of charging policy in relation to the curriculum - compliance with regulations about the provision of information.

Complaints should be dealt with by the head teacher.

**f) Complaints against staff**

If it appears that disciplinary action against a member of staff may be necessary, the Conduct Procedures detailed in the GLA Conduct Policy should be followed.

**g) Confidential complaints by staff ("Whistle Blowing")**

Please see our Whistle Blowing Policy. 'Whistle Blowing' allows school staff who are concerned about possible malpractice or corruption at work to raise such issues in confidence. Areas covered by the Code include: - gifts, hospitality, and sponsorship; - use of school facilities and equipment; - membership of a secret society.

**h) Complaints about Racist Incidents**

A racist incident is defined as "any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person". This definition has been agreed by the Government, the LA and Police Service. Guidance on responding to racist incidents is provided in the LA guidance "Racial Harassment in Schools", which can be found on their website.

### Appendix 3

### COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete this form and return it to the Head Teacher (or Clerk to the Governing Body) who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your Name:	
Your Address:	
Daytime Telephone Number:	
Evening Telephone Number:	

Relationship with school e.g parent of a child on the school's roll:	
Child's Name (if relevant to your complaint):	

Please give concise details of your complaint, (including dates, names of witnesses etc.) to allow the matter to be fully investigated.

You may wish to continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents

Number of additional pages attached

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint (i.e. whom have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)

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What do you hope might reasonably contribute to a resolution of the problem at this stage?

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Signature:

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Date:

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**SCHOOL USE**

<b>Received by:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Acknowledgement sent by:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

**Complaint referred to:**

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	



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Signature:

Date:

**SCHOOL USE**

<b>Received by:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Acknowledgement sent by:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

**Complaint referred to:**

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	