



# Christ Church

## Church of England Primary School

Being Thankful, Celebration, Fairness, Forgiveness, Honesty, Love for All

### **COMPLAINTS POLICY**

The ethos of our school is embedded in our key Christian values

Honesty

Forgiveness

Love for all

Celebration

Fairness

Being Thankful

**This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and this policy supports this commitment.**

*Policy approved: October 2016 by Gov Policy Committee      Review Date: October 2019*

## **Embedding Pupil Safeguarding Awareness in the Curriculum**

All teachers incorporate elements of safeguarding into their lessons where appropriate. This involves:

- Informal conversations;
- Teacher/pupil discussions;
- Briefings for outings and trips (road safety/stranger danger etc.);
- The implementing of our e-Safety Policy regarding ICT usage;
- An awareness of any potential hazards in lessons – identifying risks and dangers.

Safeguarding is also about pupils' emotional well-being. Teachers encourage pupils to speak out if there is something worrying them, or if they are aware of, or witness something unacceptable, untoward or disturbing. Teachers promote tolerance and respect for each other and acceptance of individual differences. Teachers help pupils develop confidence and resilience and discuss what to do if things go wrong. They are approachable and show their willingness to help pupils at all times.

## **British Values**

At Christ Church C of E Primary School we promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

This includes:

- paired and group work as sharing and working together
- making choices with an understanding that the freedom to choose and have other views is respected and tolerated
- debating social issues with an understanding of how people can influence decision-making through the democratic process
- an appreciation that school rules protect individual children and are essential for their wellbeing and safety
- an acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) are accepted and tolerated without discrimination through school council elections, persuasive writing, and by promoting our Christian school values and Fruits of the Spirit as guidelines for behaviour choices.

## **Statement of Aims**

Christ Church is a Christian School where purposeful learning, stimulus and a full partnership between teachers and parents encourage each child to reach his / her potential.

Within a safe, friendly and caring environment, pupils are encouraged to develop their academic, physical, spiritual and emotional capacities. The school seeks to help children recognise their place in the community and to accept their responsibilities as they grow up. In a time of change for education, Christ Church understands the need for effective management of all resources so as to provide the maximum opportunities for learning for its children.

## **Introduction**

We strive to provide a good education for all our children. The head teacher and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents or guardians. The following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases.

The difference between a concern and a complaint:

A 'concern' may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A complaint may be generally defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

If any parents are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the school, we encourage them to talk to the child's class teacher immediately.

All complaints are dealt with by the Governing Body

All parents have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

## **Aims**

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints, and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding. In all cases we put the interests of the child above all else. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

## **The complaints process**

### **The Informal Stage**

It is everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally without the need to invoke formal procedures.

Any person, including members of the general public may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that the school provides, unless separate statutory [procedures apply (such as exclusions or admissions)].

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. In our experience most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress.

Where parents feel that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment through the school office to discuss it with the Deputy Head teacher. The Deputy

Head teacher considers any such concern very seriously, and investigates each case thoroughly. Most concerns are normally resolved by this stage. If concerns are not resolved then this will be passed to the Head teacher for an informal discussion.

Should any parents have a complaint about the headteacher, they should first make an informal approach to the Chair of Governors, who will investigate it. The Chair of Governors will do all s/he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if parents are unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined below.

Complaints against the Chair of Governors or any individual Governor should be made in writing to the Clerk of the Governing body.

### **The Formal Stage**

Contact the Headteacher in writing and ask for an appointment to discuss the matter, giving details of your concerns. The Headteacher will look into the issues you have raised and respond once the relevant facts have been established.

In the unlikely event that the Headteacher has been unable to resolve the issues to your satisfaction, a formal complaint should be made to the governing body. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint, and how the school has handled it so far. The parent should send this written complaint to the chair of governors c/o the school. The Chair or a nominated Governor will investigate and respond directly to you. Complaints are not shared with the whole governing body except in general terms in case an appeals panel is required.

### **The Panel Hearing Stage**

Very few parental concerns reach this formal stage. A formal complaint is heard when all previous stages have been undertaken and the issue remains unresolved.

If you decide to take this formal action, you will need to write to the Governing Body (via the Clerk to the Governors), at the school, stating that you wish to make a formal complaint. The Governing Body will convene a small panel of governors, who have not been involved previously, to look in detail at the issues you raise. One member of the panel will be completely independent of the school, the management and the governors and will be from the Diocese, or the local Governor Service team at the local authority or from a different school.

You will be invited to attend a meeting of the panel to discuss your complaint. You will be given at least 14 days notice of the panel hearing. After fully considering your complaint the panel will write to you within 14 days to inform you of its decision.

After hearing all the evidence, the governors will consider their decision and inform the parent about it in writing. The governors do all they can to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction.

For most complaints about a school, the decision of the panel is the last stage in the procedure.

If any parent is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then s/he is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

## **Monitoring and review**

The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The headteacher logs all complaints received by the school, and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis.

Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

This policy follows advice from the Department for Education - Best practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016. It is reviewed every three years, or before if necessary.

Date: October 2016

Next review: October 2019

## **Appendix 1**

### **Unreasonable complainants**

Christ Church Primary School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Christ Church Primary School defines unreasonable complainants as *'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'*.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:-

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:-

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Head teacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues the Head teacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Christ Church Primary School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from Christ Church Primary School.

Reference: *Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016*  
*Departmental advice for maintained schools, maintained nursery schools and local authorities.*