

**ST. HILD'S  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL**

**Policy Document**

**COMPLAINTS POLICY**

**At St. Hild's we aim to serve our community by providing high quality education in a Christian context. We are a comprehensive school guaranteeing equal opportunities, a responsive curriculum and a supportive community. We expect to find God at work in our school.**

*The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.*

***"I have come that they may have life in all its fullness (John 10:10)"***

**St. Hild's Church of England School works well as part of the education service. As our mission statement says, we hope that parents won't need to complain about any part of school life, however, if a problem should arise, this document sets out the procedure to which we will work. We have used the DCSF's Guidance on School Complaints Procedures, published in 2003 to put together this document.**

**Preface**

St Hild's Church of England School, in accordance with Christian principles and values, aim to serve our community by providing an education of the highest quality. We strive to ensure "excellence for all" is a reality, promoting the growth of wisdom and learning. As a Church of England School, we aim to develop Christian values such as care, equality, honesty, respect and responsibility. We value the uniqueness of each individual and support the development of a rich and fulfilling spiritual life for all of our community.

We aim to develop self-esteem, model conflict resolution and are committed to justice and compassion. Mutual respect and trust are central to our community and we expect high standards in all aspects of school life.

This policy and its associated procedures are based on these key principles and values.

**Introduction**

St Hild's Church of England School prides itself on the quality of education provided for its pupils. However, if parents or carers have concerns, they can expect any issues to be treated seriously by the school in accordance with this policy document.

The Complaints Policy has been created to deal with any complaint against a member of staff or the school as a whole, relating to aspects of the school or the provision of facilities or services.

- A complaint can be brought by a parent or carer of a registered child at the school or any person who has been provided with a service/facility at the school. This person is referred to as the complainant
- It is expected that complaints will be expressed reasonably and in moderate language

- Schools may have a nominated member of staff with responsibility for the operation and management of the school complaints procedure. At St Hild's Church of England School, the Headteacher's PA will be the first point of contact
- A concern becomes a complaint only when the complainant asserts the school has acted wrongly in some significant decision, action or failure to take action
- Even when a complaint has been made it can be resolved or withdrawn at any stage.

## **Aims**

In line with the Education Act 2002, St Hild's Church of England School will:

- Encourage the resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- Allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of any progress
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- Respect people's desire for confidentiality
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress where necessary
- Provide information to the School's Senior Management Team so that services can be improved

## **Monitoring and recording complaints**

At all stages of the complaints procedure the following information should be recorded:

- Name of the complainant
- Date and time at which complaint was made
- Details of the nature of the complaint
- Desired outcome of the complainant
- How the complaint is being investigated (including written records of any interviews held)
- Results and conclusions of investigations
- Any action taken
- The complainant's response
- Record of any subsequent action if required

## **Special Circumstances**

- The procedures below may not be followed in the event of a matter related to child protection, when the approved Child Protection procedures will be followed
- If the complaint suggests that a child has been at risk of significant harm through violence, emotional abuse, sexual interference or neglect, it may be referred without further notice to Children's Social Care and/or to the Social Services Authority for the area in which the child lives
- If a Social Services Authority decides to investigate a situation, this may postpone or supersede investigation by the Headteacher or Governing Body
- Where a matter can be resolved through a legal appeal, it will not be considered as a formal complaint. The key areas are: admissions decisions; certain decisions relating to formal assessment of special educational needs; and decisions to permanently exclude a child

## **Procedure**

This procedure applies to any complaint about provision in the School by a parent or carer of a registered child at the School or any person who has been provided with a service/facility at the School.

### **Stage 1: Dealing with concerns informally**

- The School recognises that the vast majority of complaints and concerns can be resolved informally
- The complainant must feel able to raise concerns and complaints with the School, either in person, by telephone or in writing (including electronic communications)

A preliminary discussion may be undertaken to help clarify if he or she is making a complaint or expressing an opinion, and whether they wish to take it further.

- The member of staff dealing with the concern should make sure that the complainant is clear what action (if any) or monitoring of the situation has been agreed
- The process should be completed speedily and concluded in writing or by telephone or a face to face meeting with appropriate detail
- Where no satisfactory solution has been found, the complainant should be informed that he or she will need to consider whether to make a formal complaint in writing to the Headteacher

### **Stage 2: Dealing with a formal complaint**

- If any member of staff receives a complaint it should be passed on, in writing, to the Headteacher's PA. The Headteacher's PA will then log the complaint
- The Headteacher's PA will discuss the complaint with the Headteacher, who will appoint an appropriate senior member of staff, usually a Deputy or Assistant Headteacher to investigate the complaint
- The Headteacher's PA will contact the complainant via letter within 5 school days of the receipt of the complaint in order to confirm that the matter is being considered and to clarify any issues
- The senior member of staff appointed to investigate the complaint will investigate the complaint in discussion with staff and pupil/s, make a written record of the investigation undertaken and its outcomes and send a written report to the Headteacher's PA with advice as to a suitable resolution of the complaint
- The Headteacher's PA will inform the Headteacher of the outcome of all investigations
- The Headteacher will respond to the complainant via letter with the outcome of all investigations within 10 school days of the initial complaint being made; where possible. Where a complaint is lengthy or complex a longer time-scale may be necessary
- Where a complaint is made against the Headteacher, the Headteacher's PA will refer it to the Chair of Governors

### **Stage 3: Complaint Heard by Headteacher**

- If a resolution cannot be reached through the procedures in Stages 1 or 2, the Headteacher will re-investigate the matter and hold a discussion with the complainant in order to reach an agreed solution
- Finally if there is no agreement, or if the complaint is with regard to the

Headteacher, the complainant can write to the Governors through the Chair of the Governors and the matter will be considered by the Governing Body Complaints Committee.

#### **Stage 4 – Complaint Heard by Governing Bodies' Complaints Committee**

- Complaints at this stage should be made in writing and addressed to the Chair of the Governing Body no later than 10 school days following receipt of a Stage 3 outcome. The Chair of Governors, or a nominated Governor, will convene a Governing Body Complaints Committee
- Written acknowledgement of the complaint will be made within 5 school days informing the complainant their complaint will be heard within 20 school days
- A Complaints Committee will be arranged with 3 members of the Governing Body, the Headteacher and the complainant; 5 days' notice will be given to all attending. The Chair of the Complaints Committee should write to the complainant to explain how the review will be conducted. The letter should be copied to the Headteacher
- At the meeting everyone's case will be put across and discussed. The Complaints Committee should reconsider the issues raised in the original complaint and not confine themselves to consideration of procedural issues.

The meeting should allow for:

- The complainant to explain his or her complaint and the Headteacher to explain the reasons for his or her decision
- The Headteacher to question the complainant about the complaint and the complainant to question the Headteacher
- The Complaints Committee to have an opportunity to question both the complainant and the Headteacher
- Any party to have the right to bring witnesses (subject to the approval of the Chair of Complaints Committee) and all parties having the right to question all the witnesses;
- A final statement by the Headteacher and complainant.
- A written response from the Chair of Governors Complaints Committee to the complainant will be made within 15 school days. The letter will explain if there are any further rights of appeal and, if so, to whom they need to be addressed.

#### **The Remit of the Complaints Committee**

The Complaints Committee can:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint e.g. refer to full Governing Body
- Recommend changes to the School's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

#### **Malicious or vexatious complaints**

Where complaints are deemed after investigations to be malicious or unnecessarily time wasting they may be referred by the Headteacher to the Governing Body and further action will be considered.

### **Role of the Local Authority**

Please note that as a Church of England School, the Local Authority has no powers to investigate a complaint on behalf of a complainant.

### **Role of the Secretary of State, Department for Education**

If **after completing the 4 stages of the School's Complaints Procedure** the complainant is unhappy with the way in which the School has dealt with the complaint, they may be able to approach the Secretary of State, Department for Education to intervene **in certain circumstances**.

For the Secretary of State to intervene following a complaint, he or she needs to be sure that either:

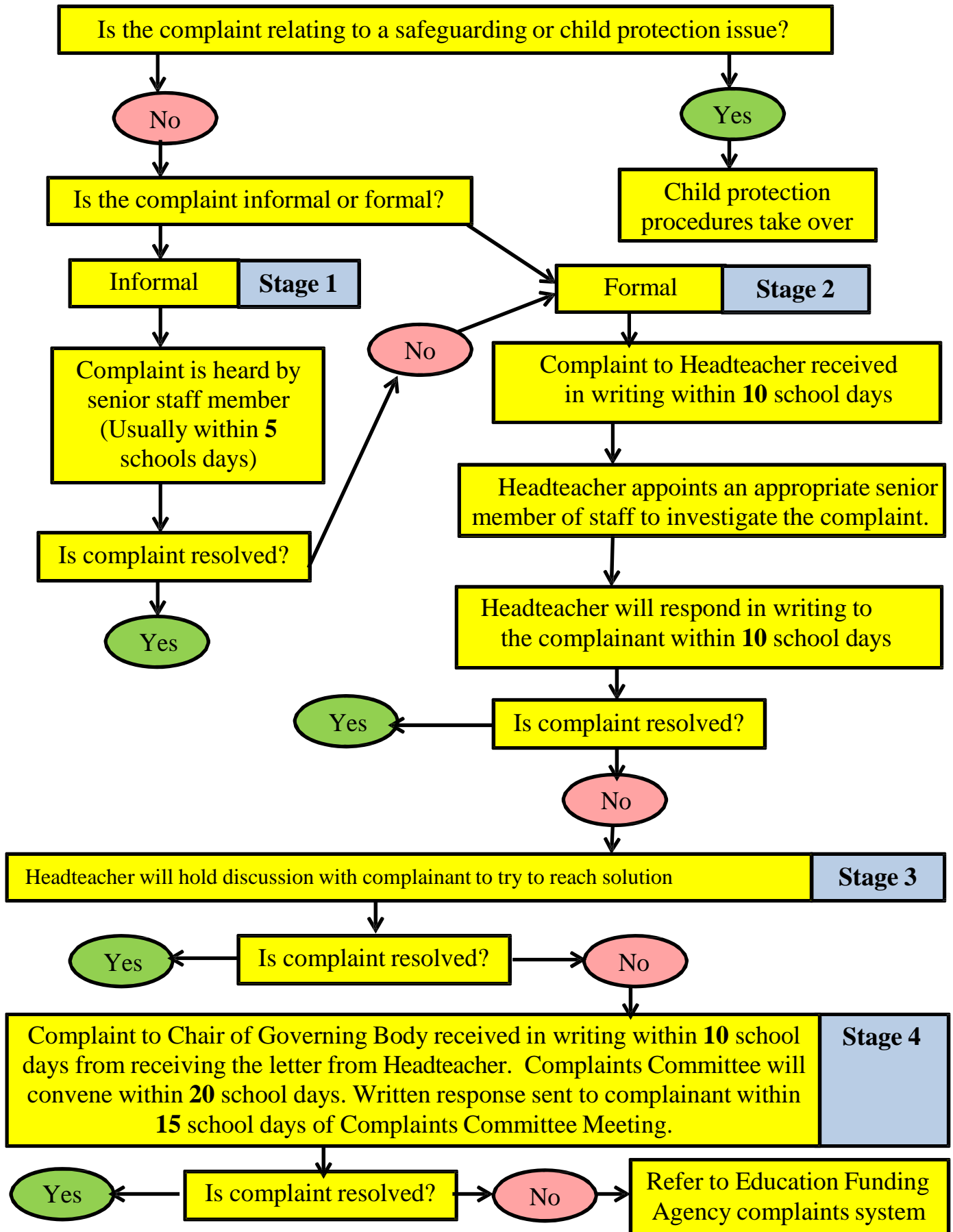
- The School has acted or is proposing to act unreasonably in the exercise or performance of its functions imposed by or under the Education Act 1996; or
- The School has failed to discharge any duty imposed by or for the purposes of the Education Act 1996.

<b>Complaints Policy</b>
<b>Linked to</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Freedom of Information Policy</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Safe Guarding Children and Child Protection Policy</b></li> </ul>

Signed.....Headteacher	<b>Review Date: March 2018</b>
Signed.....Chair of Governors	

Revision Date	Version	Status
6 <sup>th</sup> March 2017	9-5	Approved @ Full Governors 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2017

## St Hild's Church of England School Complaints Process Summary



In the event of a complaint being made against the Headteacher then the Headteacher's PA will contact the Chair of Governors.