



Join the faith and learning journey



St Antony's Roman Catholic Primary School

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

St. Antony's School is part of the Roman Catholic community of the Holy Family, where Jesus Christ is our inspiration as we raise standards and aspirations for all of our children.

INCLUSION STATEMENT

In this school, we are educating our children to:

- know who they are - a special and unique gift from God
- know why they are here - we all have a purpose and responsibility to look after God's world
- work hard and aim high for their future- find and use their God given talents to be what God intended them to be.

We are a Catholic community, in a modern society, where everyone is equal. The most loving and merciful Jesus Christ is our role model, and He welcomed everyone. All children are welcome in our school, and they and their families become part of our St. Antony's family. We will love and nurture them, and do our best to help them, on their faith and learning journeys, to become what God wants them to be.

Policy Name: COMPLAINTS POLICY

Adopted by Governors: (signed on hard copy)

Date:October 2023.....

Review date:October 2024.....

COMPLAINTS POLICY

General Principles:

- This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the services that it provides.
- An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- To allow for a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than 3 months after the event, being complained of, will not be considered.

Raising a concern or complaint

1) Informal Stage

It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage.

In the case of serious concerns, 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 uncertain about who to contact, please seek advice from the school office.

2) Formal Stage

If your concern or complaint is not resolved at the informal stage you must put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Head Teacher, [or to the Clerk to the governing body, for the attention of the Chair, if the complaint is about the Head Teacher] who will be Responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately.

A Complaint Form is provided to assist you.

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 that you would like the school to take to resolve your concern. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.

Please pass the completed form, in a sealed envelope to the Head Teacher or to the Clerk to the governing body, as appropriate.

The Head Teacher [or Chair] may invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to seek 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]. If not arrangements will be made for the matter to be fully investigated, using the appropriate procedure. In any case you should learn 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 anticipated 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 handling 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, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure. The procedure described below will be followed. A Review Request form is provided for your convenience.

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 receipt of your request.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests to make oral representations 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.

You, 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.

If you believe that the Governing Body has acted illegally or arbitrarily in handling the complaint, then you may make representations to the Secretary of State for Education.

St Antony's R C Primary School Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to 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:

Relationship with school [e.g. parent of a pupil on the schools roll]:

.....

Pupil's name [if relevant to your complaint]:

.....

Your Address:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

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

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

Number of Additional pages attached =

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

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

Signature:

Date:

School use:

Date Form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to:			
Date:			

St Antony's R C Primary School Complaint Review Request Form

Please complete this form and return it to 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:

Dear Sir

I submitted a formal complaint to the school on and am dissatisfied by the procedure that has been followed.

My complaint was submitted to and I received a response from on

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 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:

School use

Date Form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Request referred to:			
Date:			

Investigation Procedure

The investigation of an allegation or a complaint should always be carried out thoroughly and responsibly, irrespective of whether the complaint appears to be trivial or serious. The outcome of such an investigation will have significance not only for the complainant but also for any member of staff against whom a complaint has been made.

Any anonymous complaint will not be investigated, unless there are exceptional circumstances. These would include serious concerns such as Child Protection issues or bullying allegations, where the school should either involve appropriate external agencies or else conduct its own internal review to test whether there is any corroborative evidence which might trigger a formal investigation.

Preparing for an Investigation

Where the school receives a formal complaint, it should be acknowledged and a commitment made that the complaint will be investigated and the outcome of the investigation notified to the complainant in due course.

It is essential that there is a clear understanding of the complaint. Where necessary the nature of the complaint should be confirmed with the complainant. e.g. through an initial meeting. [If an investigator is appointed there may need to be more detailed follow-up.]

Any member of staff against whom a complaint has been made, should be notified that a complaint has been received and that the appropriate school procedure will be followed. It is usually not appropriate to provide the member of staff with details of the evidence on which the complaint is based until any investigation has been completed. However, the member of staff does need to be able to understand the nature of any allegations against them.

Once any complaint has been confirmed the school needs to determine which procedure [school or LA] is most appropriate and to select an appropriate person to conduct any investigation.

Conducting the investigation

Arrangements should be agreed so that accurate notes can be taken of all interviews and the outcome of the investigation be accurately recorded.

The complainant should be given the opportunity to offer documentation and to identify potential witnesses or sources of evidence.

The member of staff subject to the complaint should be advised that they may be accompanied by a friend or trade union representative when invited to be interviewed.

Where children are potential witnesses, discretion should be exercised over their involvement. Pupils should only be interviewed when the nature of the complaint is sufficiently serious to warrant it and adult witnesses are not available. Only in extreme circumstances will younger pupils be interviewed.

Any interviews should be conducted as soon as possible to ensure that recollections are as fresh as possible and to minimise the possibility that evidence will become tainted through witnesses discussing alleged incidents with other persons.

In conducting interviews, the investigator should prepare the questions to be asked prior to the interview. These can always be supplemented during the interview. The investigator should allow the interviewee to answer in their own way. Their responses should be listened to attentively. Any temptation to cut an interviewee short or to seek to "lead" them must be resisted. The interviewee should be given the opportunity of providing other relevant information at the end of the interview.

Interviewees should, however, be advised that their responses must be confined to the substance of the complaint. Any attempt by the interviewee to introduce information relating to other members of staff or to issues unrelated to the complaint should be resisted.

The investigator should avoid reaching conclusions or passing judgement until the investigation has been completed and their report is being written.

The report may contain:

- a brief outline of the process that has been followed
- a statement of the complaint/concern
- a summary of the findings, linked to the relevant evidence
- any recommendations for future action
- annexes containing copies of witness statements and other evidence collected during the investigation

The report of the investigation will usually be confidential to the school, as it is likely to contain sensitive personal information. If a request is received to release the report, under either the Data Protection Act or Freedom of Information, the school should seek legal advice from the LA.

A summary of the process undertaken and the outcome of the investigation may be provided to the complainant. Caution must be exercised in reporting back to the complainant as revealing certain details may prejudice the ability of an employee to continue in post.

Following consideration of the report by the relevant body, any final recommendations may also be shared with the parties, unless there is good reason not so to do. Wherever possible, recommendations should be constructive and not punitive.

The complainant should be advised that he/she may, if they are not satisfied that the appropriate procedure has been followed, request a review of that process by the governing body.

Blackburn with Darwen Complaints about a school within Blackburn with Darwen Local Education Authority

Introduction

The policy of the School is to work in partnership with parents/carers and the wider community. It is based on the belief that co-operation and a sense of joint purpose between staff, parents/carers and the School will assist in ensuring open and positive relationships.

From time to time, however, parents and members of the public may express concern or make a complaint, either orally or in writing, about some aspect of the conduct/operation of the school, the conduct of the Headteacher, an individual member of staff, the Governing Body or an individual governor. The School will always give serious consideration to concerns and complaints that are brought to its attention. However, anonymous complaints will not normally be considered. In considering concerns or complaints, the School will ensure that they are dealt with effectively and with fairness to all parties. The vast majority of concerns and issues raised by parents/carers will be resolved informally. Where a complaint has not been resolved informally, then the formal procedures set out below will be followed.

What if my complaint is about the governing body or an individual governor?

If you are complaining about an individual governor, you need to contact the Chair of Governors so they can investigate. Please mark your complaint private and confidential and

address it to:

Chair of Governors

C/O St Antony's R C Primary School

Shadsworth Road

Blackburn BB1 2HP

If you are complaining about the Chair of Governors, contact Governor

Services governors@blackburn.gov.uk (please also see contact details below). They will tell you who is the nominated governor to deal with such complaints. If you are complaining about the governing body, please contact Governor Services (please see contact details below).

What can I expect to happen?

Your complaint will be listened to and investigated. This does take time, so please allow a reasonable amount of time – about 15 school days is fair. We will tell you if we think it will take longer than this. If we agree that your complaint is justified, we will tell you what action we are going to take.

If this involves disciplinary action against a member of staff, this will remain confidential and we will not be able to tell you details of this (because of employment law). The Governing Body, not the Local Education Authority (LEA), is responsible for deciding if disciplinary action should be taken.

If we do not think your complaint is justified, we will tell you why. We will confirm our reasons in writing.

What if I am not satisfied with the way in which the school has dealt with my complaint?

If you are not satisfied, you have a right of appeal – and we will tell you how to do this. If the head and the governor nominated to deal with complaints have been involved and you are still not satisfied, it will go to governors who have not previously been involved. If you are still not satisfied, you can contact the local education authority.

How can the local education authority help?

In most cases, the LEA only investigates how the school and governing body handled the complaint – NOT the complaint itself. The LEA will only become involved after the school and the governing body have tried to resolve the complaint. The LEA will give you its opinion on how the complaint was handled.

How long will it take?

Complaints should be handled quickly and most are generally dealt with within a few days. Most investigations by the school should be completed within 15 school days but some may take longer. If this is the case, the school will keep you up to date with developments.

Who can help?

If you are worried about making a complaint you can have a friend, representative or interpreter to support you. Making a complaint will not affect your child/children.

The Local Education Authority

For help or general advice please contact:

Andrew Hutchinson, Governor Support Manager, Children's Services Department,
Blackburn

with Darwen Borough Council, West Wing, Floor 2, The Exchange, Ainsworth

Street, BLACKBURN, BB1 6AD. Telephone: (01254) 666507 or e-mail:
andrew.hutchinson@blackburn.gov.uk

Approved and adopted by the Governing Body on October 2023 and will be reviewed in October 2024

including DFE Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff which is now included in Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016 (Part 4 page 40) www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

Reviewed October 2023