



December 24

St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Serial and Vexatious Complaints

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| Date ratified by Governors: | |
| Date of next review of the policy: | December 2026 |
| This policy is reviewed: | Annually |

Let the light of Christ Shine Through our School

St Anne's Catholic Primary School
6 Durham Street
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St Anne's Catholic Primary School

INTRODUCTION

St Anne's Catholic School

As the first educators of their children, parents have a duty to take an active interest in their school. Canon Law requires that there is a partnership between the parent and the school "...there must be the closest co-operation between parents and the teachers to whom they entrust their children to be educated. In fulfilling their task, teachers are to collaborate closely with parents and willingly listen to them." (Canon 796).

The partnership between the parent and the school is integral to the ethos and mission of a Catholic school and should be characterised by a mutual respect by which parents feel they are able to bring their concerns to the attention of someone in the school, at any time, with the expectation they will be listened to and their concerns addressed.

Dealing with Serial and Vexatious Complaints

Definition of a complaint

The clear expression of dissatisfaction by a person or persons, not employed by the school or on the Governing Board, with any interest in the school about the standard of teaching, conduct, actions or lack of action, of members of the teaching or non-teaching staff employed at the school or anyone else working under the direction of the head teacher.

All complaints should be dealt with fairly and impartially and, to provide a high quality of service to those who complain, schools will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, schools do not expect their staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and they will act to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Unreasonable complainants are defined 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

Vexatious complaints

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, when the complaints procedure has been exhausted, and they attempt to reopen the issue or continue to not be satisfied with the outcome, the chair of governors will inform them in writing that the matter is now closed as the

complaint has been heard according to the published Complaint Procedures and there is nothing further that the school can offer.

If the complainant writes again on the same issue, then the correspondence may be recognised as vexatious and there is no obligation on the part of the school to respond.

St Anne's 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 our school.

St Anne's defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- 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 complaint's investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- 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 and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with

- uses threats to intimidate
- making telephone calls that are demanding, threatening and abusive
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the 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.

Where a complaint is made and involves telephone calls or emails the contents will be viewed or listened to, to ensure that all concerns have been addressed reasonable and rationally.

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

If the behaviour continues, the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact St Anne's causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from St Anne's school.

Based on the diocesan '**Guidance to Governing Bodies on the Management of School Complaint Procedures**' (September 2018)

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| Date agreed by governing body on Summer 2025 | Signature of Chair or Vice Chair |
| Date agreed for review Summer 2026 | Frequency of Review Annual |
| Responsibility for Review PPC Committee | |