



Complaints Policy

Purpose:	To inform all Tabernacle School staff of their responsibility regarding the Complaints Policy
Approval Body:	The Trustees of Tabernacle School
LT Lead Person:	Mrs P. A. Wilson
Lead Trustee for Policy:	Mr Ron Montaque
Date of Approval:	June 2022
Proposed Review Date:	June 2023

1. Introduction

1.1 We believe that our school provides a good education for all our pupils, and that the Principal and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all our parents. However, the school has procedures in place to deal with any complaints by parents. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

1.2 If any parent is unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or has any concern relating to our school, we encourage that person to talk in the first place to the pupil's class teacher immediately.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1 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 and, in all cases, we put the interests of the pupil above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved. In all instances we aim to maintain good working relationships between all people involved with the school.

3. The complaints process

3.1 There are 3 stages outlined in the complaints procedure:

- **Stage 1:** Speak to the class teacher of the pupil concerned
- **Stage 2:** Referral to Vice Principal or the Principal
- **Stage 3:** Complaint referred to the board of Trustees

3.2 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. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each pupil is happy at school, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the pupil's progress.

3.3 Where a parent feels 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 to

discuss it with the Deputy Leader who takes any such complaint very seriously and will investigate each case thoroughly reporting to the Principal. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.

3.4 If it is still not resolved, at this stage the Principal will investigate and make every effort to bring about a satisfactory conclusion. All complaints received will be acknowledged within 7 working days.

Should a parent have a complaint about the Principal they should first make an informal approach in writing marked 'Private and Confidential' to a member of Trustees who is obliged to investigate it. The trustee will do all s/he can to resolve the issue through dialogue with the school. If the parent is still unhappy with the outcome then a formal complaint should be made.

3.5 If the first two stages fail to resolve the matter then a formal complaint should be made to the board of Trustees. The complaint must be made in writing stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far and send it to the chair of Trustees. The Trustees must consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. It arranges a meeting to discuss the complaint, and invites the person making the complaint to attend the meeting, so that s/he can explain his/her complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting. The panel will consist of at least 3 persons one of whom will be independent of the management of the school. The complainant may be accompanied by a representative should s/he so wish.

3.6 After hearing all the evidence, the Trustees consider their decision and inform the parent about it in writing. The Trustees do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction.

3.7 If the complaint is upheld in whole or part the school will do one or more of the following in writing:

- An apology from the staff involved and the Principal
- An admission of failing on the part of the school
- An assurance that the school will take every precaution to ensure that the issue complained about will not occur again
- An outline of the steps taken by the school
- A copy of the findings and recommendations are provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the principal;
- A written record is kept
- Review the policy to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not occur again.

3.8 Bearing in mind the difficulty of investigating any complaint, if the complaint is more than 3 months old it is unlikely to constitute an investigation, due to the length of time that may have elapsed. However there are exceptions to the rule i.e:

- If the complaint is made by a child, there is a good reason why they could not complain sooner.
- If the complaint alleges abuse of a child
- If the complaint alleges criminal activity by a member of staff
- If the complaint alleges and includes evidence that the school acted in breach of the law under which it carries out its duties.

This list is not exhaustive

4. Confidentiality

4.1 All conversations and correspondence will be treated confidentially. Personal information will only be shared between staff and Trustees on a 'need to know' basis. Confidentiality will be maintained within the trustee board to ensure sufficient Trustees have no prior knowledge of the complaint to enable a complaints panel to be convened, if required, at Stage 3.

5. Monitoring and review

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

5.2 Trustees 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.