

# ST DENYS PRIMARY SCHOOL



*St Denys Primary*



*Creativity, Choice, Challenge*



*Achievement for All*



## Complaints Procedure

Reviewed: September 2025

# Aims

To define a complaint

To set out a clear procedure which should be followed in the event of a complaint

To set out timescales for dealing with complaints handled under the school's complaints procedure

# Principles

## Definition of a complaint

One definition of a complaint is 'An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, by a person or persons with a legitimate interest in the school but not being employed at the school, about the standard of teaching of members of the teaching staff, or about the conduct, actions or omissions of members of the teaching or non-teaching staff employed at the school.'

## Four stage process

The model procedure provides for a common four stage process for schools to follow in handling parental/carer complaints. The main aim at all stages in this procedure will be to ensure that the complaint is fully considered and is resolved, in so far as it is possible to do so, to the satisfaction of the complainant. It is not intended that these guidelines should replace the normal discussion which takes place in schools on day-to-day problems and concerns as they arise. It is only where the complainants remain dissatisfied with the outcome of such discussion that further steps may need to be taken.

# Procedures

## Stage 1 (informal stage)

The informal stage is the first complaint stage. Parents/carers should be encouraged to settle the matter with the head teacher, class teacher or designated staff member. Most straightforward complaints and problems are likely to be resolved at this point.

A degree of discretion should always be allowed in dealing with complaints. It may not be appropriate in all situations to advise all parents/carers to put their concerns in writing as this would tend to over formalise the situation and possibly lead to entrenched positions. The parent/carer is advised, where appropriate, to try to resolve problems at a local level, i.e. within the school.

## Stage 2 – School Governors

The second stage (and first formal stage) is where the parent/carer is not satisfied with the informal response or feels it is not appropriate to contact the head teacher. They should be advised to take up the matter in writing with the Chair of Governors (this should be signed and dated and placed in a sealed envelope marked as confidential). This should include the nature of the complaint including times and dates as well as what the complainant would like done in order to resolve the complaint.

Governors should not investigate a complaint that falls outside of this procedure. The complaint will be fully investigated and the parent/carer should be kept informed at all times of the decision making process including outcomes of any investigation and what to do should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation. A decision of the Governors will be sent to the complainant in writing. Any parties named in the complaint must be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

The chair of governors should request external support from the Human Resources Team and/or Governor services.

### **Stage 3 - The Local Authority**

If parent/carers remain dissatisfied after stage 2, the next stage is to contact the Local Authority. The complaint will be addressed by a designated team within team unconnected with the school. At this stage the complaint may well be different from the original complaint lodged as it would include dissatisfaction with the action taken by the school management to resolve the original complaint.

### **Stage 4 – Secretary of State**

If you still feel dissatisfied with the outcome of stages 1-3 above, you can take up your complaint with the Secretary of State at the Department for Education.

### **Timescales**

The following time limits will apply to all complaints handled under the school's complaints procedure:

- ▮ Stage 1 (Informal): Parents/carers seeking to resolve matters of concern should receive a response within 15 working days of making initial contact unless there is a good reason not to do so. The response should offer the complainant a full explanation or set out the steps that are proposed to resolve the complaint.
  
- ▮ Stage 2: Should be responded to in 20 working days.
  
- ▮ Stage 3: Should be responded to in 20 working days.

Where it is not possible to respond to complaints within these timescales, the complainant should be informed in writing of the reason for the delay and given an anticipated response date. The complainant should be allowed a reasonable timescale in which to pursue a complaint.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

### **Monitoring complaints**

Records are kept of all stage 2, stage 3 and stage 4 complaints. Governors will decide whether to include the number of complaints and types of complaint in their annual report to parents.