

Managing serial, persistent, vexatious and unreasonable complaints and behaviour policy

Vision

Our vision is that children are nurtured to love learning, love one another and love God.

‘Love learning, love one another, love God.’

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbour as yourself
(Mark 12)



Policy drafted by: Alison Bateman

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Introduction

The Headteacher and staff deal with specific complaints as part of their day-to-day management of the school in accordance with the School's Complaints Procedure.

The majority of complaints are handled in an informal manner and are resolved quickly, sensitively and to the satisfaction of the complainant. However, there are rare occasions when complainants behave in an unreasonable manner when raising and/or pursuing concerns. The consequences are that the actions of the complainant begins to impact negatively on the day-to day running of the school and directly or indirectly on the overall well-being of the children or staff in the school. In these exceptional circumstances the school may take action in accordance with this policy.

Aims of the policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- Uphold the standards of courtesy and reasonableness that should characterize all communication between the school and persons who wish to express a concern or pursue a complaint;
- Support the well-being of children, staff and everyone else who has legitimate interest in the work of the school, including governors and parents/carers.
- Deal fairly, openly and honestly with those who make persistent or vexatious complaints and those who harass members of staff in school while ensuring that other stakeholders suffer no detriment.

Expectations of the school

Parents/carers/members of the public who raise either informal or formal complaints with the school can expect:

- To have an opportunity to discuss their complaint and attempt to resolve the problem
- To receive a response within a reasonable timeframe
- To be treated with courtesy and respect
- To receive communication about the school's complaint procedure
- When necessary, resolve the problem in line with the complaints procedure
- When necessary, be made aware of the Serial, Persistent or Unreasonable Complaints and/or Harassment including Aggressive Behaviour from Parents and Visitors in School Policy

School's expectations of parents/carers/members of the public

School can expect parents/carers/members of the public who wish to raise problems with the school to:

- Treat all school staff with courtesy and respect
- Respect the needs and wellbeing of pupils and staff
- Avoid any use, or threatened use, of violence to people or property
- Avoid any aggression or verbal abuse
- Recognize the time constraints under which members of staff in schools work and allow the school a reasonable time to respond. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.
- Recognizing that resolving a specific problem can sometimes take some time
- In the case of a formal complaint, follow the School's Complaint Procedure

Types of behaviour that will not be tolerated include:

- Shouting at members of the school community, either in person or over the telephone
- Physically intimidating a member of the school community eg standing very close
- The use of aggressive hand gestures including finger pointing
- Shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- Swearing, discriminatory language, pushing, hitting or spitting
- Spreading malicious and untrue rumours about school or a member of staff in a way designed to cause harm or upset.
- Publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums such as newspapers.
- Threatening a member of the school community – this can be verbal or on social media
- Breaching the school's security procedures.
- Refusing to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- Refusing to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- Insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure, with good practice and the law

- Introducing trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- Raising large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insisting they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- Making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, or seeking to have them replaced
- Changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- Repeatedly making the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- Persisting with actions/correspondence that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific or repetitious
- Persisting with actions/correspondence that causes ongoing stress or is perceived as intimidating/oppressive by any member of the school community
- Refusing to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed
- Seeking an unrealistic outcome
- Knowingly providing falsified information
- Making 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. For complainants who excessively contact Holy Trinity School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number/frequency of contacts that are permissible. This will be reviewed after six months.

This list, whilst comprehensive, is not exhaustive but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour.

School's actions in cases of serial, persistent, or unreasonable complaints or harassment:

In the first instance the school will inform the complainant in writing that his / her behaviour is considered to be becoming unreasonable / unacceptable and, if it is not modified, action may be taken in accordance with this policy.

If the behaviour is not modified the school will take some or all of the following actions as necessary, having regard to the nature of the complainant's behaviour and the effect of this on the school community:

- inform the complainant in writing that his/her behaviour is now considered by the school to be unreasonable/unacceptable and, therefore, to fall under the terms of this policy.

- inform the complainant that all meetings with a member of staff will be conducted with a governor present and that notes of meetings may be taken in the interests of all parties.
- inform the complainant that, except in emergencies, all routine communication with the complainant to the school should be by letter only.
- in the case of physical, or verbal aggression, instructing and informing the complainant about being banned from the school site.
- consider taking advice from the HR / Legal Services of the LA about putting in place a specific procedure for dealing with complaints from the complainant

Serious Incidents

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 Holy Trinity School premises.