



Complaints Policy

School Mission Statement

St. Michael & St. Martin school follows the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, in its daily life through celebration of the Liturgy and through following the values taught in the Gospel of Jesus, by:

- Learning our faith.
- Living our faith.
- Loving our faith.

Thus, the school recognises the dignity of every human person because s/he is a child of God, while fostering awareness of the world's poor. Equality of opportunity for every person is therefore paramount and precludes all forms of discrimination on grounds of colour, gender, race, social class or ability.

The school aims to nurture the spiritual, intellectual and physical growth of each pupil through a holistic approach, which takes due note of the needs of every child while, at the same time, striving for excellence in all aspects of education in a secure environment.

Introduction and Scope

We care about what you think.

The Policy of this School is to work in partnership with parents/carers and the wider community. Therefore, any person, including members of the public, can make a complaint. We try hard to do our best for all our pupils/students. Your views help us plan for the future. We like to know when things are going well. We also want parents/carers to tell us about their worries, concerns or complaints as soon as possible. It is much easier for the school to sort out a recent problem than something that happened some time ago.

Our commitment to you

- We will deal with your concern or complaint in a professional manner.
- It will be looked into thoroughly, fairly and as quickly as possible.
- We will keep you up to date with what we are doing.
- We will apologise if the school has made a mistake.
- We will tell you what we are going to do to put things right.

What to do first

If you have a concern about anything we do, you can tell us by telephone, in person or in writing. If any of these are difficult for you, a friend or advocate can speak to the school on your behalf. Most concerns or complaints will be sorted out quickly either by putting things right or by explaining the School's actions to you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations. We take our duties under equality law seriously and we encourage any person having difficulty accessing this procedure to contact us immediately in order that reasonable adjustments can be made.

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at the formal stage of the procedure.

Please go to your child's class teacher who will either deal with your issue or pass you on to someone who is more able to help.

Please remember that the beginning or end of the school day can be a very busy time. If you talk to a teacher at these times, for practical reasons, it may not be possible to

sort things out there and then. Be prepared for them to make an appointment to see you/to ring you at a more convenient time.

In considering concerns or complaints, the School will ensure that they are dealt with effectively and with fairness to all parties. Where possible, complaints will be resolved informally. Where a complaint has not been resolved informally, then the formal procedures will be followed. Where your concern or complaint is considered sufficiently complex or serious, the school may choose to investigate formally from the outset.

What is a concern or a complaint?

a. A concern or a complaint is defined as:

- An expression of dissatisfaction about the conduct/operation of the School.
- The conduct of actions or lack of actions by a member of staff/the Governing Board/an individual governor.
- Unacceptable delay in dealing with a matter or the unreasonable treatment of a pupil or another person.

b. This procedure does not cover complaints or concerns that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed in the following table, as separate procedures apply (See Appendix 1).

Agreed by Governing Body on: 06.11.24

Chair of Governors- Paul Lemaire

Review Date	:	Autumn Term 2025
Person Responsible	:	Nicola Duggan Sabina Bell

Complaint's procedure does not cover the following:

- Admissions to school
- Inclusion Service and Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- School reorganisation proposals
- Child Protection Investigation
- School Exclusions
- Whistleblowing
- Staff grievance procedures
- Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities
- National Curriculum content
- Early Years
- Foundation Stage
- Statutory Framework
- Collective worship
- Sex Education
- Unauthorised absence fines
- Freedom of Information and Data Protection (GDPR)
- Functions of the Local Authority or Diocese
- For any of the above please ask school Office for advice.

Complaint Procedure

Complaints about the actions of a member of staff other than the Headteacher:

Informal Procedure

Class Teacher

Your first point of contact will always be your child's class teacher as most concerns can be sorted out through this means. Every effort will be made to resolve your concern. Staff will listen to your worries and may also share any actions that they or the school have taken. They will ask you what you would like the school to do to put things right. Of course, this does not mean that in every case they will come round to your point of view, but it will help you and the school to understand both sides. It may also prevent a similar problem arising again.

Headteacher

If you still feel dissatisfied, then at this point you can make an appointment to speak to the Headteacher. This should be made in writing. If your concern is about an action of the Headteacher personally, then you should refer it to the Chair of Governors.

You can address your letter to the school. The Headteacher will conduct a full investigation of the concern and may interview any members of staff or pupils involved. You will receive a written response to your concern.

Formal Procedure

Stage 1

Will be carried out by the Headteacher, a delegated member of staff or a Governor in the school. If the complaint relates to the Headteacher, the complaint will be investigated by a Governor. Although this is a formal investigation into your complaint, it will still be in the spirit of quickly reaching an effective outcome and maintaining positive and productive relationships. All parties need to work together to maintain productive relationships and establish a way forward in partnership. This investigation may call for more information to be gathered before the person investigating can explain what has happened from the perspective of the school or the staff member involved. This way of dealing with your concern or complaint means solving, explaining, clearing up or settling your complaint directly with you, but doing so with a more detailed investigation than at the informal stage.

How does the School Investigation process work?

Once you have raised your concern or made your complaint, the Headteacher, member of staff or Governor who is looking into it will contact you within 5 working days (term time). They can arrange to talk to you face-to-face, on the telephone or they can contact you by letter or email.

For your part, you will need to:

- Tell the school what happened and how you felt about it at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Say what action you would like to see taken as a result.
- Agree the process for resolving your concern or complaint.
- Agree timescales and pathways for communication.
- Treat any person(s) involved in the complaint with respect.

For its part, the school will:

- Listen to your concerns.
- Explain what can happen to resolve your concern or complaint.
- Confirm with you the process that will be followed and who will deal with it.
- Carry out a more detailed investigation into your concern or complaint.
- Produce and supply all parties with a written report of the findings.
- Ensure that any relevant findings are taken forward to influence school practice and policy.

What can I expect from a School Investigation?

Some concerns or complaints may demand more detailed and perhaps time-consuming enquiries, and therefore you should expect an approach that is proportionate to the complaint you have made. The person investigating your concern should keep in regular contact to keep you informed of progress on the matter. Nevertheless, the School Investigation process aims to quickly resolve your concern or complaint and identify any learning from it.

What happens next?

Your concern or complaint will be the subject of a proportionate investigation. This means that the amount of time dedicated to the matter will be in accordance with the seriousness of the matter. At the conclusion, one of a number of things may follow.

These include:

- Resolution by providing information face-to-face or by telephone – as you choose.
 - A letter from the school concluding the matter after a proportionate investigation and explaining what has been done.
 - If your complaint was about an individual, individual communication between you and that person. This is organised through the Headteacher or the person dealing with your complaint
 - A face-to-face meeting with the person working on your concern or complaint and/or the person your complaint was about. The person your concern or complaint was about will need to agree to a face-to-face meeting taking place
- The School Investigation should be completed within 10 working days when you

will receive a letter explaining the findings and any actions that may need to happen as a result. However, in complex matters it may take longer. The person investigating will keep in regular contact with you to keep you informed of progress.

What might happen as a result?

The school could take the following actions to resolve your concern or complaint and will provide feedback to you on such actions:

- Give you information or an explanation to clear up a misunderstanding.
- Apologise on behalf of the school.
- Learn from the issue, accepting that something could have been handled better and explaining what has been done to stop the same thing happening again.
- Arrange action by the Governing Body to address matters of school policy or procedure.
- Arrange feedback and support by the Headteacher to address any issues arising about a member of staff and their actions or behaviour.
- Apologise on behalf of the person your complaint was about, but only if they agree to this. Appeal against the decision made by the school investigation. The School Investigation stage of this complaint's procedure includes an appeal process should you not be satisfied with the outcome of the investigation.

Formal procedure – Stage 2

Following our initial investigation, we will write to you to let you know of your right to appeal and you will have 14 working days to let us know if you would like to do so. (This does not include school holidays where there may be no one in school to respond to your request). If you decide you would like to appeal, we will invite you to attend an appeal meeting and if the date is inconvenient, we will provide an alternative date. You will also receive any paperwork that relates to the initial school investigation 7 days in advance of the appeal meeting.

The appeal panel will be made up of 3 members of the governing body who have had no previous knowledge of the complaint.

Whilst this is part of the formal complaint's procedure, we aim to make the meeting as informal as possible so that all parties can put forward their views in a positive and respectful manner. When the appeal panel has considered all the information made available to them, they will make a decision and inform you in writing of the outcome within 5 working days. Sometimes when a complaint is very complex, and has taken a lot of time, it may be that the Governing Body may have difficulty assembling an appeal panel that fits the criteria of having had no prior knowledge of your complaint. In this case you may request that the school source an independent appeal panel to hear the final stage of your complaint. Following the appeal panel meeting the complaints procedure is complete. If you are still unhappy with the way the school has

managed your complaint, you can submit a complaint to the Department for Education online at www.gov.uk/complain-about-school

For members of the appeal panel

Appeals procedure

The Clerk will arrange a date and time for the appeal to be heard. They will provide all written information at least 3 days prior to the appeal.

The panel must agree a Chair. The Chair will make sure that the correct procedure is followed:

1. Explain purpose and format of the meeting and time scales.
2. Make formal introductions of panel and other parties present.
3. Ask complainant to present their complaint.
4. Allow panel to ask questions.
5. Allow school representative to ask question.
6. Allow school representative to present school case.
7. Allow panel to ask question.
8. Allow complainant to ask questions.
9. Allow both sides to sum up allowing complainant to do so last.
10. Close meeting with clarification of response times of the panel's decision.
11. Finally remind all parties about the confidentiality of the meeting.

The panel will make their decision and the Chair and Clerk will notify both parties of the outcome.