

Trent CE Primary School Governing Body

## Complaints Policy

# Inspired by Christ



### *Kindness Thankfulness Perseverance*

“A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another” Inspired by Jesus’ example, the Trent school community aims to serve one another in love.

We show **kindness** to others because God has shown us great kindness.

We live **thankful** lives, because every good thing comes from God.

We **persevere**, not giving up, because God is our helper.

Approved by committee/GB	Full GB
Ratified by GB	May 2022
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## 1. GENERALLY

*“To err is human, to forgive, divine” (Alexander Pope). Or, as the Bible puts it, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3v23).*

Getting things wrong is a common thread in the whole of humanity and as a school we are very aware that we are not immune to this. We may get things wrong from time to time. Therefore, we want to ensure that when mistakes are made, or where it is felt that mistakes may have been made, there is a clear process to allow complaints to be addressed.

This policy outlines the process of making a complaint and how your complaint will be addressed. Our goal in this is to ensure there is both clear accountability but also a pathway to reconciliation where that is required. Jesus’ death on the cross allowed us to be reconciled to his Father and he urges us to be reconciled with each other.

*“Inspired by Christ, we serve one another in love.”*

At Trent CE Primary School, we have a strong commitment towards working in positive partnership with the whole school community. A school is a busy place where there are many interactions between pupils, parents, carers and staff as part of the every -day life of the school. We have an ethos of respecting the rights of all members of the school community and as part of our curriculum teaching we work to instil this in our children. From time to time something may go wrong, or you may think we can do something better. Where any concerns are raised we aim to resolve these as quickly and as efficiently as possible. Usually concerns that are raised can be resolved very quickly through the school's day to day communication between parents and the school staff. Where a parent may feel that an issue has not been dealt with appropriately it is important, for all involved, that there is a clear and transparent process for a complaint to be looked into and followed up.

## 2. OVERVIEW

### 2.1 Resolving Issues and Complaints

Most issues and complaints can be successfully dealt with informally and we would encourage you to do this however, for those situations where this is not the case, we have a more formal process for you to use as outlined in this document for us to then investigate and deal with complaints.

2.2 From the School’s point of view, we see it as important to try and reach an early resolution to not only promote closure in the matter but enable parents and teaching staff to move forward constructively.

2.3 Please note that if at any stage of the process legal action is commenced by the complainant in relation to the matters under consideration, the complaints process will automatically cease, and all further correspondence will need to be with the School’s legal representatives.

2.4 The headteacher may escalate the complaint at any stage of the process if they feel it is appropriate.

2.5 Where the procedure refers to the headteacher, they may delegate any of the functions to a member of the senior leadership team if appropriate.

### 2.6 Issues that the Complaints Procedure cannot deal with

Existing statutory bodies, personnel or other procedures already exist and must be used for dealing with each of the following issues:

- Complaints about the EHCP process for children with special educational needs;
- Disciplinary issues relating to members of staff;
- Allegations of abuse;
- Admissions and exclusions;
- Provision of collective worship and religious education;
- Curriculum complaints;
- Child Protection matters;

## **2.7 Investigation**

When we receive a complaint, we will try to:-

- Discuss the complaint with you.
- Establish what has happened and who was involved in order to clarify the details.
- Discover what you feel would remedy the situation.
- Interview those involved – allow them to be accompanied if they wish.
- Approach the interview with an open mind – and keep notes.

2.8 If we are unable to fully respond within the specified timescales, we will inform you before the deadline, giving a reason and a new deadline for reply.

## **2.9 Timing**

It is in all of our interests that any concerns or complaints are raised as soon as is practicable after they occur.

Parents wishing to wait to make a complaint after their child has left the School should be aware that the child's pupil file would have been passed on to the next school and therefore the School will have a very limited amount of information available on which to pursue the investigation. You are therefore urged to consider how you might best obtain a resolution you desire and if this is indeed possible after a considerable time has elapsed.

## **3. STAGE 1 – INFORMAL COMPLAINT**

- We ask in the first instance that you speak directly with the member of staff concerned if you are not happy about something that has happened or is happening in the School.
- At this stage, ideally the class teacher, key stage leader or other individual responsible for the services will look to resolve the concerns.
- Our response will be conducted by meeting face to face within three school working days and if we are unable to respond within the timescale, we will inform you before the deadline giving a reason for any delay and a new reasonable deadline for reply.

## **4. STAGE 2(a) – FORMAL COMPLAINT TO THE HEADTEACHER**

- If you are not satisfied with the response received in Stage 1, we would ask you to make your complaint in writing to the head teacher and outline your desired outcome from the complaint.
- The complaint must be taken up by you within 10 school working days following the informal Stage 1 response and we will provide you with a written acknowledgement of the complaint within two school working days of receipt and include a target date for response normally within 15 school working days.
- We will endeavour to provide you with the opportunity to meet to discuss the complaint further as part of our investigation work.
- Following completion of the investigations, the headteacher will respond in writing to you with all appropriate information on the complaint and information on any outcome.

## **5. STAGE 2(b) – FORMAL COMPLAINT TO THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS**

If you consider that the decision of the head teacher is perverse, or that the head teacher has acted unreasonably in considering the complaint, then you may bring a complaint in respect of the investigation carried out by the head teacher.

This will provide an opportunity for the evidence to support such a complaint to be investigated. In this case you should submit in writing a complaint in respect of the head teacher's investigation to the Chair of Governors within 15 school days of receiving the head teacher's written response.

The Chair of Governors will carry out an investigation, and will consider all available evidence. This may include separate interviews with you, the head teacher and relevant members of school staff if the Chair of Governors requires additional evidence. However it would not be appropriate to question any children if they have been part of any previous investigation.

When the investigation has been concluded you and the head teacher will be informed in writing of the outcome within 15 school days of receiving the complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, or consider that the decision of the Chair is perverse, or that the Chair has acted unreasonably, then you may request that the Governing Body review the handling of the complaint.

## **6. STAGE 3 – FORMAL COMPLAINT TO THE GOVERNING BODY**

- We would ask you to make your complaint in writing and addressed to the Chair of School Governors no later than 15 school working days following receipt of a written outcome at Stage 2 and once the earlier procedures have been exhausted.
- A Governor's Complaint's Panel consisting of three members of the Governing Body excluding the Chair will be convened and written acknowledgement of the complaint will be made to you within five school working days of receipt of the complaint. We will look to convene the Panel within 15 school working days of receiving the complaint.
- The issues around the complaint will be investigated and reviewed with everyone involved invited to put forward their case and we will look to make a written response to you as soon as possible but within a maximum of 15 school working days from the date of the Panel Meeting.

## **7. STAGE 4 – APPEAL TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION**

If you are still not happy by this stage, an appeal can be made to the Department for Education (DfE) on the following grounds:-

- The governing body is acting or proposing to act unreasonably.
- The governing body has failed to discharge its duties under the 1996 Education Act.

It should be noted that, in this sense, the word "unreasonably" is used in a strict sense and means acting in a way that no reasonable school or governing body could act in the circumstances.

## **8. VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS**

- It is not appropriate to make personal accusations or attacks on members of School staff or to raise matters that are not about education or a child's well-being. It is also not appropriate to make unsubstantiated allegations against the School or to behave unreasonably by not engaging with the School to attempt a joint resolution.

- If a complainant acts unreasonably by continuing to raise similar issues or raising a range of unrelated issues on a repeated basis, then we reserve the right not to respond.

**9. SCHOOL COMPLAINT INFORMATION**

If you are making a complaint, could you please provide information either using or following the form in Appendix "A".

**10. MONITORING OF POLICY**

This policy is reviewed every two years.

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**APPENDIX A**

## **School complaint form**

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to pupil:

Your address and postcode:

Your daytime telephone number:

Your evening telephone number:

Your complaint is: (include details of any actions taken to try to resolve the situation)

(If you run out of space, please use extra paper)

What do you think we should do?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details:

Your signature:

Date:

**Monitoring**

Are you:     Male     Female

Do you have a disability?     yes     no

**White**

- British
- Irish
- Greek or Greek Cypriot
- Turkish or Turkish Cypriot
- Albanian (excluding Kosovan)
- Kosovan
- Any other White background  
*specify if you wish* .....

**African: Asian or Asian British**

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Any other Asian background  
.....

**Chinese**

- Chinese

**Mixed**

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed background  
*specify if you wish* .....

**Black or Black British**

- Caribbean

**A**

- Nigerian
- Somali
- Congolese
- Any other African background  
*specify if you wish specify if you wish* .....

**Any other ethnic category**

- Any other group  
*specify if you wish* .....

**Please complete and return to the school office.**

**Your complaint will be acknowledged with an explanation of what happens next.**