



St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Complaints Policy

School Contact Details

- **Address:** Upper Hill Street, Liverpool L8 5UX
- **Telephone:** 0151 709 1062
- **Headteacher:** Mrs J Lewis
- **Chair of Governors:** Mr D Blowes

1. Introduction

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School is committed to maintaining strong, positive relationships with parents and the wider community. We welcome feedback and aim to resolve concerns quickly and effectively.

This policy meets the requirements of the **Education Act 2002** and follows **DfE Best Practice Guidance (2020)**, which requires schools to have a clear complaints procedure. [\[gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk)

2. Concerns vs Complaints

- A **concern** is a worry or doubt for which reassurance is sought.
- A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or not taken. [\[gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk)

Most concerns can be resolved informally without entering the formal process.

3. Who Can Make a Complaint

Any person, including parents, carers or members of the public, may make a complaint unless separate statutory procedures apply.

4. Principles

We will ensure that:

- Complaints are taken seriously and dealt with promptly
- Investigations are fair, impartial and transparent
- All parties are treated with respect
- Complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage
- Lessons are learned to improve practice

5. How to Raise a Concern or Complaint

Concerns can be raised:

- In person

- By telephone
- In writing

Initial contact should be with the class teacher or Headteacher.

6. Timescales

- Complaints must normally be raised within **3 months** of the issue
- Complaints received during holidays will be logged on the next school day
- The school will aim to meet all response deadlines and keep complainants updated

7. Stages of the Procedure

Stage 1 – Formal Complaint (Headteacher)

- Submit complaint to the Headteacher
- Acknowledgement within **10 school days**
- Investigation conducted (may be delegated)
- Written response within **10 school days**

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, it will be handled by the Chair of Governors.

Stage 2 – Governors' Complaints Panel

- Request escalation within **10 school days** of Stage 1 outcome
- Panel of at least three impartial governors
- Meeting held (or written submissions considered)
- Written outcome provided within **10 school days**

This is the **final stage within the school process**.

8. Outcomes

At any stage, the school may:

- Offer an explanation
- Acknowledge fault
- Provide an apology
- Take action to prevent recurrence
- Review policies

9. Next Steps

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may contact the **Department for Education**, who will review whether the school has followed its procedures correctly. [\[gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk)

10. Complaints Not Covered by This Policy

Separate procedures apply to:

- Safeguarding/child protection
- Admissions
- Exclusions
- SEN assessments
- Staff discipline and grievances

11. Managing Serial, Unreasonable and Vexatious Complaints

Definition

The school recognises that, in rare cases, complaints or behaviour may become **unreasonable, persistent or vexatious**.

This may include:

- Repeated complaints about the same issue after it has been concluded
- Refusal to accept outcomes of investigations
- Excessive contact placing unreasonable demands on staff time
- Changing the complaint repeatedly or raising trivial issues
- Abusive, threatening or aggressive behaviour
- Seeking unrealistic or unachievable outcomes

DfE guidance recommends that schools include a process to manage such complaints to protect staff and maintain effective operation. [\[gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk)

School Response

Where behaviour becomes unreasonable, the school may:

- Request that communication is made through a single point of contact
- Limit contact to specific methods (e.g. written only)
- Respond only to new and substantive issues
- Decline to investigate repeated complaints already addressed
- End correspondence where the matter is closed

All decisions will be:

- Proportionate
- Clearly justified
- Recorded

Warning Process

Before restrictions are applied, the school will:

- Write to the complainant explaining concerns
- Outline expected behaviour
- Warn of possible restrictions if behaviour continues

Unacceptable Behaviour

The school will not tolerate:

- Abusive or threatening language
- Harassment of staff (including online)
- Persistent disruptive contact

In such cases, the school may:

- Restrict site access
- Cease direct communication
- Refer matters to relevant authorities

Equality Considerations

The school will consider:

- Disability or additional needs
- Communication barriers
- Reasonable adjustments

12. Record Keeping

- All complaints are recorded
- Outcomes are documented
- Data is handled in line with GDPR

13. Monitoring and Review

- Complaints are monitored for trends
- Policy reviewed annually by governors

Policy Information

- **Written by:** Mrs J Lewis
- **Date written:** September 2025
- **Review Date:** July 2027
- **Ratified by Gobs:** July 2026