

THE ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL

Academy Trust - Special School

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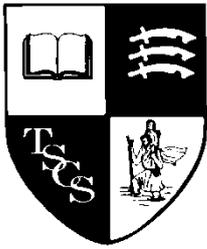
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"Christopher's Cottage"



A Residential Respite Care /
Sports Hall Facility



THE ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL ACADEMY TRUST - COMPLAINTS POLICY

April 2017

Introduction

The majority of issues raised by parents/carers, the community or pupils are concerns rather than complaints. The St. Christopher School is committed to taking concerns seriously at the earliest stage in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow the school's formal complaints procedure.

The aim of The St. Christopher School's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner.

If you do not understand any part of this policy please do not hesitate to contact the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors (please contact the school office in confidence to obtain contact details). Your complaint will then be investigated fully, ensuring all relevant facts are taken into consideration.

The policy has four main stages:

Stage 1 - Raising a Concern

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. On some occasions the concern may require investigation or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within a day or two. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. If you are not satisfied with the outcome at this stage, please put your concerns in writing to the Headteacher. A 'concern' may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'* (DfE Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures January 2016).

Stage 2 - Registering a Formal Complaint

Formal complaints should be put in writing to the Headteacher. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The school will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 school working days of receiving it. In many cases this response will also report on the action the school has taken to resolve the issue.

Alternatively a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. This meeting will normally take place within 10 school working days. The aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible, including what you think the school could have done to resolve the issue.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome at this stage, please contact the school within 10 school working days of getting our response and tell us why you are still not satisfied and what you would like the school to do.



LOEC Mark (Gold)
Learning Outside the Classroom



The Headteacher will arrange for further investigation and provide you with an opportunity to meet, to supplement any information provided previously. You may wish to be accompanied by a friend, relative or other representative. As part of this investigation the headteacher will interview witnesses and take statements from those involved. At the end of the investigation the headteacher will write to you with a full response including details of what action the school will take to resolve the complaint and what to do if you are still not satisfied with the outcome.

If you are still not satisfied you will need to write to the Chair of Governors within 20 school working days of getting the letter.

Stage 3 - Contacting the Governing Body

If the matter has still not been resolved you will need to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint (contact details available in confidence from the school office). A complaints panel who hear and make a decision about formal complaints which have not been resolved either at the informal stage or following an investigation by the Headteacher will be convened if required.

A hearing will be arranged within 15 school working days of receipt of your letter.

Stage 4 - The Hearing

The aim of the hearing is to resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. Any documents from either yourself or the headteacher to be considered by the panel, and the names of any witnesses who might be called must be received by the clerk at least 5 working days before the meeting. The agenda, plus copies of any papers submitted will be sent to the complaints panel members, the headteacher and yourself at least 3 working days before the meeting date. In addition, the headteacher will copy relevant papers to any members of staff named in your complaint.

You will be invited to attend the meeting and bring with you a friend or representative. (If you intend to be represented you will need to advise the clerk to the governors prior to the meeting)

The panel will be made up of at least 3 people who have not previously had any involvement with your complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school.

The headteacher will attend and may bring a friend or representative. Other members of staff may be asked to be present; they also have the right to bring a friend or representative.

A clerk will record details of the hearing and the decision reached.

You will be given the opportunity to explain your complaint and the headteacher to explain the school's response. You will have the opportunity to question the headteacher and/or other members of staff about the school's response and the headteacher will be able to question you about your complaint.

The panel will question both you and the Headteacher. Witnesses may be called (subject to the approval of the chairman) and all parties will have the right to question all the witnesses.

The panel will consider your complaint on the basis of the papers they have received together with what is said at the meeting.

If either you or the school representatives do not attend the meeting, the chairperson has discretion to proceed or to adjourn at any stage.

The Outcome

The panel will consider your complaint and all the evidence presented and will reach a decision.

The panel can uphold your complaint in full, uphold it in part or dismiss it.

The chairman will send you and the headteacher a statement outlining the decision within 5 school working days of the meeting confirming the final decision. The headteacher will copy relevant papers to any members of staff named in the complaint.

Review of Complaints

The governing body will monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary.

The Headteacher will report any official complaints in the Headteacher's Report to Governors. As well as addressing an individual's complaints, the process of listening to and resolving complaints will contribute to school improvement. When individual complaints are heard the governing body may identify underlying issues that need to be addressed. The monitoring and review of complaints by the school and the governing body will be a useful tool in evaluating the school's performance.

Publicising the Procedure

A copy of this policy is available from the school office and on the school website.

Records of complaints and progress of the complaint will be kept confidential to the complaint panel and complainant.

Review

To be reviewed: April 2019