

# OUR LADY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



We ASPIRE that through the love of Jesus everyone should  
"have life and have it to the full".

John 10:10

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

Reviewed by: <i>Headteacher</i>	Approved by: <i>Governing Body</i>
Policy Date: <i>February 2026</i>	Next Review Date: <i>Spring 2028</i>
Review Frequency: <i>Every 2 Years</i>	



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## **1. Opening Statement**

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School is committed to providing a high-quality education within a caring Catholic environment. We recognise the importance of strong relationships between pupils, parents, staff, governors and the wider community.

We believe that concerns should always be taken seriously and addressed promptly, fairly and respectfully. When concerns are raised, the school will work openly and constructively with parents and carers to resolve issues as quickly as possible.

The governing body is committed to ensuring that complaints are handled in a transparent, impartial and consistent manner and that lessons learned from complaints contribute to the continued improvement of the school.

## **2. Vision and Values**

At Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, we believe that every child is a unique gift from God. Our mission is to nurture each child so that they grow academically, socially, spiritually and morally.

Guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ and the values of the Catholic faith, we aim to provide a learning environment where every member of the school community feels valued, respected and supported.

Our mission reflects the words of Jesus: "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." John 10:10.

Through this vision we encourage our pupils to:

- show kindness, compassion and respect
- take responsibility for their actions
- develop confidence and resilience
- grow in faith and understanding
- contribute positively to their community

## **3. Partnership with Parents, Families and Parish**

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School values the strong partnership between the school, parents, carers and the parish community.

We believe that children achieve their best when school and families work together in a spirit of trust, respect and open communication. Our close relationship with the parish helps support the spiritual development of our pupils and strengthens the sense of belonging within our Catholic community.

This partnership encourages mutual support and understanding, ensuring that concerns can be raised openly and addressed constructively for the benefit of every child.



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#### 4. Introduction

We welcome feedback from parents and carers and recognise that concerns or complaints may arise from time to time.

Most concerns can be resolved quickly through informal discussion with staff. However, where this is not possible, the school has adopted this formal complaints procedure to ensure that all concerns are dealt with fairly, consistently and transparently.

This procedure aims to:

- resolve concerns at the earliest possible stage
- ensure complaints are treated seriously and investigated fairly
- provide a clear process for raising concerns
- maintain positive relationships within the school community
- ensure lessons are learned to improve future practice

#### 5. Definitions and Aims

##### Definitions

The Department for Education distinguishes between a concern and a complaint.

A concern is defined as:

“An expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.”

A complaint is defined as:

“An expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action.”

Concerns can usually be resolved informally. Complaints follow the formal procedures outlined in this policy.

##### Aims

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School aims to:

- respond to complaints promptly and fairly
- ensure investigations are impartial and thorough
- address all issues raised
- maintain confidentiality where appropriate
- treat complainants respectfully
- ensure decisions are lawful, reasonable and proportionate
- keep complainants informed of progress
- use complaints to support school improvement



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## 6. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, which requires schools to have procedures for dealing with complaints relating to the school or the services it provides.

It is based on Department for Education guidance on school complaints procedures.

Where complaints relate to Early Years provision, the school will follow requirements in the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework.

## 7. Scope of the Policy

This procedure applies to complaints relating to the school and the services it provides.

The procedure does not cover:

- admissions
- statutory SEND assessments
- safeguarding matters
- suspensions and exclusions
- whistleblowing
- staff grievances
- staff disciplinary matters
- school reorganisation proposals
- curriculum content

**Complaints that raise safeguarding concerns will be handled in accordance with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and may be referred to appropriate external agencies where necessary.**

Separate procedures exist for these matters.

Complaints about services provided by organisations using school premises should be directed to the relevant organisation.

## 8. Roles and Responsibilities

### The Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response if they:

- follow the complaints procedure
- cooperate with the investigation
- respond promptly to requests for information
- treat staff respectfully
- avoid approaching individual governors about complaints
- avoid discussing complaints publicly on social media



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### **The Investigator**

The investigator will:

- establish the facts of the complaint
- interview relevant individuals
- review evidence and records
- maintain secure notes
- produce a written report with findings

### **The Complaints Coordinator**

The complaints coordinator may be:

- the Headteacher
- a designated governor
- a member of staff responsible for administrative support

The coordinator will:

- manage communication with the complainant
- ensure the procedure is followed
- maintain complaint records
- liaise with governors where necessary

### **Clerk to the Governing Body**

The clerk will:

- arrange complaints panel hearings
- circulate documentation
- record minutes of hearings
- communicate panel decisions

## **9. Principles for Investigation**

When investigating a complaint the school will seek to establish:

- what happened
- who was involved
- what outcome the complainant is seeking

Investigations will be conducted fairly, objectively and proportionately.

### **Timescales**

Complaints should normally be raised within three months of the incident.



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If a complaint relates to a series of events it should be raised within three months of the final incident.

Where timescales cannot be met, the school will inform the complainant and provide a revised timeline.

## 10. Informal Stage

Most concerns can be resolved informally.

Concerns should normally be raised with:

- the class teacher
- another relevant member of staff
- the Headteacher where appropriate

Concerns may be raised in person, by telephone, email or letter.

If the issue cannot be resolved informally it may proceed to a formal complaint.

Where a concern or complaint is raised verbally (in person or by telephone), the school will make a written record of the details and share this with the complainant to confirm that it accurately reflects their concerns.

### 10.1 Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Where a complaint raises **safeguarding concerns**, the school will follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures regardless of whether the complainant is identified.

The school will normally acknowledge concerns within five school days.

## 11. Formal Complaints Procedure

The school operates a two-stage formal complaints process.

### Stage 1 – Formal Investigation

A complaint should normally be made in writing to the Headteacher.

The complaint should include:

- details of the issue
- relevant dates and events
- names of witnesses where appropriate
- supporting documents
- the outcome sought

The school will acknowledge the complaint within five school days.



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A written response will normally be provided within ten school days.

The response will explain how the complaint can be escalated if the complainant remains dissatisfied.

### **Stage 2 – Complaints Review Panel**

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request a review by the governing body.

The request must be made within ten school days of the Stage 1 response.

#### **The Panel**

The panel will consist of three governors who have had no prior involvement in the complaint.

If necessary, governors may be sourced from other schools or the local authority to ensure impartiality.

#### **The Hearing**

The complainant will receive reasonable notice of the hearing.

Both parties will receive copies of relevant documentation before the meeting.

During the hearing:

- the complainant presents their case
- the school presents its response
- questions may be asked
- witnesses may be called where necessary

The meeting will be held in private.

#### **Outcome**

The panel may:

- uphold the complaint in full
- uphold the complaint in part
- dismiss the complaint

If the complaint is upheld the panel may recommend actions to resolve the complaint or changes to school procedures.

A written decision will normally be provided within five school days.

The panel decision represents the final stage of the school's complaints procedure.

## **12. Complaints Against the Headteacher or Governors**

Complaints about the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors via the school office.



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Complaints about the Chair of Governors or governing body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body.

Independent investigators may be appointed where necessary.

### **13. Referring Complaints to the Department for Education**

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after completing the school's complaints procedure they may contact the Department for Education.

The Department will consider whether the school:

- followed its complaints procedure
- complied with education legislation
- acted reasonably

The Department will not normally reinvestigate the complaint.

### **14. Unreasonable or Persistent Complaints**

Most complaints are made in good faith.

Where a complaint is found to be malicious (i.e. intentionally false), the school may take appropriate action in line with relevant policies.

However, complaints may become unreasonable where individuals:

- refuse to cooperate with investigations
- repeatedly raise the same issues
- make excessive demands on staff time
- use abusive language or threats
- publish confidential information on social media

The school may restrict communication or take appropriate action where necessary.

Serious incidents may be referred to the police.

### **15. Record Keeping and Confidentiality**

The school will keep records of complaints including:

- correspondence
- investigation notes
- meeting minutes
- outcomes

Records will be stored securely and managed in accordance with data protection legislation.



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### **16. Learning Lessons**

The governing body and senior leadership team will review complaints to identify improvements to policies and procedures.

### **17. Monitoring Arrangements**

The governing body monitors the effectiveness of this policy.

Complaints will be logged and reviewed regularly.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

### **18. Links with Other Policies**

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEN Policy
- Staff Grievance Procedures
- Staff Disciplinary Procedures
- Data Protection Policy

**This policy is available on the school website:**

[Our Lady's Catholic Primary School and Nursery](#)

**Paper copies are available on request from the School Office**



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## Complaint Form

### Appendix A

When the school receives a written complaint, we aim to acknowledge receipt within 5 school days and provide a full response within 10 school days, where possible.

Please complete this form and return it to the Headteacher (or to the Clerk to the Governing Body if the complaint concerns the Headteacher).

<b>Your Details</b> Name:	Name of pupil (if relevant):  Relationship to pupil (if relevant):
Address:	
Email:	
Telephone:	
<b>Details of the Complaint</b> Please provide details of your complaint, including relevant dates, times, names of witnesses and any other information that may help the investigation. <i>You may attach additional pages if necessary.</i>	



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**Evidence**

Are you attaching any supporting documents? Yes / No

If yes, please list them below:

**Action Taken So Far**

What action have you already taken to try to resolve the complaint?

Who have you spoken to and what was the outcome?

**Desired Outcome**

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem?

Signature:

Date:

*School Use Only*

Date complaint received:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Received by:

Complaint referred to:



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## Request for Review by the Governing Body

### Appendix B

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 of the complaint procedure, you may request a review by the Governing Body Complaints Panel.

Requests must normally be submitted within 10 school days of receiving the Stage 1 response.

Please complete this form and return it to the Clerk to the Governing Body via the school office.

<b>Your Details</b> Name:	Name of pupil (if relevant):  Relationship to pupil (if relevant):
Address:	
Email:	
Telephone:	
<b>Details of the Complaint</b> Date the original complaint was submitted:  To whom was the complaint addressed:  Date the response was received:	
<b>Reason for Requesting a Review</b> Please explain why you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1. <i>You may attach additional pages if required.</i>	



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**Outcome Sought**

Please explain what outcome you are seeking from the Governing Body review panel.

**Documents**

Are you attaching any supporting documents?    Yes / No

If yes, please list them below:

Signature:

Date:

*School Use Only*

Date request received:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Received by:

Panel hearing arranged for: