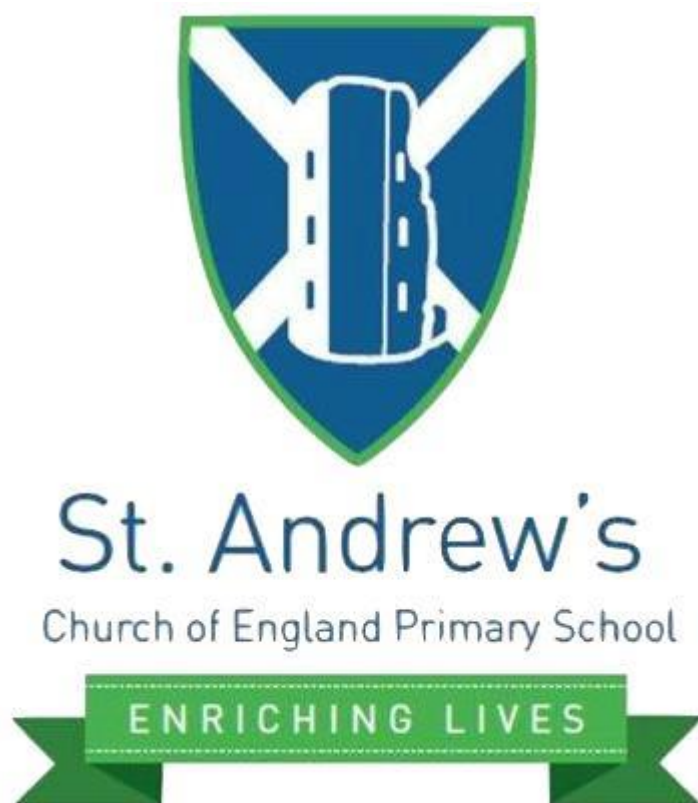


Parent Partnership Policy



Our Vision.....

We believe that every person in our school community should flourish and broaden their horizons. Therefore, it is the element of 'enrichment' that defines our school; we are a church school that endeavours to provide the widest of opportunities for all.

Within our caring and nurturing environment and guided by our shared Christian values, we aim to ensure that all voices in our school family can be heard and all are engaged in learning that develops and challenges them, excites their imagination and provides an opportunity to achieve their full potential.

We see everyone and everything as valued in the eyes of God and recognise that all the members of our family are individuals as we work together towards a society of mutual respect, compassion and justice.

Even the smallest person can change the course of the future."

..... JRR Tolkien

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1. Who can make a complaint?

1.1 This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to St Andrew's C.E. Primary School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

2. The difference between a concern and a complaint

2.1 A concern may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*.

2.2 A complaint may be defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.

2.3 It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. St Andrew's C.E. Primary School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

2.4 If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the Headteacher, will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Headteacher will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

2.5 We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, St Andrew's C.E. Primary School will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

3. Where a parent/carer has a concern about their child

3.1 It is natural that parents may, occasionally, be concerned about an aspect of their child's education or welfare at school. This could include issues concerning one school's approach to aspects of the curriculum, homework, behavioural problems or any other issue.

3.2 If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education or wellbeing of their child that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's Classteacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.

3.3 Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the Classteacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should raise the issue with the Headteacher. An initial response will be made within two days. The

Headteacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. At this stage all responses will be dealt with informally and parents can expect a detailed response or meeting within one week. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage. For issues relating to the additional needs of children, the Additional Needs Leader should be involved.

3.4 Only in the event that an informal resolution cannot be achieved, a parent may refer the matter to the Governing Body for consideration. In the initial stage, the parent should send this written complaint to the Chair of Governors using the attached proforma. The parent will need to inform the school why they think that the concern has not been dealt with to their satisfaction.

3.5 Where possible the Chair will seek subsequent resolution and he may decide that a meeting should be held with the complainant. Any complaint made to the Chair of Governors will be acknowledged within 5 school days, with a written substantive response normally within 10 school days. Where it is not possible to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of all parties, the Chair will then refer the matter to the Clerk to the Governors to convene an independent panel of the School Governors.

3.6 It is essential that this process is fair and objective. To avoid a conflict of interest, it is vital that the full Governing Body does not hear the complaint at this stage. Any governor who has been involved with the complaint at an earlier stage would be unable to give objective consideration to the issue. It is for the Governing Body to agree upon the procedures for the Complaint Panel meeting. However, the Governing Body will usually convene a panel of 3 or 5 governors who have not previously been involved in the complaint. The panel will usually meet within 15 school days of the matter being referred to the Clerk. The Chair of the panel (not the Chair of Governors if previously involved) should notify the Headteacher and the complainant as to whether they will be invited to attend the panel meeting. Alternatively, the panel may decide to consider written material only. Both parties must be treated equally. For example, if the Headteacher is invited to the meeting, so must the complainant. If the complaint relates to a staff disciplinary or capability matter about which the Headteacher has already taken action, the governors should focus on how the original complaint was managed to avoid prejudicing any ongoing disciplinary or capability procedures. The Headteacher and complainant should be informed of the Panel's decision in writing within 10 school days.

3.7 This is the final stage in the academy's Complaints Procedure. The Governing Body's decision is final.

3.8 If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2.

3.9 The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by St Andrew's C.E. Primary School. They will consider whether St Andrew's C.E. Primary School has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

3.10 The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:
Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD.

4. Where a parent has a concern about the Headteacher or Governor

4.1 Where the complaint concerns the Chair of Governors, then the Vice Chair would act instead)

4.2 If a parent has a complaint about the Headteacher or Governor, s/he should first make an informal approach to one of the members of the Governing Body, who will contact the Chair of Governors. The Governor and Chair of Governors will do all they can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school and an informal meeting may be arranged with the Headteacher or Governor. Any complaint made to the Chair of Governors will be acknowledged within 5 school days, with a written substantive response normally within 10 school days.

4.3 If an informal complaint fails to resolve the matter or if a formal complaint is made to the Governing Body, the complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far. The parent should send this written complaint to the Chair of Governors who, if considered appropriate, will endeavour to resolve the matter. However, where this is not possible he will refer the matter to the Clerk to the Governors to convene an independent panel of the school Governors to investigate the matter. The panel will usually meet within 15 school days of the matter being referred to the Clerk. (see Appendix A).

4.4 If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

This will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the Governing Body. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

4.4 The Governing Body's decision is final, however, where the complainant believes that the Governing Body acted "unreasonably", they can complain to the Department of Education (see 3.8 to 3.10).

5. Where a member of staff has a concern over a parent

5.1 Any member of staff has the right to terminate a meeting if they feel that they are being threatened or their welfare is at risk. In such a situation the following steps may be

considered. If a member of staff refers a concern to the Headteacher, he will make an initial investigation into the incident to understand the facts. If the matter can be resolved, he will do so and subsequently inform the Governing Body of the matter and the outcome. However, if the Headteacher feels that the situation warrants more serious action, he will contact the Chair of Governors and discuss the issue. Agreed DFE and LEA practices will be implemented and if warranted, the matter may be referred to the police.

5.2 The Chair of Governors will refer the matter to the Clerk to the Governors who will convene an independent panel of the school Governors to investigate the matter. The panel will usually meet within 15 school days of the matter being referred to the Clerk. The Chair of Governors may decide to apply a temporary exclusion order if the incident is considered to be a serious one, pending a meeting of the Panel.

5.3 The Panel of Governors will consider the facts of the incident. The party concerned has the right to make a submission to this Panel. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.

5.4 After hearing all the evidence, the Panel will make their decision and inform the parent about it in writing normally within 10 school days. If a decision is made to exclude a parent or guardian, the decision may be temporary or permanent, and it is subject to review.

5.5 The Governing Body's decision is final, however, where the complainant believes that the Governing Body acted "unreasonably", they can complain to the Department of Education (see 3.8 to 3.10).

6. Making a complaint?

6.1 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 Stage 2 of the procedure.

6.2 Complaints against school staff (except the headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to the headteacher via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

6.3 Complaints that involve or are about the headteacher or a Governor should be addressed to Mr John Powe (the Chair of Governors), via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

6.4 Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

6.5 For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

6.6 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.

7. Anonymous complaints

7.1 We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

8. Time scales

8.1 You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

9. Complaints received outside of term time

9.1 We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

10. Scope of this Complaints Procedure

10.1 This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by St Andrew's C.E. Primary School other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
• Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs • School re-organisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Lincolnshire education Authority
• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding.
• Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions . <i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i>

	<i><link to school behaviour policy>.</i>
Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus. Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

10.2 If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

10.3 If a complainant commences legal action against St Andrew's C.E. Primary School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

11. Resolving complaints

11.1 St Andrew's C.E. Primary School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

12. Withdrawal of a Complaint

12.1 If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

13. Persistent Complaints

13.1 Whilst the school will seek to resolve concerns and complaints to the satisfaction of all parties, it may not always be possible to achieve this in every case. For this reason, the school is entitled to close correspondence on a complaint after a formal complaint has been heard and a decision reached by the Governing Body, where it is felt that all reasonable action has been taken to resolve the complaint.

13.2 Where the complaints procedure has been completed at all stages and the complainant persists in their complaint the academy will be entitled to close correspondence (including personal approaches, as well as letters and telephone calls).

13.3 This will not prevent parents raising other concerns which may subsequently arise. We will do all we can to help to resolve a complaint but sometimes it is simply not possible to meet all of the complainant's wishes.

14. Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Clerk to the Governors in a sealed envelope marked 'private and confidential' or by email to:

governors@st-andrews-woodhall.lincs.sch.uk

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address:
Postcode:
Day time telephone number:
Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

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

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: