

# Saint Winefride's

## CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

### SCHOOL COMPLAINTS POLICY

#### PRINCIPLES

As a school, our underlying principle is that concerns ought to be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. Having a complaints procedure need not in any way undermine efforts to resolve the concern informally. In most cases the class teacher will receive the first approach. We hope that we would be able to resolve issues on the spot. However, if this is not possible, then the formal procedure follows our mission statement - given here because we feel it to be appropriate to our approach to complaints and concerns.

#### Complaints Procedure

##### **Stage One: Complaint Heard by Staff Member**

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The school will respect the views of a complainant who indicates that he/she would have difficulty discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff. In these cases, the headteacher can be contacted directly. Where the complaint concerns the headteacher, the complainant can approach the chair of governors.

Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels too compromised to deal with a complaint, it may be that the complainant is referred to a senior member of staff. The ability to consider the complaint objectively and impartially is crucial.

##### **Stage Two: Complaint Heard by Headteacher**

At this point, the complainant may be dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled at stage one as well as pursuing their initial complaint. The head may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken.

##### **Stage Three: Complaint referred to Chair of Governors**

If the complainant believes at the stage that the complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved, it will be referred to the Chair of Governors, who may be able to resolve the issue and if not, will convene a meeting of the Complaints Appeal Panel.

##### **Stage Four: Heard by Governing Bodies Complaints Appeal Panel**

The complainant needs to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint. The Chair, or a nominated governor, will convene a GB complaints panel.

The governors' appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process, and is not convened to merely rubber-stamp previous decisions.

The governing body nominates a number of members with delegated powers to hear complaints at this stage, and set out its terms of reference. These can include:

- © drawing up its procedures;
- © hearing individual appeals;
- © making recommendations on policy as a result of complaints.

The procedure adopted by the panel for hearing appeals would normally be part of the school's complaints procedure. The panel can be drawn from the nominated members and may consist of three or five people. The panel may choose their own chair.

***This policy has been revised and approved by the governors of Saint Winefride's Catholic Voluntary Academy and will be reviewed and amended as necessary. It supersedes previous COMPLAINTS Policies.***