

Complaints Policy

Name of policy	Complaints
Status	Oct 2022
Date of next review	Sept 2025
Approved By	HR Committee

General Principles:

St Cuthbert's RC Academy Trust Complaints Policy is available to download on each school's website or a paper copy may be requested by contacting the school.

This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to any of the schools in the Academy Trust, or the services that it provides.

An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

To allow for a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than 3 months after the event, being complained of, will not be considered.

Raising a concern or complaint

1) Informal Stage

It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification, or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage.

In the case of serious concerns, it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Head of School / Head Teacher or Chief Executive Officer (or to the Chair of the Trust Board, if the complaint is about the CEO).

If you are uncertain about who to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the Governance Professional to the Trust Board.

2) Formal Stage

If your concern or complaint is not resolved at the informal stage you should put the complaint in writing (email or letter) and pass it to the Head of School/ Head Teacher or Chief Executive Officer, (or the attention of the Chair of the Trust Board, if the complaint is about the CEO) who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately.

A separate Complaint Form is provided to assist you.

You should include details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents.

It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like the school to take to resolve your concern. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.

Please pass the completed form, in a sealed envelope to the Head of School / Head Teacher / Chief Executive Officer (or to the Chair of the Trust Board), as appropriate.

The Head of School/Head Teacher or Chief Executive Officer [or Chair] may invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to seek an informal resolution. If you accept that invitation, you may be accompanied by a friend, if you wish, to assist you in explaining the nature of your concerns. It is not permissible for you to be accompanied by a legal representative.

It is possible that your complaint will be resolved through this meeting. If not, arrangements will be made for the matter to be fully investigated, using the appropriate procedure. In any case you should learn in writing, usually within 10 school days of the school receiving your formal complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. This notification will include an indication of the anticipated timescale wherever possible.

Any investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, you will be informed in writing of its conclusion.

If you are not satisfied with the way the process has been followed, you may request that the Trust Board reviews the process followed by the school in handling the complaint. Any such request must be made in writing to the Governance Professional to the Trust Board, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure. The procedure described below will be followed. A Review Request form is provided for your convenience.

Review Process

Any review of the process followed by the Trust will be conducted by a panel of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One panel member will be independent of the management and running of the school. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of your request.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests to make oral representations will be considered.

The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant. It will allow a parent to attend, and be accompanied by a friend, at the panel hearing, if they wish. It is not permissible to have legal representation at this meeting.

The panel will then invite representatives of the school (usually the Head of School/Head Teacher or Chief Executive Officer or the Chair of the Trust Board), as appropriate, to make a response to the complaint.

The panel may also have access to the records kept of the process followed.

You, and the school representative[s], will be informed in writing of the outcome, usually within 5 school days of the panel meeting.

A copy of the findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Head of School/Head Teacher or Chief Executive Officer.

A written record will be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with the informal process, formal process, or proceed to a panel hearing. The records will be retained by the Data Protection Officer of the Trust.

A written record will be kept of action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

The matter will then be closed as far as the school is concerned.



St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to the school [or Governance Professional to the Trust Board], who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your Name:

Relationship with school: [e.g., parent of a pupil on the school's roll]

Pupil's name [if relevant to your complaint]:

Your Address:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give concise details of your complaint, [including dates, names of witnesses etc...], to allow the matter to be fully investigated:

You may continue on a separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of Additional pages attached =

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint?
[i.e who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?]

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

Signature:

Date:

School use

Date Form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to:

Date: