

St Mary's Church of England Primary School
Policy for Managing Serial or Persistent Complaints

Date of Policy:	March 2024
Member of Staff Responsible:	Governing Body Policy
Review Date:	March 2025
Consultation:	This policy has been drawn up in consultation with staff and governors following the model policy issued by the Department for Education (January 2019) and guidance from other professional associations.

Ethos Statement

Our school is committed to bringing out the best in each other so that every member of the school community can know 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). Through learning of the teachings of Jesus, we believe that our children can explore and develop their understanding of Core Christian values as markers and guides for their own lives. We aim for the school's Core Christian values to inform and influence our pupils' moral compass and allow them to enjoy 'life in all its fullness'. These values are known as the 'Sunshine 6'. They are: Forgiveness, Perseverance, Honesty, Compassion, Courage and Respect.

Introduction

This procedure is to be read in conjunction with the school's Complaints Procedure which can be found on the school's website.

St Mary's Church of England Primary School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive, intimidating or threatening.

St Mary's Church of England Primary School defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school. Examples of such behaviour by the complainant includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- refusal to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refusal to co-operate with the complaints investigation process;
- refusal to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure;
- insistence on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introducing trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on;
- raising large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly making the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refusing to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeking an unrealistic outcome;
- making excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with;
- using threats to intimidate
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly providing falsified information
- publishing unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should limit their communication with the school to that relating to their complaint while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Where appropriate, the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors if the complaint is about the Headteacher) will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an '*unreasonable*' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors if the complaint is about the Headteacher) will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact St Mary's Church of England Primary School causing a significant level of disruption, we may draw up and issue a communication plan. This will specify methods of communication and the number of contacts made. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from St Mary's Church of England Primary School.