

Trent CE Primary School Governing Body

Complaints Policy

Inspired by Christ



Kindness Thankfulness Perseverance

“A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another” Inspired by Jesus’ example, the Trent school community aims to serve one another in love.

We show **kindness** to others because God has shown us great kindness.

We live **thankful** lives, because every good thing comes from God.

We **persevere**, not giving up, because God is our helper.

Approved by committee/GB	Full GB
Ratified by GB	29 April 2024
Date for review	April 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

“To err is human, to forgive, divine” (Alexander Pope). Or, as the Bible puts it, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3v23).

As a school we recognise that from time to time there may be occasions where you may wish to seek redress for complaints/concerns or issues you wish to raise. Therefore, we want to ensure that there is a clear process to allow complaints to be addressed in a fair and timely manner.

This policy outlines the process of making a complaint and how your complaint will be addressed via our complaints process. Our goal is to ensure that there is both clear accountability and a pathway to reconciliation where that is required. Jesus’ death on the cross allowed us to be reconciled to his Father and he urges us to be reconciled with each other.

“Inspired by Christ, we serve one another in love.”

At Trent CE Primary School, we have a strong commitment to working in positive partnership with the whole school community. A school is a busy place where there are many interactions between pupils, parents, carers and staff as part of the everyday life of the school. We have an ethos of respecting the rights of all members of the school community and as part of our curriculum teaching we work to instil this in our children.

Sometimes things may go wrong, or you may think we can do something differently. Where concerns are raised we aim to resolve these as quickly and as efficiently as possible. Usually concerns that are raised can be resolved quickly through the school’s day-to-day communication between parents and the school staff. If a parent feels that an issue has not been dealt with appropriately it is important, for all involved, that there is a clear and transparent process for a complaint to be investigated and followed up.

2. OVERVIEW

2.1 Resolving Issues and Complaints

Most issues and complaints can be successfully dealt with informally and we would encourage you to take this approach in the first instance. However, there may be situations in which this is not possible and for which we have a more formal process, outlined in this document. This will allow us to investigate and deal with the complaint accordingly.

2.2 From the school’s point of view, it is important to try to reach an early resolution to promote closure of the matter and to enable parents and teaching staff to move forward constructively.

2.3 If, at any stage of the complaints process, legal action is commenced by the complainant in relation to matters under consideration, the school’s complaints process will automatically cease, and all further correspondence will need to be via the school’s legal representatives.

2.4 The Headteacher may escalate the complaint at any stage of the process if they feel it is appropriate.

2.5 Where this complaints process makes reference to the role of the Headteacher, the Headteacher may delegate any of the functions to a member of the senior leadership team if appropriate.

2.6 Issues That the Complaints Process Cannot Deal With

The issues set out below must be dealt with via the relevant statutory bodies, or other policies and procedures and will not be dealt with under the complaints process:

- Complaints about the EHCP process for children with special educational needs;

- Disciplinary issues relating to members of staff;
- Allegations of abuse;
- Admissions and exclusions;
- Provision of collective worship and religious education;
- Curriculum complaints;
- Child Protection matters

2.7 Investigation

When we receive a complaint, our aim is to:-

- Discuss the complaint with you;
- Establish what happened and who was involved;
- Explore what you feel would remedy the situation;
- Interview those involved (allowing them to be accompanied if they wish);
- Approach all interviews with an open mind and maintain a record of what was discussed. All records will be kept and processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

2.8 Timing

It is in everyone's interests that any concerns or complaints are raised as soon as is practicable. The school will only be able to investigate a complaint if it is made within three months of the incident or circumstances that are the subject of the complaint occurring

The decision to investigate a complaint outside of this timeframe is at the sole discretion of the school.

Whilst we endeavour to resolve your complaint within the set time limits, there may be occasions where further investigations are required and we are not able to meet the said time limits. In such instances we will communicate details of the new deadline / time limit explaining the reason for the delay.

3. STAGE 1 – INFORMAL CONCERN

- If you have a concern about something that has happened or is happening in school, the first step is to make an appointment to speak directly with the class teacher, key stage leader or other appropriate staff member. The phase leader may also be present at this meeting;
- At this stage, the member of staff will consider how to resolve the concern/s;
- We will arrange for a face-to-face meeting within 5 school working days where we will respond to the complaint. If we are unable to respond within this timescale, we will inform you in advance of the deadline, explaining the reason for the delay and providing a new reasonable deadline by which we will respond.

4. STAGE 2 – FORMAL COMPLAINT TO THE HEADTEACHER

- If you are not satisfied with the response received in Stage 1, we would ask you to make your complaint in writing, using Appendix A, to the Headteacher, outlining your desired outcome of the complaint.
- This written complaint to the Headteacher must be made within 10 school working days of our Stage 1 response. We will endeavour to provide you with a written acknowledgement of your written complaint within 5 school working days of receipt and include a target date for response, normally within 15 school working days.
- As part of our investigation to review the matter and desired outcomes, we will provide you with the opportunity to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the complaint further.
- If you are not satisfied that the matter has been resolved in that meeting, you must inform us in writing, within 10 school working days of the meeting, outlining the reason/s you believe the complaint remains unresolved. The Headteacher will respond to you in writing

within 15 school working days confirming the school's decision on the basis of the steps taken up to this Stage 2.

5. STAGE 3 – FORMAL COMPLAINT TO THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

- If you consider that the decision of the Headteacher is unjustified, then you may appeal the decision by referring your complaint to the Chair of Governors.
- In this case, you should submit, in writing, a complaint in respect of the Headteacher's investigation to the Chair of Governors within 10 school working days of receiving the Headteacher's written response at Stage 2. The complaint to the Chair of Governors should outline your reasoning to support your complaint regarding the Headteacher's decision.
- The Chair of Governors will carry out an investigation and will consider all available evidence. This may include separate interviews with you, the Headteacher and relevant members of the school if the Chair of Governors requires additional evidence.
- When the investigation has been concluded you and the Headteacher will be informed in writing of the outcome within 20 school working days of receiving the complaint.
- If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, or consider that the decision of the Chair is unjustified then you may request that the Governing Body review the handling of the complaint.

6. STAGE 4 – FORMAL APPEAL TO THE GOVERNING BODY

- If you are not satisfied with the response received in Stage 3, we would ask you to address your complaint in writing to the Chair of School Governors no later than 10 school working days following receipt of a written outcome at Stage 3 and once all of the procedures in the earlier stages have been exhausted.
- You will need to outline your reason/s for raising this complaint to the Governing Body and in particular set out why you believe that the decision reached by the Chair in Stage 3 was unjustified.
- A Governors' Complaints Appeal Panel, consisting of three members of the Governing Body (excluding the Chair), will be convened and written acknowledgement of the complaint will be made to you within 5 school working days of receipt of the complaint. If possible, the Panel will be convened for the Panel Meeting within 15 school working days of receiving the complaint.
- The complaint will be investigated and reviewed and everyone involved will be invited to put forward their case. The Governors' Complaints Appeal Panel will endeavour to respond in writing to you as soon as possible but in any case within a maximum of 15 school working days from the date of the Panel Meeting.
- If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the Stage 4 process has been followed, or consider that the decision of the Governors' Complaints Appeal Panel is unjustified then you may appeal this decision by referring the matter to the Department of Education (DfE).

7. STAGE 5 – APPEAL TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

If, following Stages 1 to 4 above, you are still not satisfied with the decision of the Governors' Complaints Appeal Panel, an appeal can be made to the Department for Education (DfE) on the following grounds:-

- The governing body is acting or proposing to act unreasonably.
- The governing body has failed to discharge its duties under the Education Act 1996.

It should be noted that, in this sense, the word "unreasonably" is used in a strict sense and means acting in a way that no reasonable school or governing body could act in the circumstances.

8. VEXATIOUS, PERSISTANT AND UNREASONABLE COMPLAINTS

- It is not appropriate to make personal accusations or attacks on members of school staff or to raise matters that do not relate to education or to a child’s wellbeing. It is also not appropriate to make unsubstantiated allegations against the school or to behave unreasonably by refusing to engage with the school to reach a joint resolution.
- The school reserves its right at its sole discretion to stop responding and to bring the complaints process to an end if:
 - You act unreasonably by continuing to raise similar issues, you change the basis of your complaint as the investigation proceeds or you raise a range of unrelated issues on a repeated basis;
 - The school has reason to believe that you are contacting the school with the intention of causing disruption, you are abusive or aggressive and/or you are making insulting personal comments about, or threatening behaviour towards, school staff;
 - A duplicate complaint is received at the end of a complaints process, for example, from a spouse, partner, grandparent or child. In such circumstances, the duplicate complaint will not be reinvestigated;
 - You make excessive demands on school/staff time by frequent, lengthy, and complicated communications with staff in person, in writing, by e-mail and/or by telephone whilst the complaint process is ongoing;
 - You publish unacceptable information on social media or other public platforms;
 - A complaint is made anonymously. Such complaints will not be investigated.

9. SCHOOL COMPLAINT INFORMATION

When making a complaint, please use the form in Appendix A (or follow the same format) to provide information for consideration.

10. MONITORING OF POLICY

This policy is reviewed every two years.

APPENDIX A

School complaint form

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to pupil:

Your address and postcode:

Your e-mail address:

Your daytime telephone number:

Your evening telephone number:

Your complaint is: (include details of any actions taken to try to resolve the situation)

(If you run out of space if completing in hard copy, please use extra paper)

Have you discussed this matter with a member of staff? If so, who did you speak to, when did you speak with them and what was the outcome of the discussion?

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

What do you think we should do? What would a resolution or desired outcome look like for you?

Your signature:

Date:

Monitoring

Are you: Male Female

Do you have a disability? yes no

White

- British
- Irish
- Greek or Greek Cypriot
- Turkish or Turkish Cypriot
- Albanian (excluding Kosovan)
- Kosovan
- Any other White background
specify if you wish

African: Asian or Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Any other Asian background
.....

Chinese

- Chinese

Mixed

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed background
specify if you wish

Black or Black British

- Caribbean

A

- Nigerian
- Somali
- Congolese
- Any other African background
specify if you wish specify if you wish

Any other ethnic category

- Any other group
specify if you wish

Please complete and return to the school office.

Your complaint will be acknowledged with an explanation of what happens next.