Complaints Policy

For use across all Academy schools and Trust Central within the Lux Mundi Catholic Academy Trust

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON:.....

CEO's SIGNATURE:.....

Introduction

In a Catholic school, parental/carers' concerns are of particular importance. As the first educators of their children, parents/carers have a duty to take an active interest in their school. "Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring." (Gravissimum Educationis). To this end, "there must be the closest co-operation between parents and the teachers to whom they entrust their children to be educated. In fulfilling their task, teachers are to collaborate closely with the parents and willingly listen to them." (Can.796) In a Catholic School, therefore, dealing with parental/carers' concerns will be an intrinsic part of the school's ethos and mission.

No-one likes criticism but an open organisation will always be willing to listen to concerns and anxieties and be ready to learn from them if appropriate. In a school, most concerns are likely to be expressed by the parents or carers of its pupils, though some may come from pupils themselves, former pupils, parishioners, or from other interested parties such as neighbours or users of the premises. It is appropriate for a complaint to be processed from wherever it arises. For the purposes of this policy all references to schools include academies.

Nearly all concerns or questions can be resolved very quickly and informally if parents/carers feel able to voice them as soon as they arise. Obviously, the more information the school gives to them the less scope there is for misunderstanding. As part of this information, parents/carers should be told that feedback is always welcome and that, therefore, they are warmly encouraged to voice any concerns straightaway, preferably to the person concerned. In most cases, discussion, explanation, further information – or an apology, if appropriate – will resolve the issue. **Every effort should be made to allay concerns at this level and with the least possible formality. The ideal is that no concern should ever become a formal complaint.**

Occasionally, however, a concern will be too serious to be handled in this way, perhaps needing greater investigation; or the person concerned may not feel that the answers given so far have been acceptable or adequate. In such circumstances, the concern will become a complaint and the formal procedure should be rigorously followed. Even in these cases, every effort should be made to resolve the issue at the lowest possible level of the procedure. It should be very rare indeed that a complaint needs to be decided at the Appeal Stage by a Complaints Appeals Panel.

It is very important that all governors and members of staff be familiar with the school complaints procedure and that they know who the complaints co-ordinator for the school is so that they can refer complaints to that person when approached by someone with a complaint. Regular training on complaints procedures is provided by the Diocese. In all circumstances the published procedure must be followed closely. Should difficulties arise, advice can be sought from the Diocesan Education Service.

THE FORMAL PROCEDURE

Principles

At every stage of the formal procedure, the handling of the complaint will be:
- Non-adversarial
- Swift (using agreed time limits)
- Fair (using independent investigation where necessary)
- Confidential

Throughout the process, the school will be willing:
- to listen
- to learn
- to admit mistakes
- to apologise if appropriate
- to address any issues raised
- to change school practice if appropriate

In using this procedure:
- staff are asked to be aware that complainants may feel intimidated by the school as an institution and unsure whether they will be treated fairly
- complainants are asked to be aware that those complained about, especially individual members of staff, may feel very vulnerable during this process

Throughout the procedure, therefore, the aim of all parties should be not only to resolve the complaint but also to develop and sustain good relationships between all members of the school community. However formal or serious the complaint, or however dissatisfied the complainant, the aim will always be reconciliation between all parties and a renewed commitment to work together amicably. The gospel values of justice and forgiveness should always underpin the entire process.

This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

- members of staff (who should use their own Grievance Procedure)
- procedures with their own appeal structure e.g. admissions, exclusions and SEN assessments
- concerns about the delivery of the National Curriculum and about collective worship will be dealt with by the school in the first instance (stages 1 and 2) and if there is no satisfactory resolution, will be referred to the Secretary of State

It is also totally separate from any Disciplinary, Capability or Whistleblowing Procedures. If the investigation of any complaint were to lead to concerns on the part of the headteacher or governors about the capability or conduct of a member of staff, these would not be discussed or dealt with within this procedure.

Outline of the Procedure

There are three stages to the formal procedure. It is possible that at any stage it will become necessary to involve other members of staff, governors or outside persons in the investigation of a complaint. In order to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 written consent should be obtained from the complainant before any information is disclosed to a third party. Throughout the procedure audio and/or video recordings may only be made in exceptional circumstances (e.g. as reasonable adjustments) and with the consent of all those present (including witnesses). Covert recordings obtained without the written consent of all parties will not be accepted as evidence.

Stage 1

Complaint heard by a member of staff (not the subject of the complaint).

Schools are recommended to designate a member of staff or the deputy head as the Complaints Co-ordinator, to whom all complaints will be addressed in the first instance. The name should be publicised to parents with the Procedure.

The member of staff designated as complaints co-ordinator will, obviously, need to be held in high professional esteem by staff, governors and parents. Status in the school hierarchy will be less important than personal qualities and interpersonal skills. Sensitivity, assertiveness, efficiency and articulateness are likely to be particularly required.

The complaints co-ordinator will either hear a complaint personally or, where appropriate, refer the matter to another member of staff. The co-ordinator will also keep records of each complaint and of action taken in regard to it (preferably using an agreed proforma e.g. as in Appendix A) so that the senior managers and governors of the school can be kept informed of all issues that arise and as a result can change or develop school practices where necessary or appropriate. Thus complaints about the school can be used positively as a self-evaluation tool. If a person is unable to articulate their complaint or would have difficulty in presenting it in writing e.g. through disability, learning or language difficulties, then the complaints co-ordinator or another member of staff should assist the complainant in formulating the complaint.

Stage 2

Complaint heard by the headteacher.

Stage 3 Complaint heard by Governing Body’s Complaints Appeal Panel.

If unsatisfied at Stage 1 or 2, the complainant can take the complaint to the next stage.

THE FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE IN DETAIL

Stage 1 – Complaint Heard by Staff Member
NB The aim is to resolve the complaint at this level.

1.1 The complaint should be addressed in the first instance to the designated member of staff. **The complaints co-ordinator for this school is Naomi Sutherland, Head of School (e-mail: school@st-elizabeth.uk marked for the attention of Ms N. Sutherland)**. This may be done in person, by telephone or in writing e.g. letter, email or text. Sometimes a complaint may be made by a third party on behalf of the complainant. In very small schools, the designated member of staff may have to be the headteacher, in which case the procedure will start at Stage 2.

1.2 The complaints co-ordinator will log the complaint (See Appendix A for a sample record form) and either investigate the complaint personally or refer it to an appropriate member of staff. In making this decision, the co-ordinator will be sensitive to any indication that the complainant would have difficulty discussing the complaint with a particular member of staff. All records will be kept securely and confidentially.

1.3 If the complaint concerns the Headteacher, a governor, or the whole governing body, the co-ordinator should refer it to the Chair of Governors and, in courtesy, inform the Headteacher/governor(s) that this has been done. If the complaint concerns the Chair of governors, the co-ordinator should refer it to the vice-chair.

1.4 Whoever investigates the complaint will:

- establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved;
- clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- meet with the complainant or contact them;
- clarify what the complainant feels would put things right, clearing up any areas of misunderstanding, identifying areas of agreement and discussing what might be possible;
- interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish (this should include adults and pupils as appropriate, whether main players or witnesses);
- conduct each interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keep secure and confidential notes of each interview.

1.5 **Timescales:** Within ten school days of receiving the complaint, the investigator will complete the investigation and contact the complainant to arrange a meeting. (See 1.6). At any point in the process, the complaints co-ordinator may decide or agree to commission a further investigation, whether by a member of staff or an independent person. If this occurs, the timescale may be extended and the complainant must be informed of the extension and the reason for it.

1.6 When the investigation is complete, the member of staff investigating will meet the complainant to try to resolve the complaint. Every effort should be made to try

to resolve the complaint at this meeting. Any of the following may be appropriate at this point:

- an acknowledgement that the complaint is valid in whole or in part;
- an apology;
- an explanation;
- a clarification of misunderstandings;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

Some of the above may require that the investigator seek authority from the head teacher. Naturally, nothing should be offered or promised that cannot be justified or fulfilled.

1.7 Any appeal against the outcome of the complaint should be received within 5 working days from the date of the outcome and the appeal process should be completed within one month.

Stage 2 – Complaint Heard by Headteacher

(*In very small schools, this stage may be the start of the procedure – see 1.1)

2.1 Where a complaint has not been resolved at Stage 1, it will be referred to the headteacher unless the original complaint concerned either the headteacher or the chair of governors in which case the complainant may refer it straight to Stage 3.

2.2 The headteacher will either investigate the complaint personally or refer it to another senior member of staff (who has not so far been involved) or arrange for an independent investigation if appropriate. At this point it is possible that the complaint will have escalated to include a complaint concerning the manner in which the original complaint has been handled. Both parts of the complaint would in this case need to be investigated.

2.3 In conducting the investigation, the investigator will operate in accordance with section **1.4**.

2.4 **Timescales:** Within ten school days of receiving the complaint, the investigator will report back to the headteacher. Within a further three school days, the headteacher will contact the complainant and arrange a meeting. (**See 2.5**) At any point in the process, the headteacher may decide or agree to commission a further investigation, whether by another senior member of staff or a governor or an independent person. If this occurs, the timescale may be extended and the complainant must be informed of the extension and the reason for it.

2.5 **When the investigation is complete**, the headteacher will consider the evidence and, whether or not he or she investigated the matter personally, will meet the complainant (with or without the person who conducted the investigation

if different) to try to resolve the complaint. **Every effort should be made to resolve the complaint at this meeting**. Any of the suggestions in section **1.6** may be appropriate at this point.

2.6 If the complaint cannot be resolved, the complainant will be advised that they may refer it to Stage 3. This should be done within 5 working days of the investigation outcome meeting (2.5).

Stage 3

Complaint Heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel

2.2 A Complaints Appeal Panel, consisting of three governors, should be appointed annually by the governing body. This panel will have delegated power to hear and finally determine complaints. Ideally, the make-up of the panel should reflect the make-up of the governing body and/or the profile of the pupils in the school. Any governor who has prior involvement in or detailed knowledge of a particular complaint or its investigation may not sit on the panel hearing that complaint. It would be advisable, therefore, for the governing body to agree alternative panel members in case of such a circumstance. In the event that there are insufficient numbers of governors available to participate in a Panel, the Chair of Governors or Vice-Chair of Governors as appropriate may appoint associate members, on the recommendation of the Trust, to participate solely in the relevant complaints panel.

One of the complaints panel members must be completely independent of the management and running of the school i.e. not a governor or employee of the school (The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014). The complaint must not be discussed at a meeting of the full governing body as this could compromise the impartiality of the complaints panel and also any subsequent disciplinary hearing which may follow a serious complaint against a member of staff.

2.2 To trigger Stage 3, the complainant will have been dissatisfied with the school's approach to the complaint in the first two stages and must now put the complaint in writing to the Chair of governors. The Chair will check what has happened so far and, if the procedure has been properly followed and it is appropriate to move to Stage 3, he or she, or a nominated other governor, will - via the clerk - convene a Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel. If the original complaint concerned the Chair of Governors and was referred to the Vice Chair at Stage 1, the Vice-Chair will tell the complainant the name of the nominated governor for a referral to Stage 3. (see section 3.1) If both the Chair and Vice-Chair of governors are the subject of the complaint then the clerk will notify the complainant of the person to whom the complaint will be referred.

2.2 This is the final stage of the school procedure. It is, therefore, vital that, in the spirit of the procedure, the Appeal Panel should:

- be prepared to hear complaints without preconceptions;
- examine and discuss the matter fully so that they ensure that they have every piece of information or evidence that they require;

- be prepared to commission, organise or conduct further investigations if necessary;
- give the complainant the opportunity to express their dissatisfaction and worries and to suggest what might put things right;
- be prepared to take whatever action is required.

2.2 **Timescales**. The date of the Appeal Panel Meeting should be agreed by all parties within five school days of the receipt of the written referral of the complaint. The meeting itself should be held within fifteen school days of the receipt of the referral. If the complainant or the headteacher wishes to submit information in writing to the panel, they should send it to the clerk to the governors at least five school days before the meeting. As far as possible, the meeting should not be delayed if the referral comes at the end of a term, especially at the end of the summer term. Since the aim of the procedure is to resolve the issue and effect reconciliation if necessary, it will be best if the matter can come to the panel as quickly as possible, especially as the complainant will already have been engaged over a protracted period in attempts to put things right.

2.3 **Failure to agree a date**. If a party to the complaint fails to agree to attend a Complaints Panel meeting having been offered 2 or more alternative dates, within the 20 school day period, in an effort to accommodate their attendance, then the Complaints Panel may decide the meeting should take place in any event on the date last offered to the parties to the complaint. This particularly so if otherwise the complaint will not be heard within the school term or if the event giving rise to the complaint extends back sometime before the complaint was made. The complainant will be notified in writing of the time and date the Complaints Panel has agreed to meet to consider the complaint.

2.4 **Failure to Attend**. If a date is agreed or if pursuant to 3.5 above the complainant fails to agree a date and it is decided that the meeting should proceed and on the date and time notified to the parties the complainant fails to attend without reasonable excuse, notified to the Complaints Panel by the time of the meeting then the Complaints Panel will consider whether it is appropriate either to dismiss the complaint summarily for absence of the complainant or to proceed to conduct the meeting in the absence of the complainant using such evidence as was already before it on paper and as is available orally from the other party.

The Meeting of the Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel

2.5 **Before the meeting:** Members of the panel should consider carefully any documentation from the headteacher or the complainant but should not discuss the matter with any one, including the other members of the panel, before the meeting. This is in the interest of fairness and natural justice. The appeal panel must operate scrupulously as an independent arbiter of the complaint. The panel may however, liaise before the meeting in order to decide whether or not it is appropriate to exercise the powers set out in paragraph 3.5 above.

2.6 **Conduct of the meeting – to be borne in mind:**

- One of the panel must act as Chair and there should be a clerk for the meeting.

- The Trust may appoint an advisor to support the panel.
- The meeting room should be private and as informally laid out as possible in order to encourage a spirit of partnership. It is very important that there should be nothing adversarial about the proceedings. The tone of the whole meeting will be set by the atmosphere of the room in which it is set and by the way people are greeted. Panel members should be sensitive to the vulnerabilities and sensitivities of all concerned. Parents/Carers may be emotional when talking about their child; they must be allowed to be accompanied if they wish; the headteacher and others involved in the earlier investigations may fear that their professionalism could be under attack. Everyone needs to remember that the aim and purpose of the meeting is to resolve the complaint and find ways of going forward together. It is possible that the complainant may not be satisfied with the outcome if the panel does not find in their favour, but the conduct of the meeting can go a long way towards smoothing such dissatisfaction. At the very least, every complainant should feel at the end that their complaint has been taken seriously and examined impartially.
- If the complaint is about the Headteacher or Chair of governors and has been investigated by the Chair of Governors or another governor at Stage 2, then that governor may present the case for the school.
- Very special care should be taken if the complainant is a child or if there are child witnesses. Children's views should be given equal consideration to those of adults. If a parent/carer has complained on behalf of a child, the parent/carer should be given the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting the child needs to attend
- The parent/carer must be told that they are permitted to bring a friend or representative to the meeting.

2.7 Role of the Clerk

The clerk will:

- confirm to all parties in writing the date, time and venue of the hearing;
- receive and distribute any documentation to be read before the hearing;
- meet and welcome all parties as they arrive at the hearing;
- record the proceedings and maintain secure and confidential records;
- notify all parties of the panel's decision within 3 school days (or as decided by panel). The wording of any letters will be agreed with the chair of the panel.

3.10 **Role of the Chair of the Panel**

The Chair will ensure:

- that the procedure is properly followed (with the support of an external advisor if necessary);
- that the procedure for the hearing of the complaint is explained to all parties and that all parties have the opportunity to put their case without undue interruption;
- that the issues are addressed; ¬ that all parties are put at their ease, especially any who may not be accustomed to speaking at such a hearing;
- that the proceedings are kept as informal as possible and that everyone treats each other with respect and courtesy;
- that the panel operates in an open-minded and independent way; that time is given for all parties to consider any 'new' evidence.

Role of the external advisor

- To advise the panel on procedure. The Diocesan and local authority officers are there in an advisory capacity only. They do not have a vote and do not participate in the panel's decision-making process.

3.11 Order of Proceedings for the Hearing of the Complaint

- Welcome, introductions and explanations of the proceedings by the Chair.
- The complainant is invited to explain the complaint.
- The headteacher may question the complainant.
- The panel may ask questions at any time.
- If there are any witnesses for the complainant, each one is invited into the hearing in turn and in each case the witness is invited to speak, then the headteacher may question them. In each case, the witness will leave after their evidence.
- The headteacher is invited to explain the school's actions.
- The complainant may question the Headteacher.
- If there are any witnesses for the school, they are treated in exactly the same way as the witnesses for the complainant.
- When the Chair is sure that all parties have asked all that they need to, the complainant is invited to sum up their complaint.
- The headteacher is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- The Chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within three school days following the day of the hearing.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues (supported by an external advisor if there).

3.12 **Options Open to the Panel**

The panel may:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

3.13 **After the Hearing** the following action needs to be taken.

- The Chair of the panel agrees with the clerk the wording of the letter to be sent to both parties. This must include reasons for the decision and the fact that appeals on points of law or procedure may be referred to the Education funding Agency. The clerk then ensures that the letter is sent out in accordance with the agreed timescale.
- The clerk writes up the notes of the meeting and gives a copy to the Chair of the panel. It is recommended that these notes also be sent to the complainant and the school (redacted as appropriate).
- The clerk ensures that any recommendation to change school procedures is put on the agenda for the next governing body meeting.

3.14 **Serial or Persistent Complaints:** If properly followed, a good complaints procedure will limit the number of complaints that become protracted. However, there will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedure having been

followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Chair of Governors is able to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed. The procedure for dealing with serial and persistent complaints is attached to the back of this document at page 15-16.

GENERAL POINTS

Using and Publicising the Procedure

The governing body needs to adopt the procedure formally and then to review and re-adopt it annually. They also need to ensure that staff are confident in its use and that it is appropriately publicised to all interested parties, especially parents. It must be placed on the school website and could also be included in the school prospectus or sent out with a newsletter.

Recording and Reporting Complaints

In order to turn complaints to positive effect, it is important that records are kept so that at regular intervals (perhaps termly) both the senior managers of the school and the governing body can reflect on issues that have arisen and on the way in which they have been handled. The school will record in writing the progress of all complaints, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the final outcome. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls. The complaints co-ordinator is the most obvious person to hold these records and to collate them into a report for the headteacher (if he or she is not the co-ordinator) and the governing body. Such a report could be a valuable self-evaluation tool. The governing body may also wish to consider reporting to parents any changes which have been made to the school's procedures as a result of parental feedback.

Confidentiality

All correspondence, statements and records of complaints must be kept strictly confidential, except where a legitimate subject access request is made under The Data Protection Act 2018, or where the secretary of state (or someone acting on their behalf) requests access to them. Complainants are entitled to a copy of the records of a complaint, including notes and outcomes. Where relevant, the person complained about is also entitled to a copy of the findings and recommendations. This should be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the headteacher. Records of complaints should be retained for three years following completion of the complaints process and then destroyed.

Complaints Made Other Than in Accordance with the Procedure

Sometimes a complainant may be unfamiliar with, or unaware of, the complaints procedure; sometimes they may choose to take their complaint straight to governors or to other parties, such as the diocese or the Local Authority. In every such case, the procedure must be strictly adhered to, and the complaint redirected to its proper stage in the procedure. It is, therefore, important that all members of staff and all governors are fully aware of the procedure and that it is publicly available. It is particularly important that governors know that they must not attempt to deal with complaints themselves, but should tell complainants to take their complaint to the school's complaints co-ordinator.

Complaint Campaigns
Occasionally schools become the focus of complaint campaigns where large volumes of identical complaints are received from persons unconnected to the school. If the school is the subject of such a campaign, the Chair of Governors will send a template response to all complainants or publish a single response on the school website. The method of response will be determined by the number of complaints received.

Legal Representation
The Complaints Appeal Panel hearing is intended to be a non-adversarial meeting. It is not part of legal proceedings and it is intended that the complaint should be heard, that the complainant and 11 the school should be reconciled and any mistakes rectified. It is not therefore appropriate for the complainant or the school to be legally represented. Legal representatives/advisers will only be admitted in exceptional circumstances and with written permission obtained in advance from the panel.

Complaints to Ofsted
The Education and Inspections Act 2006 at s.160 provides a procedure for Ofsted to investigate parents' complaints about a school. A complaint cannot be investigated unless the school's complaints procedure has been exhausted, subject to the Chief Inspector's discretion to waive this requirement.

Complaints to the Lux Mundi Trust
If a complaint has completed the school procedures and the complainant remains dissatisfied, they have the right to refer their complaint to the Lux Mundi Trust. The Trust has a duty to consider all complaints raised but will only intervene where the governing body has acted unlawfully or unreasonably and where it is expedient or practical to do so.

APPENDIX A

EXAMPLE OF A COMPLAINT RECORD FORM (Stage 1 and Stage 2)

PART A - RECORD OF COMPLAINT

Complainant's Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Details of the Complaint:

Date Complaint Made:

Action Already Taken to Resolve the Matter:

Complainant's View of what might resolve the issue:

PART B - ACTION TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Complaint Investigated by:

Action (with dates):

Date of formal meeting with complainant:

Outcome of the Meeting:

ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS

It is appropriate for each person present to be given a copy of this page.

- Welcome, introductions and explanation of proceedings by the Chair;
- The Complainant (or representative) is invited to explain the complaint;
- The Headteacher (or representative) may question the Complainant;
- The Panel may ask questions at any time;
- If there are any witnesses for the Complainant they are invited individually into the room to make their points, the Headteacher and the Panel may question them and then the witness is invited to leave;
- The Headteacher is invited to explain the school's actions;
- The Complainant and the Panel may ask questions;
- Any witnesses for the school are invited in and treated in the same way as the Complainant's witnesses;
- The Chair checks that all parties have asked all they need to, then the Complainant, followed by the headteacher is invited to sum up;
- The Chair explains that the decision will be issued within 3 school days and all parties leave together;
- The Panel makes its decision (advised on law and procedure by member of Diocesan Education Service, if present.)

Policy for managing serial and unreasonable complaints

St Elizabeth 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 or threatening.

St Elizabeth 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, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes 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
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates 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.

Whenever possible, the headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, 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 Elizabeth School causing a significant level of disruption,

we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. 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 Elizabeth School.