



SARRATT CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Compliments and Complaints Policy

Laying the foundations for our children to be confident, respectful and to achieve their full potential.

Date of Review:	September 2018
Next Review Date:	September 2020
Approval:	SLT

We care about what you think

At Sarratt C of E school, Christian values are at the heart of everything we do. We deliver our vision through following 'The Sarratt way', 'treating others the way we would want to be treated ourselves' and striving to 'do our best to be our best selves'.

In our school, we respect and value the views of all. Each day this school makes many decisions and tries hard to do the best for all the children. Your comments - either positive or negative - are helpful for future planning.

You may want to talk to us about a particular aspect of this school, though not actually make a complaint - you just want to get something 'off your chest'. We recognise that most concerns can be resolved quickly and effectively when brought to our attention. If you are dissatisfied about the way your child is being treated, or any actions or lack of action by us, please feel free to contact us.

Equally, we want to hear your positive comments so that we can build on our strengths as well as addressing areas to improve. This can be passed on verbally to the member of staff concerned or via email to the school admin who will direct your compliment to the member of staff concerned. You may feel it appropriate to alert the Head of School or Chair of Governors to your compliment, in which case you can email them directly using the contacts listed in Appendix A.

We will endeavour to

- Deal with your concern honestly, politely and in confidence.
- Look into it thoroughly and fairly.
- Deal with urgent concerns quickly.
- Keep you up to date with progress at each stage.
- Apologise if we make a mistake.
- Inform you of actions.
- Reply to formal complaints within **28 school days (5½ weeks)**.

The Informal Stage

On most occasions concerns can be resolved immediately by speaking to a child's class teacher. It may be necessary for you to make an appointment at a time which is convenient to both you and the teacher.

If your concern is relating to a particular area of school life, e.g. sports provision, SEND, please see Appendix A for the relevant member of staff to contact.

You are advised to let the teacher or member of staff know the nature of the concern when making an appointment so that they may investigate further if necessary.

The purpose of the meeting is to establish a solution or to agree a plan of action to resolve the concern. If the meeting fails to do so then make an appointment to see a member of the SLT.

The SLT will normally make further investigations and meet with you to suggest a workable solution. If you feel that the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, you may request a further meeting with the Head of School or consider making the matter the subject of a formal complaint.

First Formal Stage

Request a meeting with the Head of School who will complete the form in Appendix B and investigate your complaint. The Head of School will aim to inform you of the outcome within 10 school days (2 weeks).

If your first contact is with individual Governors, they will advise you to take up your concerns with the appropriate member of staff or Head of School. A Governor should not be made aware of a potential complaint as they may be required to sit on a Panel in the event of a formal hearing (Stage Two) and should be impartial.

If your complaint is about the Head of School, you should write to the Chair of Governors.

If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) you might find it helpful to talk to our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) or your child's named Special Needs Officer at the Local Authority. The SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS – formerly Parent Partnership) may also be able to help you.

Second Formal Stage

If you remain dissatisfied following Stage 1 and wish to take your complaint further, you will be asked to complete a form (Appendix C) which should be placed in a sealed envelope and addressed for the attention of the Chair of Governors.

The Chair of Governors will arrange for your complaint to be considered and investigated under the arrangements approved by the Governing Body. This should involve a Panel of Governors at a hearing where the complainant and the respondent are invited to attend. If the Chair of Governors or another Governor has been involved

in discussions to help settle the matter at Stage 1, s/he should arrange for another Governor to take charge of the situation. Neither the Chair of Governors nor the Governor in charge should sit on the Panel themselves and they should instead ensure that a Panel is convened in line with the timeframes and guidance set out in the school's complaints procedure. The Governor in charge of investigating the complaint may ask to meet you to discuss your concerns. It is not advisable for a Panel to investigate and conclude matters without giving the Complainant and Respondent the opportunity to respond. Therefore a formal hearing with all in attendance is most preferable.

You should make sure that the Governors' Complaint Panel is provided with any written information or evidence you intend to use in a formal hearing. You may bring a friend, representative or interpreter to any meeting if you wish. The Chair of the Panel may invite any person who may help establish the facts of the complaint. The Chair should tell you who this person is before the meeting. If any member of staff is required by the Governing Body to attend a meeting they will have the opportunity to be accompanied or represented as they wish. A member of staff named in a complaint may also choose to attend a meeting, even if not required to do so by the Governors. They may be represented. If this happens, we will inform you in advance.

When the Panel has fully investigated your complaint, the Chair of the Panel or the Governor in charge of the investigation will write to you to tell you the findings. These findings will be reported to the Governing Body. The Chair of Governors will then write to you confirming the outcome of your complaint and any agreed actions to be taken. Our Governing Body will aim to deal with your complaint **within 28 school days (5½ weeks)**.

Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints

We may reject a complaint at any time if the complaint has no serious purpose, or is intended to cause disruption or annoyance, or if the complainant is seeking an unrealistic remedy. We refer to these complaints as frivolous or vexatious.

A frivolous or vexatious complaint can be characterised in a number of ways:

- Complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious;
- Insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason;
- Insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner;
- Complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance;
- Demands for redress which lack any serious purpose or value.

We understand that if you contact us with what you believe is a complaint, then it is a concern to you, whatever others might think. We are sensitive to the fact that if you raises the same or similar issues repeatedly, despite receiving a full response, there may be underlying reasons for this persistence.

Deciding whether a request is frivolous or vexatious is a balancing exercise, taking into account all the circumstances of the case.

If we decide that a complaint is frivolous or vexatious, we will write to you explaining that we are terminating our consideration of the complaint. We will give reasons for our decision.

Further Recourses

You can complain to the Secretary of State at the Department for Education:

The Secretary of State
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT
Website: www.education.gov.uk
Telephone: 0370 000 2288

In the case of complaints about Special Educational Needs provision, you may complain further to the Local Authority. This should be done by writing to the Children's Services Complaints Manager.

It should be noted however that if you wish to pursue this route, you must do so within 20 working days (4 weeks) of receiving the written outcome of the hearing into your complaint. After 20 working days (4 weeks), neither the school nor the Local Authority is under any obligation to investigate or progress your complaint any further.

Useful Contacts

Advisory Centre for Education
Education Advice & Training
72 Durnsford Road
London
N11 2EJ
Web: www.ace-ed.org.uk
Phone: 0300 0115 142

POhWER
Hertlands House
Primett Road
Stevenage
SG1 3EE
Web: www.pohwer.net
Phone: 0300 456 2370

Children's Legal Centre
Riverside Office Centre
Century House North
North Station Road
Colchester
Essex
CO1 1RE

Web: www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Phone: 0345 345 4345

National Youth Advocacy Service
(NYAS)

Egerton House
Tower Road
Birkenhead
Wirral
CH41 1FN

Web: www.nyas.net

Phone: 0345 345 4345

SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs & Disability Information Advice Support Service –
formerly Parent Partnership)

Registry Office Block

CHR102

County Hall

Hertford

SG13 8DF

Web: www.hertsdirect.org/parentpartnership

Email: parent.partnership@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Phone: 01992 555847

Family Lives

(Formerly Parentline Plus)

15-17 The Broadway

Hatfield

Hertfordshire

AL9 5HZ

Web: www.familylives.org.uk

Phone: 0808 800 2222

APPENDIX A

STAFF CONTACTS

Nature of your concern	Staff member	Contact details
SEND provision	Mrs Byrne	senco@sarratt.herts.sch.uk
Lunches Milk Visits Office Communication Clubs Parentmail	Mrs Carson	admin@sarratt.herts.sch.uk
Curriculum Pastoral Social and emotional development Behaviour	Class teacher	admin@sarratt.herts.sch.uk
Safeguarding Health and Safety	Mrs O'Hare Mrs Serby (SLT)	head@sarratt.herts.sch.uk admin@sarratt.herts.sch.uk
Sports provision	Mrs Goldspring	admin@sarratt.herts.sch.uk
SPA	Mrs Coupland	spa.chair@sarratt.herts.sch.uk
Governance	Mr Gould	mgould@sarratt.herts.sch.uk

APPENDIX B

FORMAL FOR STAGE ONE - FORMAL COMPLAINT
 To be completed during meeting with Head of School

Name		
Address		
Postcode		
Email		
Telephone	Day	
	Night	
	Mobile	
What is it you wish to complain about?		
What would you like us to do to put things right?		

SIGNED	
DATE	

APPENDIX C

FORM FOR STAGE TWO - FORMAL COMPLAINT

To be completed, placed in a sealed envelope and addressed for the attention of the chair of governors

Name			
Address			
Postcode			
Email			
Telephone	Day		
	Night		
	Mobile		
What is it you wish to complain about?			
Have you raised your issue with the class teacher / appropriate member of staff? (Informal stage) If so, when did you do this?	YES (inc date)	NO	
Have you complained to the Head of School? (Stage One)	Yes	NO	
When did you do this?	Date		
What happened when you complained to the Head of School?			

What would you like us to do to put things right?

SIGNED	
DATE	

Appendix D

DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS FLOWCHART

