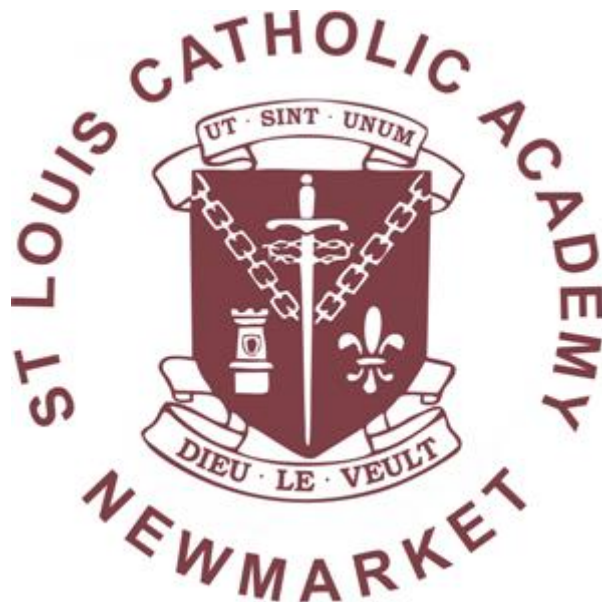


St Louis Catholic Academy

“Learning Together in Faith”

Complaints Procedure Policy



Date reviewed	Wednesday 7 th June 2017
Signed	Mrs Julienne Whipp – Chair of Governors
Minuted	18 th October 2017
Date of next review	October 2021

**The Head of School
is:**

Mr Nick Kerin
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**The Chair of Governors
at the school is:**

Mrs Julienne Whipp
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1. General Principles

St Louis Catholic Academy is committed to providing the very highest standards of education and support and places great value on its strong partnership with parents. The School recognizes that from time to time concerns or complaints may arise and it is its aim to work with all parties involved towards a satisfactory resolution.

The aim of this procedure is to enable both the School and the complainant to reach a resolution of their concerns by providing a transparent and easily understood process for handling complaints. Both parties will do this by:

- attempting to resolve concerns through informal discussions at the earliest stage;
- providing named contacts and a timescale for a response to be made by the academy;
- focusing on resolving complaints rather than apportioning blame;
- promoting confidentiality and discretion;
- being forthright in dealing with vexatious, abusive and malicious complaints.

Expectations under this procedure

When bringing a complaint to the School under this procedure expect the school to:

- take the complaint seriously;
- treat the complainant with courtesy and respect;
- both parties will deal with it with discretion and confidentiality (if the matter relates to the safety and well-being of a child then the School reserves the right to share details with other agencies);
- the School will offer the opportunity for the complainant to be accompanied by a friend, adviser or colleague;
- meet the timescales set unless there is good reasons to extend these – in which case the complainant will be informed;
- seek and offer resolution at all stages;
- inform the complainant of the action taken to resolve the complaint and of any measures to ensure that a similar complaint does not arise in the future;

In turn the School expects that:

- all staff will be treated with respect;
- the complainant must be mindful of the need to keep information relating to children confidential in the interests of all students;
- that the complainant will enter into the procedure in the spirit of seeking resolution;
- if it is considered that disciplinary action may be necessary against a member of staff then it will be dealt with under the School's disciplinary procedure and in confidence.

In the unlikely event that anyone bringing a complaint is considered by the Head of School to be acting unreasonably or that the complaint is malicious or vexatious then the Head of School will intervene and appropriate restrictions may be imposed.

2. How to report a complaint

Stage 1 - Informal concerns or complaints

Concerns or complaints should initially be discussed informally with the relevant member of staff, for example the class teacher or phase leader with a view to resolving the issue. There is no need at this stage for the complaint to be made in writing. Staff may make notes in regard to these discussions.

If the complaint has already been discussed with the member of staff, or that would be inappropriate, a senior manager (this could be the Head of School or another senior leader) will discuss the complaint again with a view to seeking to resolve the matter informally, within 10 School days of the initial concern.

It would be expected that the vast majority of concerns or complaints would be resolved at this early stage.

In the unusual event that the complaint remains unresolved after discussions with the appropriate member of staff then it may be put in writing and would be handled under Stage 2.

Stage 2 - Formal Complaint Investigation

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally then there will be the opportunity to put it formally in writing on the appropriate form which should be returned to the Head of School **within 10 school days** of receipt of the aforementioned form.

The School will acknowledge receipt of the form **within 5 school days** of its receipt and will appoint an appropriate person to investigate the complaint further (The Investigating Officer).

The Investigating Officer will:

- investigate the complaint and then decide how best to resolve it;
- provide a written response outlining how the investigation was conducted and the outcome of the complaint, as well as offering an opportunity to discuss the outcome if appropriate. This will **be within 5 school days** of receipt of the original complaint by the Investigating Officer;
- advise on the next steps if after this review the complaint has not been resolved which will be covered under Stage 3.

Stage 3 - Formal Complaint Panel

If the complaint has not been resolved at Stage 2 then the complainant may write **within 10 school days** of the notification of the Stage 2 outcome to the Chair of Governors named on the second page of this document explaining why they feel that the complaint has not been fully addressed at Stage 2.

The Investigating Officer will acknowledge the request **within 5 school days** and advise of the arrangements for the Formal Complaint Panel.

A meeting of the Panel, made up of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and consisting of at least 2 school governors and 1 member independent of the school and its' management, will be convened **within 20 school days** of the request.

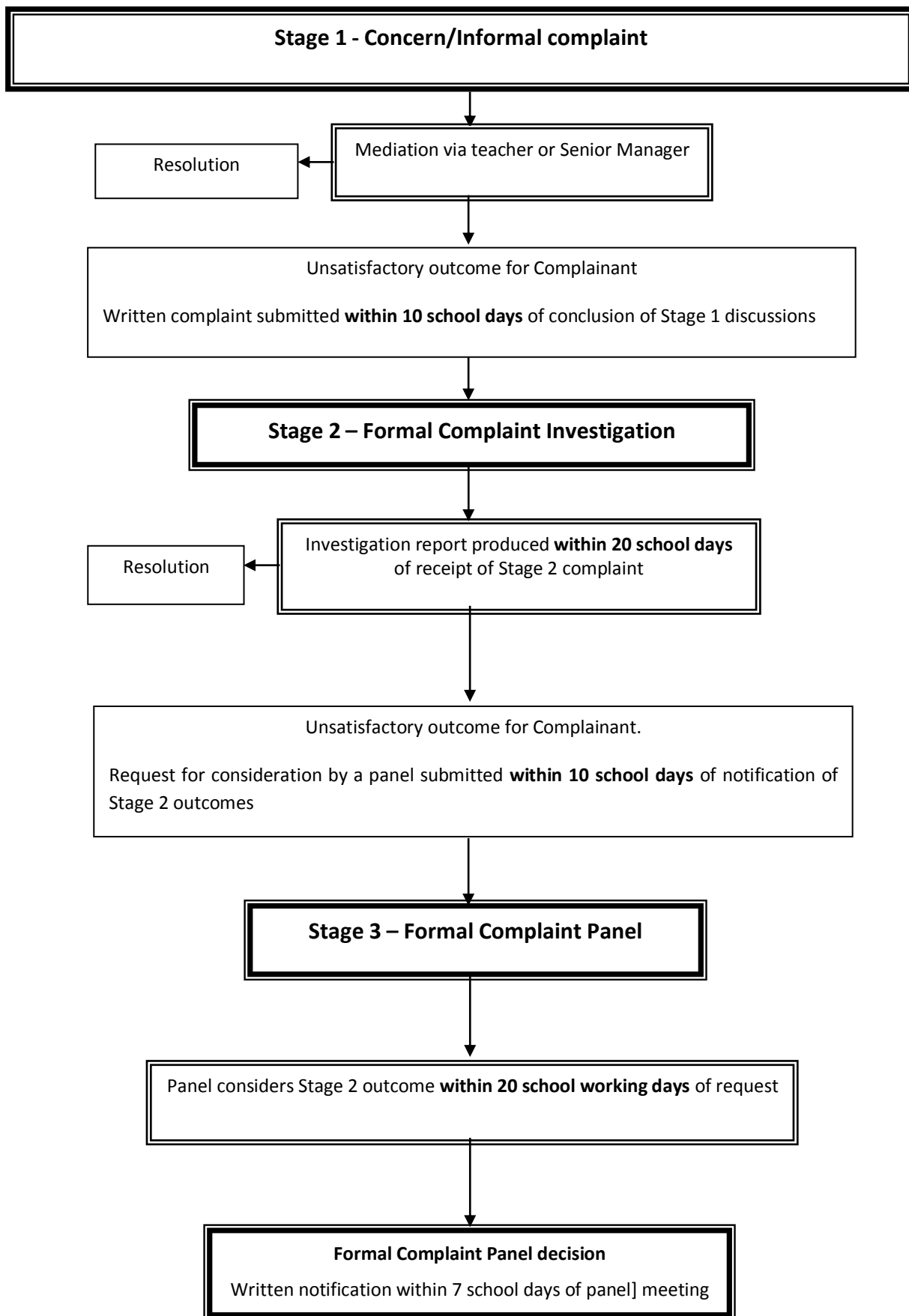
The Panel will consider the following:

- any appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- whether to dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- whether to uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- whether changes to the school procedures in the future may be necessary.

The Panel will take into account whether the complaint has been handled properly and reasonably in accordance with this procedure and whether the Stage 2 outcome was reasonable and appropriate.

The complainant will be informed of the outcome at the end of the Formal Panel and this will be confirmed in writing **within 7 school days**. The decision of the Panel is Final.

GENERAL COMPLAINTS PROCESS



Complaints Procedure: Management of stages

Complaint relates to	Stage 1: Informal	Stage 2: Formal Complaint Investigation Investigating Officer	Stage 3: Formal Complaint Panel
Pupils, parents or staff (other than the Head of School)	The appropriate member of staff	The Head of School or other Senior Manager	Panel appointed by the Chair of Governors.
The Head of School	The Head of School	The Chair of Governors or another nominated non-staff Governor	Panel appointed by the Vice Chair of Governors.
Executive Headteacher	Executive Headteacher	MAT Directors	
A Governor or Governors (other than the Chair of Governors)	The Chair of Governors	Another nominated non-staff Governor	Panel appointed by the Vice Chair of Governors.
The Chair of Governors (or a group of Governors including the Chair of Governors)	The Chair of Governors (or a group of Governors including the Chair of Governors)	Another nominated non-staff Governor	Panel appointed by the Vice Chair of Governors.
The whole body of Governors		A person appointed by the Diocesan Education Service	A panel appointed by the Diocesan Education Service.

Note: Governors will not be part of any Stage 3 panel if involved in any of the previous management stages.