

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The teachers in St. John the Baptist School want the children to do well and be happy. We recognise that you as a parent/guardian play an important part in making this happen. Therefore, we aim to provide as many opportunities to keep you informed and involved in your child's progress as we possibly can. Reports, Newsletters, Open days and Parent/ Teacher meetings all help the process. Questions and concerns are usually dealt with quickly and helpfully.

However, we recognise there are times when things go wrong, when concerns continue and differences of opinion develop. These can usually be resolved by speaking to the right person. Most concerns can be settled without too much trouble, but whatever the issue, even where you are seriously concerned about your child's future at the school, it's always important to try to find an answer. Disruption to a child's education would be the most damaging result of all.

What to do first. Take a few minutes to read this procedure. Then think the complaint through.

- *What actually happened?* Remember there is often more than one view about an incident or situation. For example, your child may be telling the truth but it may not be the whole story.
- *What do you want to complain about?* What do you hope will happen as a result of your complaint? It might help to talk this through with a friend or relative.

When you make a complaint, remember that although you want to change a situation, you want it to end on a positive note with no bad feelings. In order to do this you should try to follow the procedures carefully and always try not to put yourself or anyone else into a corner.

What to do next. When you are clear in your own mind as to what you believe has happened then you need to speak to someone at the school. Although some schools can arrange to see parents who just “pop in”, this is not generally possible. It is always best to try to make an appointment where you can sit down and talk things through calmly and without interruption. If your concern/ complaint relates to a class issue please contact the class teacher first. If the issue is not resolved a meeting with the principal, teacher and parent will be arranged. A meeting can be arranged directly with the principal to deal with non-classroom related issues.

If you are still unhappy. In most cases, the problem will have been solved by this stage. However, if you are still unhappy, then you should contact the Chairperson of the Board of Management. The school will tell you how to make contact with this person who may help to resolve the problem informally, possibly by arranging a meeting between those involved. Once again, you'll have the opportunity to talk through your concerns with an independent party who is there to listen and to discuss what is being said. If, after this, you are still not satisfied with the answer, then you should ask to make a formal complaint to the Board of Management.

Complaints to the Board of Management. As this is a serious step to take, it is important that you have thought things through carefully and that every possible attempt has been made to solve your concerns by other means. Normally, a meeting of the Board of Management will be called to hear your case and all sides will be asked to submit a written statement. You will also be invited to attend any hearing that is held, to present your side of the story. The decision of the Board of Management will then be sent in writing to all parties.

And, if you are still unhappy ... If after the Board of Management has dealt with your complaint, you are still unhappy with the decision that was taken, you can contact the Department of Education & Science or National Parents' Council-Primary for advice on what to do next. For example, if you feel that the Board of Management has acted unreasonably, you can consider taking your complaint to the Department of Education & Science.

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