St George's C of E Primary School

Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints Policy

St George's C of E School

School's theological-rooted Christian Vision

At St George's CE Primary school our vision is that every child upholds the Christian values with them in their daily lives. Our children strive to be confident, kind, thoughtful and selfless. You can see our vision come to life when walking through our school and in our classrooms. Our school motto is 'Jesus colours our love, our life, our learning'. We strive to live out this vision in everything we do in school to allow children to enjoy the fullness of life and enable them to flourish in the world in which they live.

Our vision is rooted in the Gospel of John and in particular chapter 10 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.' Our vision is rooted in the principle of Jesus' teaching that we must use his teaching to allow children to live life to the full and be able to flourish in their life within and beyond school. Our school vision encompasses our 6 Christian values (compassion, love, truthfulness, thankfulness, forgiveness and hope)

January 2026

Policy adopted:- January 2026

Policy to be reviewed:- September 2028

Signed on behalf of Governing Body:- G.JAMES

Signed by the Headteacher:- J.Young

Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints Policy

1. Purpose of the Policy

St George's Church of England Primary School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly, consistently and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to all members of our school community. We recognise that complaints provide an important opportunity for reflection and improvement.

This policy sets out how the school will respond where complainant behaviour becomes serial, unreasonable or vexatious and begins to hinder the school's ability to investigate concerns effectively, or impacts negatively on staff wellbeing and the wider school community.

This policy should be read alongside the school's **Complaints Policy** and **Data Protection Policy**.

2. Our Commitment

The school will:

- Treat all complainants with courtesy, respect and fairness
- Take all complaints seriously and investigate them appropriately
- Ensure complaints are handled in line with published procedures
- Protect staff from behaviour that is abusive, threatening or unreasonable
- Balance the rights of individuals to raise concerns with the school's duty to safeguard staff wellbeing and ensure effective use of public resources

We do not normally limit contact with complainants. However, we do not expect staff to tolerate behaviour that is unacceptable and will take proportionate action where necessary.

3. Definition of Serial or Unreasonable Behaviour

For the purposes of this policy, unreasonable behaviour is defined as behaviour which hinders the school's consideration of a complaint due to the frequency, persistence or nature of the contact.

This may include, but is not limited to, situations where a complainant:

- Refuses to clearly articulate their complaint, the grounds for it, or the outcomes sought, despite reasonable support being offered
- Refuses to cooperate with the complaints investigation process
- Refuses to accept that certain issues fall outside the scope of the school's complaints procedure
- Insists on the complaint being handled in ways that are incompatible with the school's procedures or good practice
- Introduces trivial, irrelevant or excessive information and expects it all to be addressed
- Raises an excessive number of detailed questions and insists on immediate responses
- Makes repeated or unfounded allegations about staff involved in handling the complaint
- Changes the basis of the complaint during the investigation
- Repeatedly raises the same complaint despite it having been fully investigated and concluded
- Refuses to accept the outcome of a properly conducted investigation, including escalation to external bodies where appropriate
- Seeks outcomes that are unrealistic or disproportionate
- Makes excessive demands on school time through frequent, lengthy or complex contact
- Uses intimidating, aggressive, abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or behaviour
- Makes threats or engages in harassment
- Knowingly provides false or misleading information

- Publishes unacceptable or defamatory content about the school or staff on social media or other public platforms
- Submits repeated or excessive Subject Access Requests as a means of continuing a complaint or applying pressure once the school's complaints procedure has been exhausted

4. Expectations of Complainants

Complainants are expected to:

- Engage respectfully and constructively with school staff
- Limit contact to what is necessary while a complaint is being investigated
- Allow reasonable time for the school to respond

Repeated correspondence by email, telephone or in person may delay resolution and will not normally expedite outcomes.

5. Managing Unreasonable Behaviour

Where concerns about unreasonable behaviour arise, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will, wherever possible, attempt to address these informally with the complainant.

If the behaviour continues, the Headteacher will write to the complainant to:

- Explain why the behaviour is considered unreasonable
- Outline what change in behaviour is expected
- Set out the actions the school may take if the behaviour continues

Where behaviour causes significant disruption, the school may implement a **communication plan**, which may include:

- Specifying a single point of contact
- Restricting communication to specific methods (e.g. written correspondence only)
- Limiting the frequency or length of communications

Any communication plan will be proportionate, time-limited and reviewed after six months.

6. Serious Incidents

In cases involving serious aggression, threats or violence, the school will take immediate action to safeguard staff and pupils. This may include:

- Contacting the police
- Restricting access to the school site
- Communicating decisions in writing

7. Subject Access Requests (SARs)

The school recognises the legal right of individuals to make Subject Access Requests (SARs) under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. All SARs will be handled in line with statutory requirements and within required timescales.

However, where a SAR is **manifestly unfounded or excessive**, particularly where requests are repetitive or form part of serial or unreasonable behaviour, the school reserves the right to:

- Charge a reasonable fee to cover the administrative costs of responding; and/or
- Refuse to act on the request

Examples may include:

- Repeated requests for the same information without reasonable justification
- Requests intended to cause disruption or place an excessive burden on school resources
- Requests used as a continuation of a complaint after the complaints process has been concluded

Any decision to charge a fee or refuse a request will be made by the Headteacher or the school's Data Protection Lead and confirmed in writing. The response will explain the decision and inform the requester of their right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).
Further details are set out in the school's **Data Protection Policy**.

8. Equality and Fairness
This policy will be applied fairly and consistently. The school will consider reasonable adjustments where a complainant has a disability or additional needs that affect their ability to engage with the complaints process.

9. Monitoring and Review
The Governing Board will review this policy annually or earlier if required by changes in legislation or guidance.

Linked policies:

- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy