



# Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School

## Complaints Policy

Key staff:	J Rogers
Key governor:	
Last reviewed:	October 2017
Approved by Governing Body:	<i>A Tremarco</i>
Date:	October 2018
Due for renewal:	October 2019

## **The Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School Complaints Policy**

This policy is based on the principle that where possible, issues will be dealt with informally. Where this proves unsuccessful or impracticable, the formal procedures will give the complainant a route in ensuring that the issue is appropriately considered.

The complaints procedure covers all complaints about any provision of facilities or services that the school provides with the exceptions as stated below:

- Admissions to school
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- School re-organisation proposals
- Matters likely to require a child protection Investigation
- Exclusion of children from school
- Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures
- Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities.

### **The difference between a concern and a complaint.**

A 'concern' may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important enough for which reassurances are sought'.

A complaint may be generally defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal procedures. The school takes informal concerns seriously and makes every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. However, if the complainant would like to raise their concerns officially, the school's formal procedure will be invoked through the stages as outlined in the policy procedures.

### **Who can make a complaint?**

Any person, including members of the general public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that the school provides, unless separate statutory procedures apply (such as exclusions or admissions). The school does not limit complaints to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school, although it is expected that it will be mainly parents/guardians that will make use of the following procedure.

A complaint may be made in person, by telephone, or in writing. In order to prevent any later challenge or disagreement over what was said, brief notes of meetings and telephone calls may be kept and a copy of any written response added to the record. Where there are communication difficulties, the school may use recording devices to ensure the complainant is able to access and review the discussions at a later point.

**Introduction:**

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints. Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School is committed to taking concerns seriously and at the earliest stage. By dealing with matters informally, but fairly, and in a timely manner, it is hoped that the number of formal complaints can be kept to a minimum. However, it is always the prerogative of the complainant to have the issue dealt with through the school's formal complaints procedure.

Notwithstanding, the prime aim of Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Unreasonable complainants may warrant appropriate action by the school. Please see attached 'Policy for Unreasonable Complainants'.

Parents may raise matters with school staff without any formality. At this stage it may be unclear whether the parent is making a complaint, seeking information or has misunderstood the situation. If the enquiry is not resolved immediately, and an issue is identified, then the following procedure will be instigated:

**The Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School Policy has four main stages.**

- Stage 1 A concern is raised informally with a staff member.
- Stage 2 Formal complaint is heard by the complaints coordinator or an appropriate member of staff.
- Stage 3 – Complaint is heard by the headteacher.
- Stage 4 – Complaint is heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel.

**Stage 1 – Raising a concern**

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which hopefully will resolve the concern. The school requests that parents make their first contact, the form tutor, or if s/he is the subject of the complaint, the year head. Parents will be given the opportunity to discuss their

complaint with the appropriate member of staff. On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within three school days. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if the informal process has been exhausted and no satisfactory solution has been found **within 10 school days**, complainants will be asked by the member of staff dealing with the complaint whether they wish their concern to be considered formally (i.e. Stage 2 and onwards). Please note that it remains the prerogative of the complainant to move to stage 2 from the outset thus by-passing Stage 1.

**Stage 2 – Complaint heard by the complaints coordinator or by an appropriate staff member.**

Formal complaints shall be put in writing (see attached appendix 1) and addressed to Mr J Rogers, complaints coordinator. The complaint will then be logged. The school will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 school days of receiving it. The aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible and as such the school will investigate and aim to respond within ten school days. Should this timescale not be met, a letter of explanation will be sent with a revised schedule. If you are not satisfied with the result at stage 2 please write to or call the school within ten school days of getting our response. You will need to tell the school why you are still not satisfied and what you would like the school to do. The matter will then be moved to stage 3.

**Stage 3 – Complaint heard by the headteacher**

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2, the headteacher will arrange for a further investigation. Following the investigation, the headteacher will normally give a written response within ten school days. If you are dissatisfied with the result at stage 3, you will need to let the school know within ten school days of getting the response. The matter will then be placed before the Complaints Appeal Panel.

**Stage 4 – Complaint heard by the Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel**

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 3, then you will need to write to the chair of governors giving details of the complaint. The chair or a nominated governor will convene a complaints panel. The hearing will normally take place within 15 school days of the receipt of the written request for a stage 4 investigation.

The aim of the Appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the panel's decision in writing within three school days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further. **The Governors appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.**

In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the headteacher, the chair of governors will be informed of the complaint. The Chair of Governors will arrange for the

matter to be investigated. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of a member of the governing body, the matter will be referred to the Archdiocese.

Appendix 1  
Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School

Please complete and return to Mr J Rogers, complaints coordinator, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

**Your name:**

**Pupil's name:**

**Your relationship to the pupil:**

**Address:**

**Postcode:**

**Day time telephone number:**

**Evening telephone number:**

**Mobile number**

**Please give details of your complaint. If necessary please use supplementary sheets.**

**What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.  
(Who did you speak to and what was the response)?**

**What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?**

**Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Official use**

**Date acknowledgement sent:**

**By whom:**