

St Gregory the Great Catholic primary 0-11

Sharing your concerns about your child's education A guide for parents

Catholic Academies aim to be places where love of one's neighbour is obvious at all times. As St John reports, Christ said to his disciples at the Last Supper "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you".

Catholic Academies are staffed by teachers who are not only qualified and expert in their own field but who also, having freely chosen to become teachers in a Catholic institution, commit themselves to care for and help children in every way possible consistent with Catholic doctrine, principles and the Catholic ethos of the Academy. Nevertheless, as in any organisation, parents may from time to time raise a concern.

St Gregory the Great catholic Primary 0-11 recognises that at times things can go wrong. This guidance will help you understand how to resolve concerns you may have about your child's education.

The Academy has procedures for dealing with concerns or complaints and we value any feedback about our services, including compliments and suggestions. If you are concerned about any aspect of your child's education, you should contact the principal/Head of Teaching & Development at the Academy.

The Academy's Academy Committee has overall responsibility for the Academy and for ensuring the well-being of pupils and that all pupils receive an appropriate and high standard of education.

The principal/Head of Teaching & Development is responsible for making decisions on a daily basis about the Academy's internal management and organisation. So you should contact the Academy if you are concerned about an issue such as:

- your child's academic progress
- special education needs provision
- your child's welfare
- bullying
- something that has happened in Academy.

How do I complain to the Academy?

First, we hope you will speak to the relevant member of staff as soon as you have a concern. This will be the Key Person for your child.

This informal approach is nearly always the quickest and most effective way of resolving your concerns. They will complete a complaints form and ensure any actions set are recorded.

If you feel that your concern has not been resolved, then it is important to speak to or write to the phase leader who will look into your concern further.

If you are unhappy with the response of the phase leader it will be shared with the primary principal. We hope that at this stage the complaint will be fully resolved, however if you are still not confident that your complaint has been dealt with by the Primary Principal you should write with your complaint to the Chair of Committee Representatives/Clerk to the Academy Committee at the Academy address. Mark your envelope 'FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION'.

This is how your complaint will be handled

Within 5 working days the chair of Committee Representatives will clarify the nature of your complaint by asking you to complete a complaint form and will offer help in completing the form, if appropriate

Within 5 working days of receiving the form the Chair will decide whether mediation should be offered to help you and the principal explore possible resolution.

If mediation is agreed, the chair of Committee Representatives will endeavour to set up the meeting **within 10 working days**. If that timescale is not possible you will be told the reason.

If mediation is not deemed appropriate or if it is not successful, the Chair of Committee Representatives or Clerk will set up a panel of Committee Representatives to meet **within 15 working days** to consider your complaint. The clerk will provide details of the hearing and will request any further information you may wish to provide.

The complaints panel will consist of three Committee Representatives who (as far as possible) will have no prior knowledge of the events being complained of. The panel will be supported by a clerk who will take notes during the hearing and will stay with the panel while they make their decision in case Committee Representatives need to be reminded about responses to a particular question. The panel will hear the complaint impartially and make their decision without fear or favour.

Five working days before the hearing the clerk will send to you, the complainant, the principal and the three panel members, copies of all papers submitted by both sides so that there is sufficient time to read the evidence before the hearing.

At the hearing

Parents may be accompanied by a friend or supporter

1. You and the principal will be invited into the room where the panel is being held at the same time.
2. After introductions, you, the complainant will be invited to explain your complaint,
3. The principal may question you
4. The panel will question you
5. The principal/Head of Teaching & Development will be invited to explain the Academies actions
6. You, the complainant may question the principal/Head of Teaching & Development.
7. The panel will question the principal/Head of Teaching & Development.
8. The panel may ask questions at any point.
9. You, the complainant will then be invited to sum up your complaint.
10. The principal/head of Teaching & Development will then be invited to sum up the Academy's actions and response to the complaint.
11. The chair will explain that you and the Principal/Head of Teaching & Development will hear from the panel **within five working days**.
12. Both you and the principal/Head of Teaching & Development will leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
13. The clerk will remain with the panel.

Can I take my complaint further?

Not all complaints can be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant. For example, there will be occasions, when after investigation, the staff member has been seen to act appropriately and reasonably. Therefore, it is possible that a complaint may not be upheld.

The local authority cannot investigate Academy matters on a parent's behalf nor can it review how the Academy has dealt with your complaint. However, if you feel that the Academy has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures, you can write to the Director of Academies, at the Diocesan Academies Commission. The letter should include the time limit for any such appeal.

Reviewed: September 2015