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Unreasonable Complaints Policy

Adopted by the Governing Body 15 June 2017
Review June 2019

The Governors of St. Gabriel's Roman Catholic High School, Bury

Unreasonable and / or Persistent Complaints

(This policy is based on that recommended in the Department for Education document, 'Dealing with complaints about schools - a practical toolkit for head teachers and governors' Revised July 2016)

The governors and staff of **St. Gabriel's Roman Catholic High School** are committed to dealing with all concerns and complaints fairly and impartially, and to strive to resolve such matters as quickly as possible.

We will not normally limit the contact that those raising concerns and complainants have with the school. However, as their employers, the governing body does not expect our members of staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and we will take appropriate action to protect them from such behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

***Unreasonable complainants** are 'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, disrupt effective working by placing excessive demands upon the school's time and resources. In these circumstances, the school's consideration of either their complaint, or other matters of a high priority, can be adversely affected.'*

The school **may** regard a complaint as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:-

- a. refuses to either explain their complaint, fully set out the grounds of a complaint, or the outcomes they wish by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- b. refuses to co-operate with the school's complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- c. refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- d. insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- e. introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they (*the complainant*) expects to be taken into account and commented on, or, raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- f. makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- g. changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- h. repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is either groundless or has been addressed);
- i. refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed, including any referral to the Department for Education;
- j. seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- k. makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff, either in person, in writing, by email, or by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

We may also consider a complaint to be unreasonable if the person making the complaint,(either face-to-face, by telephone, in writing, or by email), does so:-

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;
- by publishing information which is unacceptable / defamatory, (either to the school or individuals), in a variety of media. such as in social media, websites, and newspapers.

We request and expect that complainants will limit the numbers of communications with school while a complaint is being progressed. ***It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.***

Whenever possible, the head teacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues the appropriate person will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable, and asking them to cease.

For complainants who make excessive contact with **St. Gabriel's Roman Catholic High School**, thereby causing a significant level of disruption, the school may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of harassment, aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual, or individuals from the school premises and land.

This policy adopted by governing body and operative date.	
Review / amendment date (subject to any Dof E amendment).	