



St Paul's Nursery School

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Developing **R**espectful, **I**ndependent, **C**onfident Communicators with **E**njoyment daily!

Managing serial, vexatious or unreasonable complaints policy 2025

St Paul's Nursery School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

St Paul's Nursery School defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- prolific correspondence or excessive e-mail or telephone contact about a concern or complaint
- requests for information which are excessive and unreasonable;
- an insistence on only dealing with the Headteacher, on all occasions, irrespective of the issue and the level of delegation in the school to deal with such matters;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the federation's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with



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staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with

- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

The school may receive complaints that are considered to be 'vexatious'. These are when;

- complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious
- insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason
- insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner
- complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
- demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value

For the purpose of this policy, harassment is the unreasonable pursuit of such actions above in such a way that they;

- appear to be targeted, over a significant period of time, on one or more members of staff
- cause ongoing distress to individual member(s) of staff
- have a significant adverse effect on the whole or parts of the school community
- are pursued in a manner which can be perceived as intimidating and oppressive by the recipient. This could include situations where persistent demands and criticisms, whilst not significantly taxing or serious when viewed in isolation, have a cumulative effect over time of undermining confidence, well-being and health.

The school's actions in cases of serial, unreasonable and/or vexatious complaints or in cases of harassment

- In the first instance the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will verbally inform the complainant that their behaviour is considered to be becoming, or has become, unreasonable or unacceptable, request that the behaviour is changed and advise that action may be taken in accordance with this policy. The complainant will be advised to acquaint themselves with the policy.
- The verbal information given will be confirmed by letter

The school will stop responding to complaints when all of the following have taken place;

- The school has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns
- the complainant has been given a clear statement of your position and their options
- the complainant contacts you repeatedly, making substantially the same points each time



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The case to stop responding is stronger if one or more of these incidents have taken place:

- their letters, emails, or telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive
- they make insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff
- you have reason to believe the individual is contacting you with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience

If the behaviour persists, the complainant will be informed by letter that his/her behaviour is now considered by the school to be persistently unreasonable and /or unacceptable and therefore falls under the terms of the parent and visitor code of conduct and the **Department for Education Guidance, 27 November 2018: Controlling access to school premises:**

In this instance the school will;

- inform the complainant by letter that their behaviour is now considered by the school to be persistently unreasonable and /or unacceptable and therefore falls under the terms of this policy;
- Restrict the individual to a single point of contact via an email address
- specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.
- In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the relevant school.



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