St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation

For the good of all through curiosity, creativity and love

Policy Title:	**Persistent Complaints Procedure**
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Contact:	governors@stjohnandstnicolasschools.org.uk
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St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation
Persistent Complaints Policy

At St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation, our vision is 'For the good of all – through curiosity, creativity and love.' This vision inspires everything that the federation does. It applies equally to all the federation's policies with the intention that our policies impact as fairly and positively as possible to meet the needs of all members of our schools' community.

St. John and St Nicolas Schools Federation is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. They will not normally limit the contact complainants have with their schools. However, they do not expect their staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

1. Definitions of unreasonable complaints/behaviour

St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders their consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the schools, 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 but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales.
- 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 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.

2. Guidance

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the federation that relates to their complaint, while the 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 executive headteacher or chair of governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the executive headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the federation causing a significant level of disruption, the federation may 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, the federation will immediately inform the police and communicate their actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from either St John the Evangelist School, St Nicolas School or both.