



## **Complaints Policy**

**Last reviewed and approved by Trustees  
August 2023**

## Complaints Policy

St Mary Islington PCC is committed to providing a safe, stimulating, consistent and accessible service to children, their parents, and members of the public. We always aim to provide high quality services for everyone, but accept that sometimes things do not always go to plan. In such circumstances, we want to know of any concerns so that we can put them right and learn from our mistakes. This policy applies to all users of our services.

This policy describes St Mary's formal Complaints Procedure. St Mary's welcomes all comments on its services, regardless of whether they are positive or negative. St Mary's also requests feedback from all users of our services via regular evaluations and questionnaires.

In the first instance, if a child, parent or a member of the public using St Mary's services has a complaint about some aspect of the provision, or about the conduct of an individual member of staff or volunteer team member, they are encouraged to speak directly to that member of staff or their supervisor. Alternatively, the relevant Department Manager should be approached, who will try to resolve the problem. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be found, then Stage One of the procedure will formally come into operation. All complaints will be logged so that issues can be reviewed as part of St Mary's commitment to maintain best practice.

A complaint which has Safeguarding or Child Protection implications will be dealt with under St Mary's safeguarding procedures and escalated accordingly. If any party involved in the complaint has good reason to believe that a criminal offence has been committed, then the police will be contacted. If Social Services authority, the Police, or the Church of England decide to investigate a situation this may postpone or supersede any complaints process being followed by St Mary's Islington PCC.

### **Stage One – formal complaint to a St Mary's Manager**

If informal discussions of a complaint or problem have not produced a satisfactory resolution to the situation, the child or parents should put their complaint in writing to the Department Manager. This manager will be responsible for managing the complaint and communicating with the Vicar. Relevant names, dates, evidence and any other important information on the nature of the complaint should be included.

If a complaint is made about one of the Managers the Vicar, as Chair of the PC, will conduct the investigation in accordance with Stage One.

On receiving a formal complaint we will:

- 1.1 Acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing as soon as possible (or within five working days).
- 1.2 The Department Manager may arrange to meet the relevant individuals, such as members of staff, to discuss the complaint. The Manager will judge if it is best for all parties to meet together or if individual meetings are more appropriate.
- 1.3 A formal record of all meetings will be taken and made available for those concerned should they wish to see them.
- 1.4 The Department Manager or Vicar will produce a written response to the complainant within 15 working days. The Manager may wish to meet with the complainant to discuss/resolve the matter

before confirming the outcome in writing.

- 1.5 Either party may need to consider consulting a mediator who is acceptable to both parties and will offer support and advice. Any mediator must ensure discussions are kept confidential.
- 1.6 The written response should include a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, it should include what action St Mary's will take to resolve the complaint.
- 1.7 Stage One should be completed within 20 working days. If there is any delay, St Mary's will advise the complainant of this and offer an explanation in writing and a revised completion date.
- 1.8 St Mary's will not pay financial compensation as a response to complaints, although it may spend money on a relevant purpose (e.g. purchasing new equipment).

### **Stage Two – Consideration by the Vicar or trustees**

If at the conclusion of the Stage One process the complainant remains dissatisfied with the response they have received, Stage Two of the complaints procedure will be followed.

The original complaint along with St Mary's response will be passed to the Vicar and the St Mary's Trustees, who will form a complaint committee formed of the Vicar and a minimum of two Trustees. If the Vicar investigated the original complaint, the committee should be formed of a minimum of three Trustees and the Vicar will not be part of the committee.

- 1.9 The committee will consider the complaint on the basis of the written evidence, and usually also set up a hearing and hear both parties, providing written advance notice of this hearing. The aim of this hearing should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the complainant and St Mary's.
- 1.10 The hearing should allow for:
  - The complainant to explain their complaint and the Manager or Vicar who originally investigated the complaint to explain the reasons for their decision in the original handling of the complaint
  - The complainant to question the Manager or Vicar who originally investigated the complaint
  - The committee to question both the complainant and the Manager or Vicar
  - Any party to have the right to bring witnesses and all parties having the right to question all witnesses
  - Final statement by the complainant and the Manager or Vicar
- 1.11 At the end of the hearing the committee will issue a written statement to both the complainant and the Manager or Vicar (who originally investigated the complaint) either upholding or not upholding the complaint, or upholding some parts and not others. If relevant, this finding should also include what St Mary's will do to resolve the complaint, and any changes St Mary's will make to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again.
- 1.12 As in section 1.8 above, St Mary's will not pay financial compensation as a response to complaints, although it may spend money on a relevant purpose (e.g. purchasing new equipment).
- 1.13 Stage Two should be completed within 20 working days from receiving the appeal. If there is any delay, St Mary's will advise the complainant of this and offer an explanation in writing and a revised completion date.

## **Complaints about the Reverend**

If a complaint is made wholly or mainly about the Vicar, and in particular the conduct of the Vicar then St Mary's Churchwardens and the Archdeacon of Hackney should be informed. They will then take forward the complaints process under the relevant Clergy Complaints Procedure.

## **Making a Complaint to Ofsted**

Any child or parent can, at any time, submit a complaint to Ofsted about any aspect of registered childcare provision. For St Mary's this is the Preschool and the Playscheme. Ofsted will consider and investigate all complaints received that are in breach of the relevant statutory requirements.

### **For children, parents or other service users:**

Enquiry Line: 0300 123 1231 (open 8.30am – 6.45pm, Monday-Friday)

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/parents](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/parents)

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD.

## **Monitoring and review**

The Trustees review the complaints procedure every three years, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. All complaints received from parents and service users and how they were resolved are logged by Managers or the Vicar. Trustees should be regularly informed about complaints made. The policy is made available to parents and other service users, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints procedure.

Appendix A:

### St Mary's complaints form

Here at St Mary's we value all those who use the centre and want to ensure that everybody feels comfortable when using our services. If you need to make a formal complaint please complete the form shown below.

Date & Time of Incident	
Location of incident	
Describe in detail the incident which you are making a complaint about	
Did anyone else witness the incident? If so please include details of who.	
Name of person making the complaint	
Contact details (email and phone)	

Your complaints provide invaluable feedback so we take all complaints seriously and deal with them fairly, sensitively and in complete confidence.

Please return this form to the relevant Department Manager.

*Thank you for taking the time out to complete this form*