

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1 Introduction

This Policy applies to the entire setting including the EYFS and after school and holiday clubs. Copies of this Policy are available for viewing and/or downloading on the school's website.

The difference between a concern and a complaint:

A "concern" may be treated as "an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought".

A "complaint" may be generally recognised as an "expression or statement of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or the lack of action". Any action about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is considered to be a complaint.

We take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve them at the earliest possible stage. All concerns and complaint are logged in the complaints log which is reviewed termly by Wishford.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

If a complaint concerns safeguarding or child protection issues please refer to the school's Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy, which has been revised in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2023)

The scope of this policy does not include staff grievances or disciplinary procedures.

Boarding

Boarders are actively encouraged to contribute their views to the operation of the boarding provision and are able to raise concerns and complaints without fear of being penalised for doing so in good faith.

The school's written record of complaints identifies those complaints relating to boarding provision and the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld)

2 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the procedure current parents/carers should follow should they wish to make a complaint.

If the complainant contacts the school again and again on the same point, the correspondence can be viewed as "serial", "vexatious" or "persistent" and the school reserves the right to choose not to respond.

3 Procedure

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's form tutor.

In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head.

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Low Level concerns for academic and pastoral welfare can be directed for resolution with the form tutor or the House Staff. Should the concern not be addressed, or considered of a greater concern, then the tutor/HM or the parent may choose to address the Key Stage Lead (KS3/KS4/KS5) accordingly. Further escalation may

reach the Deputy Head Pastoral, or the Deputy Head Academic and failing any resolution, can be raised to, or dealt directly with the Head.

Complaints made directly to the Head will usually be referred to the relevant form tutor unless the Head deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

Complaints made directly to the Wishford Support Office will be directed back to the Head of the relevant school, (unless the complaint is about the Head.) It is expected that unless it is very extreme circumstances all concerns (if they escalate) and complaints will go through stage 1 and 2 of this procedure before reaching the Proprietor or senior members of Wishford schools.

The form tutor/class teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received and will note what the complainant thinks might resolve the issue. Should the matter not be resolved within seven working days or in the event that the form tutor and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised of their right to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head, who will provide a copy to the Directors. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Head will contact the parents concerned, within two working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations before reporting back to the parents. In this case, a response should take no longer than two working weeks.

The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Head will give reasons for the decision.

Stage 3: Complaints Panel Hearing

If parents are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, they may request that the matter be referred to a Complaints Panel for consideration.

The Directors will appoint the members of the Panel, including the Chairman, who will be a person of good standing in the community but not associated with the school. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, at least one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable, normally within three working weeks.

If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than two days prior to the hearing.

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within two weeks of the Hearing.

The decision of the Panel will be final.

The Panel's findings and recommendations will be:

- provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
- made available for inspection on the school premises by the Directors and Head.

4 Complaints about the Headteacher or Proprietor:

If the complaint is about the Headteacher the complainant should write to the Proprietor; Mr Sam Antrobus at the following address:

25-27 High Street,
Corsham
SN13 0ES

If the complaint is about the proprietor, the complainant should write to the Directors of Wishford Schools at the above address.

5 Record Keeping

A written record of all complaints which are managed under stage two or three of this procedure will be kept by the Head.

The record will indicate:

- whether the complaints were resolved following the formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing; and
- the action taken by the school as a result of the complaint, regardless of whether the complaint is upheld.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to the individual complaint will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them. (For specific data protection points, please refer to Data Protection Policy)

6 Timescale for resolution of Complaints

Unless additional time is jointly agreed between the school and the parents the following timetable should be followed:

- Informal resolution: 10 working days
- Formal resolution: 30 working days
- Appointment of Complaints Panel: 21 working days
- Resolution by the Complaints Panel: 14 working days

A working day is defined a week day on which the school is in session and excludes weekends, bank holidays, and school holidays (even if the school is open for an INSET day, Holiday Club or similar).

Complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the outcome notified within 28 days of the complaint having been received. This section takes guidance from the Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage effective 4th September 2023

7 Contacts

Parents who believe the school is not meeting the requirements of the EYFS may complain to Ofsted by writing to this address: WBHL, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD, telephoning 0300 123 3155 or by email to: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk. Parents who are not satisfied may also contact ISI at Cap House, London

