



Windlesham School
& Nursery

Parents' Complaints Procedure

Whole School Policy including EYFS

Last Reviewed: March 2017

Next Review Due: Spring Term, Second Half 2019/20

Reviewed by John Ingrassia

Contents

- 1 Introduction 1
- 2 What Constitutes a Complaint? 1
- 3 Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints 1
- 4 Recording Complaints 1
- 5 Stage 1 - Informal Resolution 2
- 6 Stage 2 - Formal Resolution 2
- 7 Stage 3 – The Appeal Panel Hearing 3
- 8 Contact Details Available to all Parents and Carers 4

1 Introduction

Windlesham School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. Staff are actively encouraged to develop open lines of communication with all parents. Staff will give every opportunity for parents to discuss all matters relevant to their child's education and care. We encourage parents to inform us of their concerns while they are minor ones which can more easily be resolved. It is hoped however, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school with care and in accordance with this procedure. Windlesham School makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils in the School Office.

Parents of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) should follow this procedure. Parents of EYFS pupils can also make a complaint to OFSTED (contactable on 08456 014772).

2 What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do so something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you raise in good faith.

3 Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within five working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 28 days if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 28 days, if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

4 Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by paragraph (k) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, by the Secretary of State, or under other legal authority. **These records will be kept on the School premises. The School will keep records of all action taken.**

5 Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally and we expect parents to allow a reasonable opportunity for informal resolution before resorting to the formal stages of the procedure set out below.

If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Class Teacher/Tutor who is their first point of contact. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Class Teacher/Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Deputy Headteacher.

Complaints made directly to the Director of Studies, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher will usually be referred to the relevant Class Teacher/Tutor unless the Director of Studies, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.

The Class Teacher/Tutor will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 7 days or in the event that the Class Teacher/Tutor and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

If, however, the complaint is against the Headteacher, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors. Their details can be found at the end of this policy.

6 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 Headteacher. The Headteacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Headteacher will meet the parents concerned, normally within 7 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 Headteacher to carry out further investigations.

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

Once the Headteacher 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 this decision in writing. The Headteacher will also give reasons for his/her decision.

If the complaint is against the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will call for a full report from the Headteacher and for all the relevant documents. The Chair may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chair will give reasons for his/her decision.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

7 Stage 3 – The Appeal Panel Hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to The Convenor (see contact details page) who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.

The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.

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 normally not later than 3 days prior to the hearing.

The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint 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 make findings and may make recommendations.

The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 7 days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher.

In accordance with paragraph 25(3)(g) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, Windlesham School will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector or the Secretary of State for the purposes of section 162A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (as subsequently amended), details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

8 Contact Details Available to all Parents and Carers

Contact	Details
Chair of Governors	Graham Rowlands-Hempel Email: governors@windleshamschool.co.uk
Independent Schools Inspectorate	Address: CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA Helpline: 0207 6000100 Email: info@isi.net
The Convenor	The Headteacher's Personal Assistant Email: pa@windleshamschool.co.uk