

Waseley Hills High School

Complaints Procedure

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Academy Complaints Procedure

Certain types of complaint are subject to statutory procedures separate from this general complaints procedure. These include: Admissions; Exclusions; Freedom of Information & Data Protection; Child Protection/Safeguarding; Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN); Complaint by a member of school staff.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Education Funding Agency (EFA) Procedure for dealing with complaints about academies (Version April 2014, as updated from time to time), which is available from school or via the DfE website “Guidance on making a complaint about a school”, then click on link to EFA procedure.

Introduction:

The majority of issues raised by parents or students, are concerns rather than complaints. At Waseley Hills we are committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and of avoiding the need for formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish, or be asked, to follow the school’s formal Complaints Procedure.

The prime aim of our policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. If a formal complaint is made, it will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner.

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints:

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

If parents have a concern or complaint, they should normally contact their child's Tutor in the first instance. In most cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means. If the Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a subject teacher, Head of Department, Head of Faculty or member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, Head of Faculty, an Assistant Head, the Deputy Head or the Head teacher will usually be referred to the relevant Tutor unless the member of staff receiving the complaint deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

Written records of all concerns and complaints, the date on which they were received and the action taken will be made. Should the matter not be resolved

within 10 school working days or if the staff involved and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents may wish, or may be advised, to take the complaint to Stage 2.

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 teacher who will attempt to resolve the issue. The Head teacher will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 school working days. The Head teacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Head teacher will speak to or meet with the parents concerned within 10 school 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 teacher to carry out further investigations. The Head teacher will keep written records of his investigations in relation to the complaint.

Once the Head teacher 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 or by electronic communication. The Head teacher will also give reasons for his decision.

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

Stage 3 – Complaint referred to Governors

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 3 or if the complaint involves the Head teacher, then parents should write to the Chair of Governors via the school outlining a desire to take the complaint to Stage 3. The Chair of Governors will decide the appropriate course of action to take and will arrange for receipt of the complaint to be acknowledged within 3 school working days.

The Chair:

- may investigate the matter himself initially and speak with or meet with the parents concerned or
- refer the matter straight to a Governors' Complaints Panel.

If the matter is not resolved within 10 school working days of receipt by the Chair, the Chair will refer the complaint to a Governors' Complaints Panel for consideration.

The Complaints Panel will normally consist of three Governors not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, as chosen by the Chair of Governors. At least one member will be an independent member with no connection to the management of the School. If a Complaints Panel is convened, the hearing will be scheduled as soon as is practicable and normally within 20 school working days of the complaint being received by the Chair of Governors.

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 school working days prior to the hearing.

The complainant has the right to be accompanied at the hearing by a friend or colleague. Legal representation is not considered appropriate.

After due consideration of the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations.

Panel will inform the parents of their decision, and the reasons for it, either in writing or by electronic communication, normally within 10 school working days of the hearing. The Panel's decision will be final. The Panel's findings and recommendations, if any, will be sent in writing or by electronic communication to the parents, the Head teacher and, where relevant, the person complained of. A written record will be kept of all complaints and the stage at which they are resolved. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or other body legally entitled to have access, requests access to them. A record of all complaints will be kept for three years. The Governors' Complaint's hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.

If the matter is still not resolved at Stage 3 the final course of action available is to make a complaint to the DfE: Via the Department for Education's online school complaints for which is available at;

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/complaintsprocedure/b00212240/guidance-on-making-a-complaint-about-a-school>.

By post to Department for Education, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2G