

Willersey Church of England Primary School

Complaints Policy

Rationale

Willersey Primary School undertakes to provide a friendly and safe environment in which pupils will be helped to achieve their potential, both academically and socially. We recognize however, that sometimes things can go wrong and parents/carers may need to raise concerns or make a complaint they have in regards to the school.

Introduction

The majority of issues raised by parents (or pupils) are concerns rather than complaints. We are committed to taking concerns seriously at the earliest stage, in order to keep the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without need for formal procedures. However, depending upon the nature of the complaint, you may wish or may be asked to follow the formal complaints procedure.

The prime aim is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner.

In order to help parents understand the correct channels for complaint, this policy is referred to in the school prospectus and is published on the school website.

(For details regarding complaints about specific members of staff, please see the notes on the final page of this policy).

Key Principles:

- The school will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed and given careful consideration;
- All complaints will be dealt with fairly, honestly and in a timely manner;
- Complaints must be raised within 3 months of the event being complained about, save in exceptional circumstances, such as safeguarding issues or bullying allegations.
- Both the school and governors will follow the defined procedure below in the handling of all complaints. Specifically, if governors are personally approached they will direct complainants to the head teacher in the first instance. If the complainant has already done this and the matter is still not resolved, the governor will request them to submit the complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors under Stage 3. Governors will only become involved in the detail specifically as part of the complaint procedure;
- All complaints under the procedure below are logged by the Head Teacher together with their outcomes;

- All complaints will be handled confidentially and the complaints log is accessible only by the Head Teacher and assigned governors;
- The governors monitor both the complaints log and procedure on an annual basis to ensure all complaints are handled in accordance with these principles.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The school aims to work in partnership with parents in the best interests of the children and aims to resolve issues through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

Stage 1: We wish to encourage ongoing communication between teachers and parents so it is hoped that if parents have a concern they will, in the first instance, raise this with the class teacher so that hopefully it can be addressed through informal discussion. Members of staff are asked to follow up or give feedback as necessary within a few days. Class teachers are generally available at the end of the school day.

Where this informal discussion fails to resolve the issue the following procedure should be used:

Stage 2: If a parent feels that a concern has not been solved through discussion with the class teacher, or that it is of a sufficiently serious nature, then an appointment should be made to discuss the issue with the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will consider any such complaint very seriously and most complaints will be resolved at this stage. If not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction or the complaint is about the Head Teacher then the complainant should move to stage 3.

Stage 3: The complaint should be formally submitted in writing to the Chair of Governors stating the nature of the complaint & their concerns, the steps taken so far, the outcome desired and the actions sought to achieve this. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The Chair of Governors will consider whether the complaint has been properly dealt with and either confirm this or request the Head Teacher to reopen the investigation. The Chair of Governors will normally communicate this in writing to the complainant within 14 days after receipt of the complaint. The reply will address points of concern, be factually correct and clearly phrased but any disciplinary procedures/actions will remain confidential. It will advise the complainant of the next steps to take if they are still not satisfied.

Stage 4: If the complainant is still not satisfied, a panel of governors will be convened to hear the complaint and make a final decision. The hearing will normally take place within ten working days of receipt of the appeal request. The panel will comprise of 2 or 3 governors with no prior involvement in the complaint, one of whom will act as chair. All governors involved in the panel process will receive training prior to the panel meeting. Written evidence should be submitted by both the complainant and Head Teacher to the Chair who will circulate this to the panel prior to the meeting. Both the complainant and Head Teacher can be accompanied by a friend/representative who may

speak on their behalf. The panel will decide on the merits of the case and be actively involved in resolving it.

The hearing will follow these steps:

- Introduction by chair
- Complainant makes statement of complaint, outcomes sought and introduces any witnesses
- Questions to complainant and witness by panel and Head Teacher
- Head Teacher makes statement and introduces any witnesses
- Questions to Head Teacher and witnesses by panel and complainant
- Complainant makes final statement
- Head Teacher makes final statement
- Panel withdraws and reaches decision

The panel will reach a decision as to whether the complaint is upheld or rejected and may call for action to be taken by the school or parents. The meeting will be minuted/recorded by an appropriate person appointed by the Chair. Confirmation of the decision will be sent in writing within 14 days to the complainant and a brief report will be made at the next full governors meeting such as not to jeopardise any further actions.

Complaints regarding a member of staff

If the complaint regards the conduct or competence of an individual school employee, it will, where necessary, be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary policies and procedures. Any investigation will remain confidential.

If the complaint involves allegations regarding safeguarding issues involving a member of staff, it must be reported to the Head Teacher immediately. Any such allegation that relates to the Head Teacher must be reported to the Chair of Governors.

Complaints made about the conduct of the Head Teacher will be reported to both the Head Teacher and the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will arrange for the complaint to be investigated.

Complaints about the conduct of a member of the governing body will be reported to both the member and the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will arrange for the complaint to be investigated.

Further Action

Should all the stages of the school's Complaints Procedure have been completed and the complainant is still not satisfied, they will be offered details of how to refer the complaint to the DfE or Ofsted.

Note: For complaints/appeals regarding admissions, please refer to the Admissions Policy (available from the School Office and on the school website).

Flow Chart of the stages of school Complaints Procedure

