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Windrush Valley School

Policy Documents Annual Review Record

Citation	<u>This document shall be cited as:</u> Complaints Procedure Statement <u>and incorporating the following policies:</u>
Regulatory standard	
Person responsible	The Headteacher
Comments to	The Headteacher
Last reviewed/updated	September 2018
To be reviewed/updated	September 2019
Reason for review/update	Annual review
Person reviewing/updating	The Headteacher
Source/author	Alan Wood
Implementation	Immediate and on-going



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Procedures for Dealing with Complaints

Windrush Valley School is committed to providing the best teaching and pastoral care it can for its pupils. It is hoped that any worries, concerns or complaints (defined as any matter about which a parent or pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school) can be dealt with informally through the pastoral framework but, if not, the school has a formal complaints procedure. Formal complaints are extremely rare, reflecting the good relationships between pupils, parents and the school which enables matters to be resolved informally.

There were no formal complaints in academic year 09/2017 to 08/2018. Indeed, there have been no formal complaints in the past fifteen academic years, reflecting the excellent relationship between the school and its parents and pupils.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that a concern or complaint by a parent is managed sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level and resolved as soon as possible. Doing so is good practice, it is fair to those concerned and it helps to promote parents' and pupils' confidence in our ability to safeguard and promote welfare. We will try to resolve every concern or complaint in a positive way with the aim of putting right a matter which may have gone wrong and, where necessary, reviewing our systems and procedures in the light of circumstances.

We need to know as soon as possible if there is any cause for dissatisfaction. We recognise that a difficulty which is not resolved quickly and fairly can soon become a cause of resentment, which could be damaging to relationships and also to our school culture. We intend that parents and pupils should never feel – or be made to feel – that a complaint will be taken amiss or will adversely affect a pupil or his/her opportunities at school.

The school has, and follows, an appropriate policy on responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory standards. A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine concern which needs a response.

This policy applies to the whole school from Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) through to Year 6. All complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated, the results of which will be notified to the complainant within 28 days of having received the complaint and a detailed record kept of both the complaint and outcome. The record of complaints/concern will be made available to OfSTED on request.

The school retains copies of all complaints made and their outcome for a minimum of three years. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year is available to parents on written application to the Headteacher.

If pupils have worries or concerns of any nature they should discuss it at the earliest opportunity with the class teacher. Alternatively, this may be raised by letter, email or telephone

How to complain

Stage 1

You may choose informally to talk directly to a member of staff, write a letter, email or telephone. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you. Any member of staff will be happy to help. It may be best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue, they may be able to sort things out quickly (within three working days during term time), with the minimum of fuss. Staff will keep a record of your concerns and stored centrally in the school office.

However, you may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff, for example, the Headteacher, Mrs Douglas.

In this way it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction.

Next steps

Stage 2

If the above procedure does not resolve your concerns, you may wish to make a complaint or suggestion formally in writing. The school will contact you within five working days (during term time) to respond to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed.

You will be given a date by which time you will receive a response; this will be no longer than five working days. If a detailed exploration of the issues is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible. This will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

Confidentiality

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Headteacher and those directly involved. It is the School's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police. You (or in the case of a child, you and your parents) would be fully informed.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints may not be pursued. Action which needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints would be handled confidentially within the school.

If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction

We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered.

Stage 3

If you are not satisfied, the Headteacher will refer the matter to the Proprietor who will offer to invite you to a panel meeting, to be held within twenty working days. At this stage, the panel convened for this meeting will consist of at least three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and at least one other person independent of the management of the running of the school. You may wish to be supported by a friend, but legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage.

A copy of the panel's findings and recommendations will be sent by electronic mail within five working days or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. A copy of the panel's findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and the Headteacher.

Taking your concern beyond the school

We hope that we will be able to satisfy your concerns. If we do not, you may wish to seek independent legal advice. There are certain circumstances in which the Secretary of State has an interest, and you could contact him directly or through your lawyer or MP, he would then ask the Registrar of Independent Schools to investigate, usually through HM Inspectors of Schools.

The school recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to complain and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care. Should you wish to contact Ofsted regarding your complaint, please call them on 0300 123 1231.

A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act, as amended, requests access to them.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher

If a complaint is received about the Headteacher it is hoped the matter can be resolved informally. If a complainant believes this would not be possible, and the matter cannot be resolved by the above means, the complaint will be considered under the panel stage outlined above.

In the context of EYFS, please specifically note the following:

- the record of complaints is kept for at least three years
- you can make a complaint to:
Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD.
General helpline: 0300 123 1231. Textphone number: 0161 618 8524.

Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), CAP House 9 - 12 Long Lane London EC1A 9HA. Telephone: 020 7600 0100

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): Alison Beasley
(alison.beasley@oxfordshire.gov.uk)
- Complainants will be notified of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of the School having received the complaint.
- The School will provide Ofsted (and ISI), on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

If you feel that the Proprietor has acted unreasonably about your concerns, you can write to the Secretary of State for Education. You will need to list the steps you have already taken and the responses you have received. Write to:

The Secretary of State
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Alan Wood
September 2018