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Windrush Valley School

Policy Documents Annual Review Record

Citation	This document shall be cited as: **Complaints Procedure Statement** and linked to the following policies: Staff Disciplinary and Professional Capability Procedures
Regulatory standard	
Person responsible	The Headteacher
Comments to	The Headteacher
Last reviewed/updated	May 2026
To be reviewed/updated	May 2027
Reason for review/update	Regular review
Person reviewing/updating	Amanda Douglas
Source/author	Amanda Douglas
Implementation	Immediate and on-going
Approved by	Rhonda Higgs 6th May 2026

Procedures for Dealing with Complaints

1 Introduction and Scope

Windrush Valley School (WVS) is committed to providing the best teaching and pastoral care it can for its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School with care and in accordance with this Complaints Procedure. WVS makes its Complaints Procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the School's website. This policy applies to the whole school from Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) through to Year 6.

For the purposes of this policy, a 'parent' shall include a guardian, carer or any other person with parental responsibility for a child at the School. This policy applies to complaints from parents of current pupils and to parents of former pupils if the complaint was initially raised whilst the pupil was on the School roll.

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, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the School has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

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 their opportunities at school.

Formal complaints are extremely rare, reflecting the good relationships between pupils, parents and the school which enables matters to be resolved informally. It is hoped that any worries, concerns or complaints can be dealt with informally through the pastoral framework.

2 The Three-Stage Complaints Procedure

2.1 Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

If parents have worries or concerns of any nature they should discuss it at the earliest opportunity with the class teacher. Parents may choose informally to talk directly to the class teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult with the Headteacher.

The teacher will make a written record of all the concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 5 working days or in the event that the teacher 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 Complaints Procedure.

If the complaint is against the Head, the complaint should be made to the Chair of Governors as the representative of the Proprietor in accordance with Stage 3.

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

In most cases, the Headteacher will speak to the parents concerned, within 5 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.

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 this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for their decision. In most cases, the Head will make their decision and provide the parents with reasons and any actions taken or proposed within 15 working days of the complaint being put in writing.

If the complaint is against the Head, the complaint should be made to the Chair of Governors as the representative of the Proprietor who will try to resolve the complaint at this stage.

We hope that parents will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that their concerns have been fully and fairly considered. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

2.3 Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they should do so in writing to the Chair of Governors - as the representative of the Proprietor - within seven working days of receiving the decision at Stage 2, setting out their grounds of appeal. Any supporting evidence which the parents wish to rely on should also be provided with their grounds of appeal.

The Chair of Governors will then set up a Complaints Panel which 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. A panel hearing will be scheduled to take place within 15 working days of the receipt of the complaint letter invoking Stage 3. The parents will be invited to put forward their case at the panel hearing and may be accompanied if they wish.

The Chair of Governors will call for a full report from the Head and for all the relevant documents and may also call for a briefing from members of staff. Once the Chair of Governors and Complaints Panel are 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 within 5 working days of the Complaints Panel meeting. The Chair of Governors will give reasons for the panel's decision. The panel's findings and recommendations will be sent to the parents and the person against whom the complaint was made.

A copy of the panel's findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and the Headteacher.

Where timescales are given in 'working days', this is defined as Monday - Friday during term time (the dates of which are available on our website). Complaints received during holiday periods will be dealt with as soon as is practicable but are likely to take longer to resolve due to the unavailability of relevant staff. Under such circumstances the complainant will be notified of any extension to the time scales and the reason(s) why an extension is necessary when the complaint is acknowledged.

2.4 Taking your concern beyond the school

We hope that we will be able to satisfy the concerns of parents. If we do not, parents may wish to seek independent legal advice.

There are certain circumstances in which the Secretary of State has an interest, and parents may contact them directly or through a lawyer or MP. The Secretary of State may then ask the Registrar of Independent Schools to investigate, usually through HM Inspectors of Schools. When contacting the Secretary of State, parents will need to list the steps they have already taken and the responses they have received. Write to:

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

The school recognises and acknowledges parents' entitlement to complain and we hope to work with parents in the best interests of the children and young people in our care. Should parents wish to contact Ofsted regarding a complaint, they can be contacted on 0300 123 4666 or by email at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk. Alternatively, The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) can be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email at concerns@isi.net.

In the context of complaints about the fulfilment of EYFS requirements, 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): Jo Lloyd on 01865 810603 or at lado.safeguardingchildren@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.

3 Confidentiality

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.

It is the School's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

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.

4 Records of Complaints

The record of complaints/concern will be made available to OfSTED on request. The school retains copies of all complaints made whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and the action taken as a result of the complaints [regardless of whether they are upheld] for a minimum of seven 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.

5 Managing serial and persistent complaints

The School will do its utmost to be helpful to parents who make contact with a concern, complaint or request for information. However, there may be occasions when, despite all stages of the complaints procedure having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If a complainant attempts to re-open the same issue, the School will inform them that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed. If the complainant contacts the School again on the same issue, the correspondence may then be viewed as 'serial' or 'persistent' and the School may choose not to respond. However, this will not occur until the complainant has completed the three stages of the complaints procedure. The application of a 'serial or persistent' designation for a complaint will be against the subject of the complaint rather than the complainant themselves.

6 Complaints Registered

In the year 2021 – 2022 the school received 0 formal complaints of which 0 went to a panel hearing.
In the year 2022 – 2023 the school received 2 formal complaints of which 0 went to a panel hearing.
In the year 2023 – 2024 the school received 1 formal complaint of which 0 went to a panel hearing.
In the year 2024 – 2025 the school received 4 formal complaints of which 0 went to a panel hearing.
In the year 2025 – 2026 the school received formal 1 complaint of which 0 went to a panel hearing.

Amanda Douglas
Headteacher
May 2026