

# Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School



## Complaints Policy

Updated: April 2024

Next Review Date: April 2025

Approved by Governors and reviewed annually:

Signed

Date

Chair of Governors



## “Love, Laugh Learn”

We will ignite the ability in all to ***‘Love, Laugh and Learn’***, recognising the extraordinary and wondrous in everything and in everyone. Our rich, varied and creative curriculum, together with our Christian values, will empower all to flourish following Jesus’s promise ***‘I have come to give life and life in all its fullness.’*** (John 10:10)

### Our School Christian Values



## **Introduction**

This policy describes the procedures for dealing with school complaints. The policy also sets out our aims and objectives.

The policy is in nine sections:

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### **What is a complaint?**

A complaint is when a parental concern may become more serious and develop into a complaint and be a clear statement of dissatisfaction. This may relate to a variety of issues including:

- the way in which an initial concern was handled;
- the conduct or actions of pupils;
- the action or lack of action of members of staff;
- inappropriate discipline;
- lack of information.

## **AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

As a school, we are committed to strengthening home-school links and positive relationships and believe that pupils learn best if there is an effective partnership between school and parents.

Therefore, we aim:

- To reaffirm the partnership between parents, staff and governors as we work together for the good of all the children in the school;
- To ensure that it is easy for parents to inform staff and governors of any concerns they may have;
- To respond positively and quickly to complaints from parents.
- To reach outcomes that are satisfactory to the complainant

We agree that the above statements are the values that underpin our policy and can be seen as our shared aims. The aims and objectives also define our willingness to listen and respond positively to criticism and challenge in order to bring about improvement.

To achieve these aims, our objectives are:

- To continue to re-appraise and develop our home-school links and general complaints procedures;
- To make use of quality information provided by parents in order to help improve the school;
- To be sensitive to the needs of all complainants in addressing any problems and concerns that may arise on a day to day basis;
- To ensure that any complaint is acted on appropriately and outcomes are satisfactory to the complainant.

All staff will work towards the above aims, developing an understanding of issues through regular staff briefing discussions and training, as necessary and appropriate.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

At Wrockwardine Wood we are committed to listening and taking seriously all complaints without discrimination on the basis of any personal, social, physical, religious, gender, academic, age, race or cultural factors.

All members of the school community are entitled to have their points of view heard. We also believe that any person complained against has equal rights with the person making the complaint.

## **REASONS FOR A POLICY**

A high number of complaints do not necessarily mean that a school is performing badly; but unresolved complaints can result in unhealthy conflict and damage to reputation and relationships.

The main reasons for having a complaints policy is to ensure that:

1. A clear procedure for receiving and responding to any concerns or complaints is in place;
2. There is a coherent and transparent process for dealing with complaints;
3. Expectations are clear and understood by all;
4. There is an effective complaints system in place.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Key personnel will have been identified and made aware of their responsibilities. Key personnel include:

### **The Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher is responsible for the internal organisation and day-to-day management of the school; and therefore, has overall responsibility for considering complaints, or if appropriate, arranging for a designated member of staff to deal with them.

### **The Governing Body**

The Governing Body is responsible for the overall conduct of the school. If a governor receives a complaint from a parent, the complaint should be referred to the Head Teacher to investigate. If the Chair of the Governing Body receives a formal written complaint, this would normally be discussed first with the Head Teacher. The email address for the Chair is [louise.cotton@taw.org.uk](mailto:louise.cotton@taw.org.uk)

### **The LA (Local Authority)**

In relation to complaints, the LA provides guidance and advice to schools on good practice; it also provides procedures for parental complaints against the curriculum and matters relating to it and provides advice to complainants.

### **The Diocesan Board (SDBE)**

The Diocesan Board acts in an advisory capacity to Head Teachers and Governing Bodies, and does not have any general power to investigate complaints in Voluntary Aided schools.

### **Teachers & Support Staff**

All staff will be responsible for bringing any concerns made by a parent to the attention of the Head Teacher (or Deputy/Phase Leader in the absence of the Head Teacher). All staff will maintain awareness and keep up to date with complaint issues by attending appropriate training.

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

It is usual for each stage in the complaints procedure to be completed before moving to the next stage. Indicative time scales are given.

### **STAGE 1: INFORMAL STAGE**

Informal - Parents discuss concerns with class teacher. As soon as possible.

If parents are still unsatisfied, a meeting may be arranged between the Head Teacher or designated member of staff and parent(s) – within 10 days.

If still unsatisfied, parents may make a formal complaint in writing to the Head Teacher - within 3 days.

### **STAGE 2: FORMAL STAGE**

Formal

1. Acknowledgement by the Head Teacher of receipt of a written complaint (if a parent has made an oral complaint, this would not apply) - within 3 days.
2. Investigation by Head Teacher or designated member of staff, which would normally include a meeting with the parent(s) - within 7 days or by a mutually agreed time.
3. Head Teacher or designated member of staff sends written notification of the outcome of the investigation to the parents. The parents are told that if they are not satisfied they may send a written complaint to the Chair of the Governing Body via this email [louise.cotton@taw.org.uk](mailto:louise.cotton@taw.org.uk) . The Head Teacher may wish to alert the matter to the Chair of the Governing Body - within 10 days.
4. Chair of the Governing Body, or a designated governor, acknowledges receipt of a written complaint, saying the matter will be investigated and indicating timings – within 3 days. The complaint is investigated - normally within 10 days.
5. Chair of the Governing Body sends a summary of findings and a decision to the parents. The parents are told that if they are not satisfied they may ask the matter to be referred to the Governors' Complaint Committee which will not include the Chair - within 5 days of receipt of Chair's letter.
6. Governors' Complaint Committee considers the complaint. The complaint, Head's/Chair's report of investigation, and other relevant papers sent to all taking part, 5 school days before the meeting. Within 15 days of the referral in 3 above.
7. Decision of Governors' Complaint Committee notified to parents - within 5 days of the meeting. The Committee's decision is final

Please note that the timings above are based on school days when pupils are attending, staff INSET days are excluded. Counting begins on the school day after receipt.

If the Head Teacher is the subject of the complaint, the Chair of the Governing Body or a nominated governor would undertake an investigation.

## **DESIRED OUTCOMES**

- Quick response times;
- All complaints handled in strict confidence;
- The school will make clear the times set aside daily/weekly when staff are available for discussion with parents;
- The school's attitude to a pupil would never be affected by a parental complaint;
- Anonymous complaints are discouraged;
- The school will be active in encouraging strong home-school links;
- A clear procedure for receiving and responding to any concerns or complaints in place;
- The school seeks to co-operate with the LA over the handling of complaints for which the LA is responsible;
- The school will ensure that all staff have opportunities to discuss and understand the school's response to concerns and complaints made by parents;
- Any person complained against has equal rights with the person making the complaint;
- The school would seek not to directly involve pupils in a complaints procedure;
- The school will always be sensitive to the need to provide appropriate redress;
- Timescales are for guidance only as there is a need to be flexible to meet particular circumstances.

## **GUIDELINES & IMPLEMENTATION**

Guidelines for staff receiving a complaint

The most important thing to remember is to let the Head Teacher know as soon as possible about any parental concern expressed or complaint made. The Head Teacher will then take appropriate action, which may involve providing advice and support or arranging a meeting to address the issue.

The following serve as guidelines to follow:

1. When a parent is making a complaint there is usually no need to ask for the complaint to be put in writing.
2. It is important to act appropriately and without delay. It is not appropriate to conduct any sort of investigation. Listen to the parent, but do not ask leading questions. (This might compromise any investigation later).
3. Hostile confrontation and entrenched defensive positions will not aid resolution of the problem; consider whether or not to refer the matter to a senior teacher.
4. Record what you have been told while it is still fresh in your mind.
5. Be discreet. Provide assurances that confidentiality will be maintained at all times and that their concerns are taken seriously and will be addressed.

Implementation

The aims and objectives listed above will apply to all our policies and practices, and in particular to the following areas:

- Pupils' progress, attainment and assessment
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions

## **MONITORING & EVALUATION**

Monitoring the effectiveness of this policy may take the form of:

- Discussion of reported concerns, by the Senior Leadership Team
- Review of records of formal complaints heard, by the Personnel Committee;

The Personnel Committee will review this policy annually on behalf of the full Governing Body. Staff will be consulted on any necessary revisions made to the policy.

## **EXPRESSING A CONCERN: NOTES FOR PARENTS**

If you have a concern we would like you to tell us about it so that we can talk with you and see how best to remove your concern. We welcome suggestions for improving our work in the school. Whatever your concern, please know that we shall treat it as being strictly confidential. Be assured that no matter what you want to share with us, our support and respect for you and your child in the school will not be affected in any way.

Please do not delay telling us of your concern. It is difficult for us to investigate properly an incident or problem, which is more than a day or two old. After hearing your concern we shall act as quickly as we can. Please allow time for any action we may take to be effective.

### **What to do first**

Contact your child's class teacher and arrange a time when you can discuss your concern. It may be possible for you to see the teacher straight away but usually it is better to make an appointment so that you can sit and talk things through.

### **What to do next**

If you are still unhappy, ask for an appointment with the Head Teacher. If you wish to do so, it is helpful if you can give a brief outline of your concern when you make the appointment. After your discussion with the Head Teacher you may have to wait a short time while investigations are carried out. Every effort will be made to resolve the situation as quickly as possible and the problem will normally be solved by this stage. However, if you are still not satisfied you may wish to write to the Chair of the Governing Body. The Chair of the Governing Body will probably discuss the matter with the Head Teacher and may arrange for a further investigation. The Chair will then write to you to say what decision has been taken in response to your complaint.

### **Further action**

The Chair of the Governing Body, or you, may ask for your complaint to be heard by the Complaints Committee of the Governing Body. The Complaints Committee would listen to you, to the Head Teacher and others involved and come to a decision. The Complaints Committee's decision is final.

Appendix 1

[Parental Concerns Policy](#)