

Westbury Junior Complaints Procedure

Introduction

Westbury Junior School is committed to maintaining its strong and productive partnerships with parents/carers/students and other members of the local community. We believe our positive relationships with our partners provide a sound basis for establishing mutual understanding and good communication. We are open to feedback and comments about our work, both positive and negative, as these can provide us with valuable information about our effectiveness and how we can better meet our aims.

This policy describes the procedures to be followed when parents/carers/students and others have concerns and make complaints about the conduct of the school or the actions or omissions of any member of staff.

Rationale

If any parent is unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or has any concern relating to the School, we encourage that person to talk to their child's class teacher immediately.

All teachers will look to resolve the concerns at that level. It is in everybody's interest to do so. Either or both parties could then decide to bring the concern before the Head Teacher if they feel it is appropriate. At this stage a more 'formal complaint' could be instigated. We then deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures set out by the LEA. If the School cannot resolve any complaint itself, those concerned can ask the Governing Body to consider the case. If this does not resolve the problem the parent may ask the LEA to intervene.

All parents have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

What Constitutes a Complaint in our Procedure?

We accept the Local Government Ombudsman's definition of a complaint about a school:

"A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of actions, by a school or its staff affecting an individual or group."

Aims

Our School aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

Procedure for Handling Complaints

Define whether the situation is a concern or complaint.

Please address your complaint in the first instance to Richard Hatt Head Teacher. (Complaints Co-ordinator)

A suggested format is attached

Annex of complaints procedure

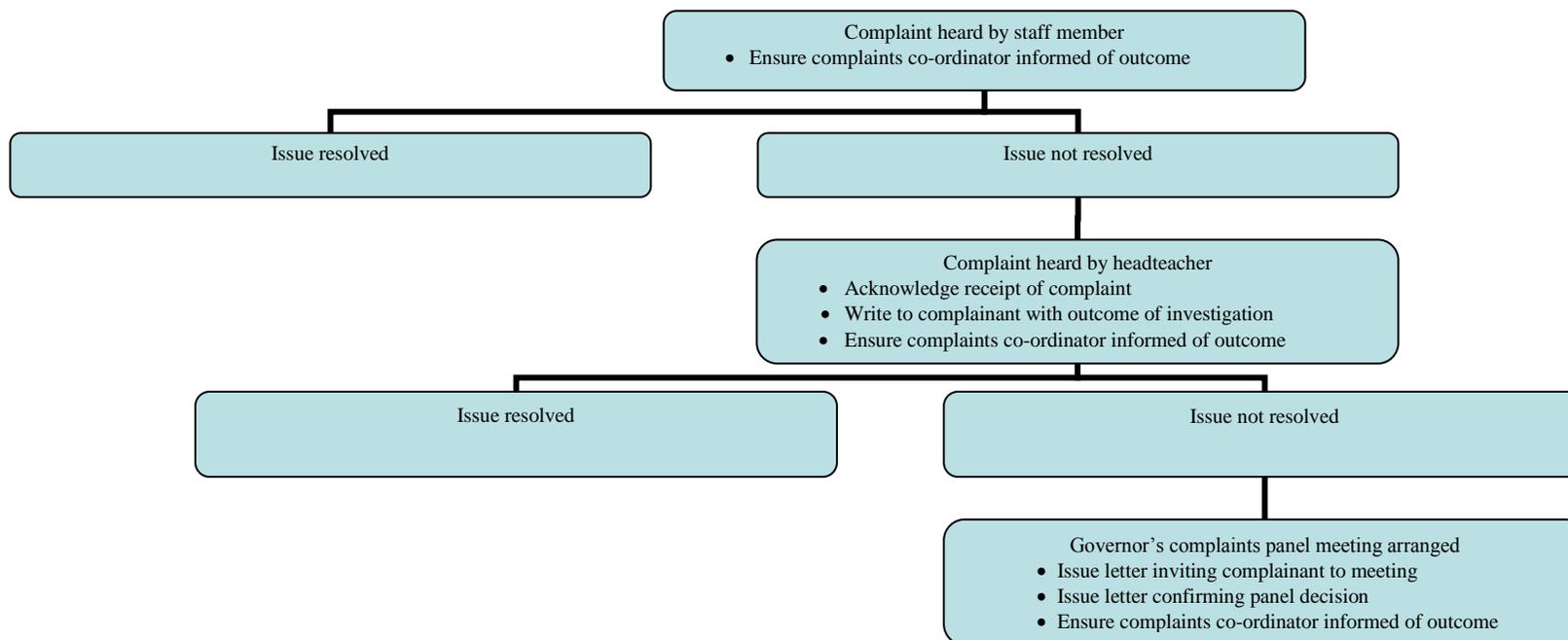
We believe that most complaints can be resolved satisfactorily by informal discussion either over the telephone or through a meeting of the key people involved.

We aim to acknowledge complaints within 5 working days and give a full response to complainants within 2 weeks. If the complaint is judged to involve complex issues, complainants will be informed within 2 weeks when they can expect a full response. Complainants will be kept informed of progress if a lengthy investigation is involved. The main aim throughout the process is to resolve the matter as quickly and effectively as possible, to everybody's satisfaction.

See Appendix A – School Complaints Procedure (practical advice on dealing handling complaints)

Flowchart

Summary of Dealing with Complaints



Stage One: Informal Complaints

Parents/carers, students and others should raise informal complaints or concerns with their child's class teacher.

Parents will be encouraged to make prior appointments to discuss any issues that are not of a routine nature.

Criticisms of the professional conduct or competence of a member of staff which may be brought to a teacher's attention will be referred to the Head Teacher.

If a parent/carer believes that a complaint or concern is sufficiently serious or sensitive she/he should talk to the Head Teacher, who will investigate or arrange for the complaint to be investigated. Progress will be reported back either through a discussion with the complainant or in writing.

Every effort will always be made to resolve the problem at this informal stage.

Complainants who remain dissatisfied at this stage will be informed that they have the opportunity to make a formal complaint

In some cases, matters affecting general school policy may be judged by the Head Teacher, in consultation with the Chair of Governors, to be appropriate for discussion at Governing Body level. In these circumstances care will be taken to ensure that the identity of the complainant and the individual complained of are not disclosed to governors in case further; more formal procedures are involved at a later stage.

Although parents/carers are encouraged to raise their concerns directly with school staff, we recognise that on some occasions they may wish to inform the Local Education Authority. This can be done by contacting Wiltshire Local Authority who will follow procedures set out in their complaints policy in consultation with the school and the complainant.

Stage Two: Formal Complaints

Formal complaints should be made in writing and will normally be investigated by the Head Teacher in the first instance.

If the complaint directly concerns the Head Teacher complainants should contact the Chair of Governors, who will consult the Education Department over appropriate action.

Any other governors in receipt of complaints will refer them to the Head Teacher or the Chair of Governors, as appropriate, and will not become further involved in the investigation.

In some cases a complaint may lead to disciplinary action against an individual. There are separate procedures for disciplinary action (see below). If this is the case the complainant will be informed that the situation will be pursued through disciplinary action. Under the Governing Body's disciplinary procedures, the outcome of these procedures is confidential.

Stage Three: Appeal

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after Stage Two investigations, complainants may appeal to the Appeals Panel of the Governing Body for a final resolution of their complaint. The complainant should contact the Chair of Governors in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how the School has handled it so far. The Chair of Governors and the Education Department will consult with each other over the resolution of the matter. The Chair of Governors will determine a method of further investigation and of formal response to the complainant. The Education Department will be available to advise the Chair of Governors over the procedure.

The Governing Body panel must consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt by arranging a meeting of its Complaints Panel to discuss the complaint, and, with at least three days' notice, inviting the complainant to attend this meeting to explain the complaint in more detail. The governors on this panel must not have been involved in or aware of the complaint procedure thus far.

After hearing all the evidence, the Governors consider their decision and inform the complainant of it in writing. The Governors do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction. If the complaint is not resolved, a parent may make representation to the LA. Further information about this process is available from the School or from the LA.

Under this complaints procedure there is no provision for further appeal beyond a consideration by the Appeals Panel of the Governing Body.

Monitoring and Review

The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Head Teacher logs all complaints received by the school, and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis.

Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

This policy is reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

WESTBURY JUNIOR SCHOOL



COMPLAINTS POLICY FOR PARENTS

NOVEMBER 2014

