



Westbourne School

Educating girls and boys for life

Westbourne School Complaints Policy

Policy Owner	Vina Khan
Policy Governor	Dorrien Peters
Date of Policy	Jan 2022
Review Date of Policy	Jan 2023

This policy is available to all current parents and prospective parents on the school website or a hard copy will be made available on request

Introduction

Westbourne has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and the pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure:

Complaints Procedures aim to:

- encourage resolution of problems by **informal** means wherever possible
- be easily **accessible** and **publicised**
- be **simple** to understand and use
- be **impartial**
- be **non-adversarial**
- allow **swift** handling with established **time-limits** for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- ensure a full and **fair** investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- respect people's desire for **confidentiality**
- address all the points at issue and provide an **effective** response and **appropriate** redress, where necessary
- provide **information** to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved

Recording Complaints

A complaint may be made in person, by telephone or in writing. Or if preferable the school Complaint Form (Appendix 1) can be used. At the end of any meeting or phone call, the staff member should record the date and details of the meeting and ensure that the school and the parent have the same understanding of what was discussed and agreed. Brief notes are made and added to the record of the complaint. If the complaint form is used, this should be sent to your line manager or a member of SMT.

Investigating Complaints

At each stage the person investigating the complaint ensures that they:

- establish WHAT has happened so far and WHO has been involved
- clarify the nature of the complaint and the nature of any unresolved issues
- meet with the parent or contact them where there is uncertainty or further information is required
- establish what the parent feels would correct the matter in hand
- interview those involved in the matter allowing them to be accompanied if requested
- conduct the interview with an open mind and persist in questioning if necessary
- keep clear notes of any interviews

Resolving Complaints

Parents are encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage. However, an admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence. In addition, areas of agreement between the parties are identified early and any misunderstandings that might have occurred are clarified as this can create a positive atmosphere in which to discuss any outstanding issues.

At each stage of the complaints process the school should aim to resolve the complaint where appropriate and offer one or more of the following:

- an apology
- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that the event complained about will not recur
- an explanation of the steps taken to ensure it will not happen again
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint

Time Limits

Complaints are considered and resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible. Time limits have been set for action within each stage, but where further investigation is necessary, new time limits may need to be set and parents are informed of the new deadline and an explanation for any delay.

The Stages of a Complaint

Whilst on occasion there may need to be some flexibility between the stages, there are three stages for a complaint:

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- Most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and **informally but within five working days.**
- If parents have a complaint they should contact their son/daughter's Form Tutor/Teacher in EYFS or Junior School or Form Tutor/Subject (Class) Teacher (as appropriate) in the Senior School. In many cases the matter will be resolved straightaway. If the Form Tutor/Teacher/Subject Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for

him/her to consult the Junior School Head or Senior School Head (as appropriate) or the Headmaster.

- Complaints made directly to the Head of School or Headmaster will be referred to the relevant Form Tutor/Subject Teacher (Class) unless the Head of School or the Headmaster deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Form Tutor/Subject (Class) Teacher will make **a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received**. Should the matter not be resolved, **then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2** of this Procedure.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should **make their complaint in writing** to the Headmaster, opening the letter with the words “I wish to make a formal complaint”. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- The Headmaster will speak to the parents concerned, **within three working days** of escalation to the Head. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations within 15 working days and a resolution within 20 working days of this investigation.
- The Headmaster will **keep written records** of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision.
- **If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3** of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If the parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Secretary to the Governors who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.

The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, **one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors.** The Secretary to the Governors will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place within **fourteen days of the complaint being referred to the Secretary.**

- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties no later than three school days prior to the hearing.
- **The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person.** This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

Following a panel hearing, any findings and recommendations will be provided to the complainant. Records of such complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld) will be kept for a minimum of three years.

After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete **within seven school days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it within three working days of reaching its decision.** The decision of the Panel will be final. **The panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Governors and the Headmaster.**

Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS)

- For complaints relating to early years will be investigated and resolved within 28 days of receiving the complaint.
- If the complaint concerns the Early Years and Foundation Stage, parents have the right to inform Ofsted and ISI of their complaint should it not be resolved satisfactorily by the School. Correspondence should be addressed to:

Early Years
Ofsted
www.gov.uk
Telephone: 0300 123 4666
Email:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9 - 12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA
Telephone: 020 7600 0100

- Parents of children in the EYFS setting will be informed of the outcome of an investigation following a complaint in accordance to the above three stages.
- Records of such complaints will be kept for a minimum of three years
- Records will be made available to Ofsted and ISI on request of all complaints made during any specified period with the action that was taken as a result of each complaint

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Written records of all complaints are kept including whether they are resolved at a preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

During the school year Sep 2020 to August 2021, we received 2 formal complaints at stage 2 which were resolved and retained on file.

COMPLAINT FORM

Name:	
Pupil's Name:	Form:
Your Relationship to the Pupil:	
Address:	
Day Time Telephone Number:	
Evening Telephone Number:	
Complaint Details	
Signature:	
Date:	