

Signed.....*C.H. Knight*

Date.....January 2021

Review.....March 2022

Complaints Procedure Policy

This school is committed to creating the ethos in which children can grow towards Christian life, learning and love.

'And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples.'
John 34-35

Woodford Valley is a single academy trust. To avoid having to use this policy for complaints received from third parties who are not parents of pupils at the academy a shorter complaints process for those third parties is incorporated in to the main policy.

Complaints from parents of former pupils:

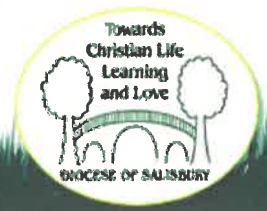
Where the complaints process has been started (but not completed) whilst parents have had children at the academy, but the children have since left, the academy should continue to follow this policy. Where complaints have been started by parents of former pupils after they have left the academy, albeit about incidents that arose during the pupils' time at the academy, the academy at its own discretion may use the shorter complaints policy (included below).

Policy:

This policy applies to any matter (other than matters which have a discrete statutory process, for example admissions, exclusions, safeguarding, data protection) which has been raised with the academy by parents of pupils as a matter of concern but which has not been capable of resolution informally and which the complainant or the academy consider should be dealt with on a formal basis.

Complaints that have been raised by persons who are not parents of pupils currently at the academy will not be dealt with in accordance with the framework below. Any such complainant should seek to resolve their complaint informally with the Headteacher. If this fails then the complaint should be put in writing and addressed to the Chair of Governors at the academy. The Chair will acknowledge receipt and issue a final written response within 20 school days. The Headteacher or Chair of Governors may require at any time that such a complaint is put in writing in any event.

This policy must be made available to parents of pupils.



Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Generally, it is expected that where the matter relates to a student it will have been raised with the student's form tutor before a request is made to deal with it under this policy. The academy will seek to resolve matters at the informal stage within 20 school days of the issue being raised.

It is a precondition to the operation of this policy that the complainant shall have made reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution and shall have acted in relation to the matter in a reasonable and measured way consistent with the academy's behaviour code adopted from time to time. The Chair of Governors shall have discretion, which will be exercised reasonably, not to allow a complaint to be pursued where this precondition has not been met.

Where the matter is not resolved at the informal stage, the parent may elevate it to the formal stage.

Complaints are best dealt with as soon as possible after issues arise. If a parent has not brought a complaint to the attention of the academy within 6 months of the date of the issue arising, the Chair of Governors shall have the discretion, which will be exercised reasonably, not to allow a complaint to be pursued.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution (Investigation by a Nominated Individual)

1. The complainant must put the complaint in writing, addressed to the Headteacher, setting out briefly the facts and stating what it is that the complainant considers should have been done or where the academy has not met reasonable expectations.
2. An investigation will be carried out by a nominated individual identified by the Headteacher as appropriate, who may offer the complainant a meeting and speak to others involved. Whenever reasonably possible, any meeting with the complainant will take place within 15 school days of the written complaint being received.
3. The investigator will put her/his findings in writing and will indicate what, if any, steps should be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 15 school days of the meeting with the complainant and if no meeting is to take place within 25 school days of the complaint being received.

Any complaint relating to the Headteacher must be raised in the first instance with the Chair of governors (or Vice-chair in the absence of the Chair) who will, if an informal resolution cannot be reached, designate a governor to investigate in the same way as in the first stage of the formal process outlined above.

Where a complaint is brought against a Governor, the Chair of Governors will investigate the complaint or appoint another Governor to do so in the same way as in the first stage of the formal process outlined above.

If the complaint is against the Chair of Governors, then the Vice-chair will investigate the complaint (or appoint another Governor to do so) in the same way as in the first stage of the formal process outlined above.



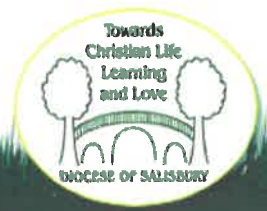
Stage 3 – Formal Resolution (Panel Hearing)

1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the investigator, she/he may request that the complaint be considered by the complaints panel of the Governing Body which will comprise at least three people who have not previously been directly involved in the matter including one person who is independent of the management and running of the academy. The request must be in writing, addressed to the Clerk to the Governors at the academy, within 10 school days of the findings at Stage 2 being sent to the complainant and must set out briefly the reasons why the complainant is dissatisfied with the response.
2. The Clerk will invite the academy to put in writing its response to the complainant's reasons. The academy will do this within 15 school days of receiving the request and at the end of that period, whether or not the academy has responded, the Clerk will convene a meeting of the complaints panel of the governing body. That meeting will be held on academy premises as quickly as practicable given the need to find a date that is reasonably convenient for the complainant, the academy and the members of the panel. Whenever possible, the meeting will be held within 15 school days of the end of the academy's response time. At any meeting, the complainant will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend but legal representation will not be allowed.
3. The meeting is not a court case and will be as informal as circumstances allow. The complainant will have the opportunity to put forward her/his reasons for dissatisfaction and to enlarge on them but may not introduce reasons that were not previously put in writing. The academy will have the opportunity to put its side of things and each side, as well as the panel members, will be able to ask questions. The complainant will have the opportunity to make final comments to the panel.
4. The meeting will be minuted in the usual way but no recording of proceedings is permitted.
5. The panel may make findings and recommendations and a copy of those findings and recommendations will be
 - (i) sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
 - (ii) available for inspection on the academy premises by the academy trust and the principal.
6. The panel will formulate its response as quickly as reasonably possible, aiming to do so within 10 school days, and the Clerk to the governors will notify all concerned.

Attendance at a Complaints Panel Hearing

The complaints panel will proceed irrespective of whether or not the complainant and/or their representative attend. If the complainant fails to attend on the day without compelling reasons, the complaints panel will still proceed in their absence and the process will continue to its conclusion. Any further attempt to re-open the matter will be considered as falling under the serial/persistent complaint section as below.

Serial or persistent complainants



If a complainant attempts to reopen an issue or a closely related issue that has already been dealt with under this complaints procedure, the Chair of Governors may write to the complainant to inform him/her that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter closed, and that continued correspondence is vexatious and that the academy trust will not respond to any further correspondence on this issue or a closely related issue.

Record Keeping

A written record will be kept of all complaints that were resolved at the formal stage of the complaints procedure. Records will contain details of whether the complaint was resolved at stage 2, or whether it proceeded to a stage 3 panel hearing. The action taken by the academy as a result of a complaint regardless of whether they are upheld will also be recorded.

Confidentiality

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

Once the complaints process is concluded (or a complaint has been terminated due to undue delay or failure to lodge a stage 3 request within the time stated in the policy) the matter is closed. If the complainant is still not satisfied then they may contact the ESFA. There is an online procedure at: <https://form.education.gov.uk>

Complaints Relating to Fulfilment of the EYFS Requirements

In order to comply with the statutory framework, written concerns or complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS Requirements will be dealt with in accordance with the following process:

- The written concern/complaint will be acknowledged within 5 days;
- The Headteacher will investigate the concern or complaint which may include meeting with the complainant and the Head of Early Years. A written response notifying the complainant of the outcome of the investigation will be sent within 28 days of the complaint being received.
- Where the complainant remains dissatisfied, the Headteacher will ensure that a formal complaints panel will be convened in accordance with stage 3 of this policy

A record of the written complaints and their outcome will be maintained and made available to Ofsted on request.

Parents are further advised that where you have concerns regarding the Academy meeting EYFS requirements they may contact Ofsted on 0300 123 4666