

WOODLANDS SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Procedure/Guidance

Policy Issued: Sept 2017

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Reviewed by: B Gandhi-Johnson

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Policies to be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Individual Pupil Risk Assessments
- Complaints Procedure – Woodlands
- Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs

COMPLAINTS POLICY

There is a separate policy for staff grievances.

1) INTRODUCTION

Woodlands School encourages open and constructive communications with parents/carers, pupils and other stakeholders. The head teacher and Directors of the school welcome constructive comments and suggestions for improvements and take seriously any complaints that users of the school may wish to raise. There is a clear process to follow and parents are invited to attend panel hearings and be accompanied if needed.

There may be a concern about a healthcare need of a learner which can be addressed using this policy if necessary. Expectations around healthcare needs whether temporary or more longer term are detailed in the policy 'Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs' 2023.

All complaints are treated as an expression of genuine concern or unhappiness. They will be considered very carefully in line with the procedures and timelines described in this policy. All correspondence, statements and records of complaint will be kept confidential although they must be made available to Estyn when inspected and copies must be provided for the Registration Authority (the Welsh Government) on request.

This policy has been formulated to comply with the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (Wales) 2003.

A copy of the policy is available on request to parents and carers of pupils and prospective pupils. A copy is also held in the main office of the school, available to all stakeholders of the school.

2) WHAT TO DO IF YOU WISH TO COMPLAIN

If you have a complaint about any aspect of the school then please let a member of school staff know. We will do our best to provide an impartial, considered and appropriate response to your concerns. We aim to resolve the issues involved as quickly and as fairly as possible.

The school's complaints policy has three stages:

1. Informal resolution
2. Formal resolution

3. Independent panel

These stages are all explained in the policy.

We intend to resolve complaints promptly and informally. However, there is a clear procedure to be followed where the person who has made the complaint feels this has not been achieved.

Please note that it will not usually be possible to deal promptly with a complaint if it is made during a school holiday. Therefore, the term 'working days' used in this policy will normally refer to term-time only.

3) STAGE 1 INFORMAL RESOLUTION

If you have a complaint about any aspect of your child's education or treatment at the school we urge you to contact us immediately, no matter how minor you feel the issue to be. We will do our best to listen and understand the nature of your complaint and resolve it your and our satisfaction.

Contact details are given at the end of this policy.

In order for the head teacher to deal with your complaint or concern he or she will need the following information:

- Who or what the complaint is about.
- The nature of your complaint, in as much detail as you wish to give.
- What you would like done to resolve it.
- Your contact details

The head teacher will record your complaint. He or she will also record the nature of the complaint and the date on which it was received. He or she will then discuss your complaint or concern with the member or members of staff concerned.

Within ten days the head teacher will then contact you to inform you of the outcome of his or her discussions with the member or members of staff concerned. If he or she has agreed a way of resolving the issue with them she will inform you about this. If you are happy with this outcome the agreed actions will be made and recorded. The procedure will end at this point.

If you do not agree with the outcome described to you by the head teacher you have a right for your complaint to proceed to the next, formal, stage.

If your complaint is about the head teacher, or you do not wish to discuss it with the Head teacher, please make your complaint to the Directors of the School or your social worker instead.

4) STAGE TWO FORMAL RESOLUTION

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis you should make your complaint in writing to the Directors of the school. Upon receipt of the complaint one of the Directors will contact you within **three working days**. The Director will acknowledge your receipt and inform you of the details of the procedure that will be followed in order to resolve the complaint.

The Director will need to discuss your complaint with relevant staff and/or pupils. The proprietor will also carry out any necessary investigations and give the matter full and detailed consideration.

The outcome of this investigation will be communicated in writing to you within a **further seven working days**. You will be informed about the evidence collected for the investigation and the reasoning which led to the conclusions drawn from it. You will also be informed about any actions which have or will be taken as a result.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation you can decide to go to stage three of the procedures, the independent panel.

5) STAGE THREE INDEPENDENT PANEL

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation you must write to the Directors of the school **within ten working days** and request that your complaint is further considered by an independent panel.

The Director of the school will appoint a panel of at least three people who have not been involved previously with the matters detailed in the complaint. At least one of these people will be independent of the management and running of the school.

The panel will meet **within ten working days** and consider all the evidence collected by the investigation.

One of the proprietors will attend the meeting of the panel. You will be invited to attend the meeting and may bring with you someone to support and advise you.

At the meeting you will be able to present and discuss your complaint fully. The proprietor will explain the evidence and reasoning which led to the school's earlier written response to you.

The panel will consider all the evidence presented to it and will make findings and recommendations based on that evidence. Minutes will be taken of the meeting by a suitable person allocated this task.

Within ten working days of the meeting, you, the head teacher, the proprietors and, where relevant, the person complained about, will each be given a written copy of the panel's findings and recommendations.

This is the end of the process. There is no appeal procedure.

6) OTHER ISSUES

Written records will be kept of all complaints, including whether they are resolved at the preliminary stages or proceed to a panel hearing.

Correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential except where the Welsh Government or Estyn, conducting an inspection of the school request access to them.

This complaints procedure complies with standard 5 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

7) CONTACT DETAILS

For all complaints please contact the Head teacher of the school, unless your complaint is about the head teacher, in which case you should contact the Directors.

The contact details for Woodlands School are as follows:

By phone: 01978 262777

Please ask to speak to the Head teacher or Directors.

By email: info@woodlandslimited.com

Please address your email: *Confidential for the attention of the Head teacher or Directors.*

8) COMPLAINTS TIME LINE

1. The complaint is received at school.
2. The complaint will be investigated and the outcome discussed with the complainant within ten working days.
3. If the complainants are unhappy with the outcome they must write to the head teacher or proprietor to inform them of this.
4. An acknowledgement of the complaint will be sent within three working days.
5. An investigation will be conducted by the school and a written outcome will be sent to the complainants within a further seven working days.

6. If complainants are unhappy with the outcome they must write within ten working days requesting an independent panel to review their complaint.
7. The Panel will meet within ten working days.
8. The Panel will write to the complainants with the outcome of their review within ten working days of the date of the meeting.

APPENDIX 1

COMPLAINTS POLICY – Pupil Version



1) INTRODUCTION

Woodlands School encourages open and honest discussions with pupils. The head teacher and Directors of the school welcome comments and suggestions for improvements and take seriously any complaints that pupils of the school may wish to raise.

All complaints are treated as an expression of genuine concern or unhappiness. They will be considered very carefully and resolved to the timelines described in this policy. All correspondence, statements and records of complaint will be kept confidential although they must be made available to Estyn when inspected and copies must be provided for the Registration Authority (the Welsh Government) on request.

This policy has been formulated to comply with the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (Wales) 2003.

A copy of the full policy is available on request to parents and carers of pupils and prospective pupils. A copy is also held in the main office of the school, available to all stakeholders of the school.

2) WHAT TO DO IF YOU WISH TO COMPLAIN

If you have a complaint about any aspect of the school then please let us know. We will do our best to provide an impartial, considered and appropriate response to your concerns. We aim to resolve the issues involved as quickly and as fairly as possible.

The school's complaints policy has three stages:

1. Informal resolution

2. Formal resolution
3. Independent panel

These stages are all explained in the policy.

We intend to resolve complaints promptly and informally. However, there is a clear procedure to be followed where the person who has made the complaint feels this has not been achieved. At each stage you will receive letter notifying you of the process and any outcomes.

Please note that it will not usually be possible to deal promptly with a complaint if it is made during a school holiday. Therefore, the term 'working days' used in this policy will normally refer to term-time only.

3) STAGE 1 INFORMAL RESOLUTION

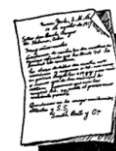
If you have a complaint about any aspect of your education or treatment at the school we urge you to contact us immediately, no matter how minor you feel the issue to be. We will do our best to listen and understand the nature of your complaint and resolve it your and our satisfaction.

In order for the head teacher to deal with your complaint or concern he or she will need the following information:

- Who or what the complaint is about.
- The nature of your complaint, in as much detail as you wish to give.
- What you would like done to resolve it.
- Your contact details

The head teacher will record your complaint. He or she will also record the nature of the complaint and the date on which it was received. He or she will then discuss your complaint or concern with the member or members of staff concerned.

Within ten days the head teacher will then contact you to inform you of the outcome of his or her discussions with the member or members of staff concerned. If he or she has agreed a way of resolving the issue with them she will inform you about this in writing. If you are happy with this outcome the agreed actions will be made and recorded. The procedure will end at this point and you will get a letter explaining the outcome.



If you do not agree with the outcome described to you by the head teacher you have a right for your complaint to proceed to the next, formal, stage.

If your complaint is about the head teacher, or you do not wish to discuss it with the Head teacher, please make your complaint to the Directors or your House Manager instead or to the Chair of Governors, Phil Young.

4) STAGE TWO FORMAL RESOLUTION

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis you should make your complaint in writing to the Directors of the school. Upon receipt of the complaint the Directors will contact you within **three working days**. The Directors will let you know that they have your complaint and inform you of the details of the procedure that will be followed in order to resolve the complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation you can decide to go to stage three of the procedures, the independent panel.

5) STAGE THREE INDEPENDENT PANEL

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation you must write to the Directors of the school **within ten working days** and request that your complaint is further considered by an independent panel.

The Directors of the school will appoint a panel of at least three people who have not been involved previously with the matters detailed in the complaint. At least one of these people will be independent of the management and running of the school.

The panel will meet **within ten working days** and consider all the evidence collected by the investigation.

This is the end of the process. There is no appeal procedure.

If you need to contact the Directors or the Chair of Governors ask to go to the main office or ask you Link Worker to contact the Head teacher or Directors.

