

Complaints Policy

Version	1.0
Approving Body	Trust Board
Date ratified	September 2015
Date issued	September 2015
Review date	September 2018
Owner	Trust Business Director
Applies to	All Trust Schools, all Trust staff

Version	Date	Reason
1.0	September 2015	To establish a Trust wide policy

1. Procedures for Dealing with Complaints

Wimborne Academy Trust (the Trust) undertakes to provide a friendly and safe environment in which pupils will be helped to achieve their potential, both academically and socially. We recognise, however, that sometimes things can go wrong and parents/carers may need to raise a concern or make a complaint they have with an individual school. This policy tells you what to do if this happens.

2. Introduction

The majority of issues raised are concerns rather than complaints. The Trust is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow the Trust's formal complaints procedure. For a school to be able to investigate a complaint, it needs to be made as soon as possible following the incident. **If a complaint is older than six months it will not be investigated.**

The prime aim of the Trust's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by a school. Any complaints concerning the conduct of Trust staff will be handled in accordance with the Trust's internal disciplinary procedures. Such an investigation will remain confidential and therefore the outcome of this will not be shared with parents/carers.

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

3. The Policy has three main stages:

Stage 1 – A concern is raised informally and dealt with by a staff member.

Stage 2 – Formal complaint is heard by the Headteacher¹. Formal procedures are only invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

Stage 3 – Complaint is heard by the **Academy Advisory Committee's Complaints Appeal Panel**

Stage 1 – Raising a concern

Concerns can be raised with any school within the Trust at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. A school will request that parents/carers make their first contact with the pupil's class teacher. It is important for parents/carers to recognise that a school is a busy organisation and that whilst we will do our best, it may not be possible to offer an appointment immediately.

On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within five working days. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at Stage 1, please write to the school within ten Academy working days of receipt of the response and state what you would like the school to do. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

¹ Throughout the document Headteacher also refers to Head of School

Stage 2 – Complaint heard by the Headteacher

Formal complaints should be put in writing and addressed to the Headteacher. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The school will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three working days of receiving it. In many cases this response will also report on the action the school has taken to resolve the issue, however, if the issue requires complex investigation (e.g. interviewing a number of people) it may take up to five working days. Alternatively, a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further.

This meeting will normally take place within ten working days from receipt of the formal complaint. The aim will be to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at Stage 2 please write to the school within ten Academy working days of receiving its response. You will need to tell the Academy why you are still not satisfied and what you would like the school to do. You can request a complaint form for this (Appendix A).

Stage 3 – Complaint heard by the Trust Advisory Committee's Complaints Appeal Panel

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2, the Headteacher will arrange for the complaint to be forwarded to the Chair of the Academy Advisory Committee. The Academy Advisory Committee will form a Complaints Appeal Panel. Members of the Panel will be independent and will therefore have had no involvement in previous investigations. At least one member of the Panel will also be independent of the management and running of the school. Panel members can be committee members from other Advisory Committees within the Trust.

A hearing will normally take place within ten working days on receipt of the written request for stage 3 of the complaint. You will be invited to attend this hearing and may be accompanied by a companion.

The aim of the Complaints Appeal Panel hearing is to independently consider the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the Complainant. All parties will be notified of the Complaints Appeal Panel's decision in writing within three working days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further although it should be noted that the decision of the Academy Advisory Committee's Complaint Panel is final.

NOTE: Allegations of abuse involving a member of the Trust's staff must be reported to the Associate Headteacher immediately. Allegations of abuse involving the Headteacher must be reported to the Chief Executive Officer/Chair of the Academy Advisory Committee immediately.

In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the Headteacher, the Chief Executive Officer and Chair of the Academy Advisory Committee will be informed of the complaint. The Chair of the Academy Advisory Committee supported and advised by the Chief Executive Officer will arrange for the matter to be investigated. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of a member of the Academy Advisory Committee the member will be informed of the complaint.

Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Headteacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name (if relevant):

Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint.

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: