



COMPLAINTS POLICY

WOLSEY HOUSE PRIMARY SCHOOL



HEADTEACHER: MR S POWELL
CHAIR OF GOVERNORS: MR M PEATFIELD

Complaints Policy

We believe that this school provides an excellent education and that the Headteacher and school personnel work very hard to build positive relationships and have in place clear lines of communication with all parents and others. In so doing complaints are kept to a minimum.

However, we are aware that under section 29 of the Education Act 2002 we must have in place clear procedures to deal with any complaint made against the school or individuals connected with it. We take any complaint seriously and we deal with them professionally following set procedures.

We are aware that under the Education Act 1996 parents have the right to complain directly to the Local Authority about any matter relating to the school's curriculum, any issue relating to the general education that we provide.

We have a duty to publish the complaints policy in the school handbook and on the school website with hard copies available from the school office.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

Statement of Intent

Wolsey House Primary school aims to resolve all complaints at the earliest possible stage, and where possible, informally, and is dedicated to continuing to provide the highest quality of education possible throughout the procedure.

This policy has been created to deal with any complaint against a member of staff or the school as a whole, relating to any aspects of the school or the provision of facilities or services. It is designed to ensure that the school's complaints procedure is straightforward, impartial, non-adversarial, allows a full and fair investigation, respects confidentiality and delivers an effective response and appropriate redress.

Any person, including a member of the public, is able to make a complaint about the provision of facilities or services that the school provides. This policy outlines the procedure that the complainant and school must follow. Once a complaint has been made, it can be resolved or withdrawn at any stage.

The headteacher will be the first point of contact when following the complaints procedure.

Aims

- To deal with any complaint against the school or any individual connected with it by following the correct procedures.
- To deal with all complaints thoroughly and by being open, honest and fair when dealing with the complainant.
- To work with other schools and the Local Authority to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

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Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:

A “**complaint**” may be generally recognised as an expression or statement of dissatisfaction about actions taken or a lack of action.

A “**concern**” may be treated as an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important, and for which reassurances are sought.

The school will class concerns as complaints and follow the same procedures for both, as outlined within this policy.

Complaints can be resolved formally, through this procedure, or informally dependent on the complainant’s choice. Any complaint or concern will be taken seriously, whether formally or informally, and the appropriate procedures will be implemented in order to resolve the matter as quickly as possible..

If an individual has difficulty discussing a concern with a particular staff member, the school will respect the views of this individual. In these cases, the person managing the complaint will refer the complainant to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

The school understands, however, that there will be occasions where people would prefer to raise their concerns formally. In this case, the school will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

A “**grievance**” is an issue raised by a member of staff where they feel the school has not implemented a policy or process fairly or properly. Grievances will be dealt with in line with the school’s Grievance Policy.

The definition of “**unreasonable complaints**” is outlined in the ‘**Managing serial and unreasonable complaints**’ section of this policy.

For the purpose of this policy, “**duplicate complaints**” are identical complaints, e.g. complaints regarding the same matter received from a complainant’s spouse, partner, grandparent or child. These complaints will not be addressed again, the individual making the second complaint will be informed that the complaint has been dealt with on a local level and if they are dissatisfied with the result, they can appeal to the DfE.

Any new details provided by a complainant’s spouse, partner, grandparent or child, will be investigated and dealt with in line with the complaints procedure.

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Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

The complainant will:

- Cooperate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint.
- Express the complaint and their concerns in full at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Promptly respond to any requests for information or meetings.
- Ask for assistance as needed.
- Treat any person(s) involved in the complaint with respect.
- Refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

The complaint investigator will:

- Ensure that all parties involved in the complaint are fully updated throughout each stage of the procedure.
- Guarantee that all parties involved in the procedure are aware of any relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010, UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- Keep up-to-date records throughout the procedure – these records will be kept securely on the school's ICT system and retained in line with the school's Records Management Policy.
- Liaise with all parties involved to ensure the complaints procedure runs smoothly, including the headteacher, clerk to governors and chair of governors.
- Provide a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved.
- Liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would remedy the situation.
- Conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in questioning.
- Keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting.
- Provide a comprehensive report for the headteacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.
- Ensure, where the complainant is dissatisfied with the response, they are allowed to escalate it to the next formal stage and are provided the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full.
- Be aware of issues with regard to sharing third party information.
- Understand the complainant's need for additional support, including interpretation support, and be aware of any issues concerning this.

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The complaints coordinator will:

- Ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure.
- Liaise with staff members, headteacher, chair of governors, clerk and, where appropriate, the LA to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure.
- Be aware of issues regarding sharing third party information and additional support which may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person.
- Maintain accurate records relating to complaints.

Where complaints are made against the headteacher, the chair of governors, will be responsible for:

- Providing a sensitive and thorough interviewing process of the complainant to establish what has happened and who is involved.
- Considering all records, evidence and relevant information provided.
- Interviewing all parties that are involved in the complaint, including staff and pupils.
- Analysing all information in a comprehensive and fair manner.
- Liaising with the complainant and complaint investigator to clarify an appropriate resolution to the problem.
- Identifying and recommending solutions and courses of actions to take.
- Being mindful of timescales and ensuring all parties involved are aware of these timescales.
- Responding to the complainant in a clear and understandable manner.

The panel chair will:

- Ensure that both parties are asked, via the Clerk, to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting.
- Ensure that minutes of the meetings are taken on every occasion.
- Explain the remit of the panel to the complainant.
- Ensure that all issues are addressed and that outcomes are reached based on facts and evidence.
- Help to put at ease and console individuals involved who are not used to speaking at such hearings, particularly any pupils involved.
- Conduct the hearing in an informal manner, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect and courtesy and is not adversarial.
- Ensure that the room's layout and setting is informal and non-adversarial while still setting the appropriate tone.

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- Confirm that no member of the panel has previously been involved in the earlier stages of the procedure or has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings.
- Give both the complainant and the school the opportunity to state their case and seek clarity without undue interruption.
- Provide copies of any written material or evidence to everyone in attendance of the meeting, ensuring that everyone has seen the necessary material.
- Organise a short adjournment of the hearing if required.
- Continuously liaise with the panel clerk and complaint investigator to ensure the procedure runs smoothly.
- Help to provide the support necessary where the complainant is a child.

All panel members will be aware that:

- The review panel meeting is independent and impartial and should be seen to be so.
- No individual with prior involvement in the complaint, or the circumstances surrounding it, is permitted to sit on the panel.
- The aim of the panel is to achieve a reasonable resolution and, ultimately, attain a harmonious reconciliation between the parties involved where practicable.
- Reconciliation between the school and complainant is not always achievable, and it may only be possible to establish facts and make recommendations to reassure the complainant that their case has been taken seriously.
- The panel can:
 - Dismiss or uphold the complaint, in whole or in part.
 - Decide on appropriate action to be taken.
 - Recommend changes that the school can make to prevent reoccurrence of the problem.
- Complainants may feel nervous or inhibited in a formal setting and, therefore, the proceedings should be as welcoming as possible.

Panel members will also be aware that when a child is present at the hearing, extra care needs to be taken to ensure that the child does not feel intimidated, as well as ensuring the child's view is represented equally. It will be considered in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/ young person's parent is the complainant, the committee will give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child needs to attend. The parent, however, will be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child to attend a part of the meeting that the panel considers is not in the child's best interests.

The clerk to the governing board will:

- Ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the UK GDPR.

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- Continuously liaise with the complaint investigator.
- Record the proceedings.
- Set the date, time and venue of all hearings, ensuring that this is appropriate, convenient and accessible to all parties involved.
- Collate all written material or evidence involved and send it to the parties involved in timely advance of the hearing.
- Greet all parties as they arrive at the hearing.
- Ensure that the minutes of the panel hearing are circulated.
- Notify the relevant parties of the panel's decision and any other actions to be taken.

Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body has:

- a duty to have in place a complaints procedure;
- delegated powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel and visitors to the school are aware of and comply with this policy;
- responsibility of annually discussing the complaints log with the Headteacher;
- in place a self-evaluation process to monitor the way complaints are dealt with;
- responsibility of taking into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and will make any modifications necessary to this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation;
- nominated a designated Equalities governor to ensure that appropriate action will be taken to deal with all prejudice related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly;
- responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents;
- the responsibility of involving the School Council in the development, approval, implementation and review of this policy;
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- log all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved;
- discuss the complaints log every year with the Governing Body;
- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- work closely with the link governor and coordinator;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff;
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy;
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

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Complaint Procedures Stage

1 (Informal Stage)

- Complainant has an informal discussion with the person closely involved with the complainant's cause for concern or with the Headteacher direct.
- If after the discussion the matter is not resolved or if the complainant is not happy with the way that it has been handled then the process moves to the next stage.
- However, every effort should be made to resolve the matter at this stage.

Stage 2 (Formal Stage)

- Once a formal written complaint is received from the complainant then the Headteacher will undertake an investigation and reply in writing to the complainant within 15 days.
- However, if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome then the complainant should move to the next stage.
- If a formal written complaint is received about the Headteacher from the complainant then the complaint must be sent to the clerk to the governors complaints appeal panel with a written reply being sent to the complainant within 15 days.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome then the complainant should move to the next stage.

Stage 3 (Formal Stage)

- The complainant writes formally to the clerk to the governors complaints appeal panel outlining the reasons why he/she is not happy with the outcomes of the Headteacher's investigation.
- The complainant requests that an appeals panel reviews the complaint.
- An appeals panel meets within 12 to 20 days after receipt of the complainant's letter.
- The complainant may request an investigation by the Local Authority if he/she feels that the review has not been handled fairly or if it has not been conducted in accordance with the school's complaints procedures.

Formal Complaint to a Local Authority

- Once a request has been received then the Local Authority complaints officer will only investigate whether the school has followed correct procedures in dealing with complaints but will not investigate the complainant's original complaint.
- After the investigation the Complaints Officer will write formally to the complainant.
- If the result is that the school did not follow correct procedures then the complaint will be referred back to the Chair of the Governing Body.
- If the result is that the school dealt with the complaint correctly then the Local Authority cannot make the school change its decision.
- The complainant may now wish to lodge an appeal with the Secretary of State for Education or with the Local Government Ombudsman.

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Complaints regarding the Curriculum and General Educational Provision

All curriculum and general educational provision complaints will be dealt with by the Local Authority in line with their set complaints procedures.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- the School Handbook
- the school website
- the Staff Handbook
- meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
- school events
- meetings with school personnel
- communications with home such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters
- reports such annual report to parents and Headteacher reports to the Governing Body
- information displays in the main school entrance

Training

All school personnel will:

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion
- receive training on this policy on induction
- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

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Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the coordinator, the Headteacher and the nominated governor.

A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement. (See Policy Evaluation).

Linked Policies

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Links
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Prospectus
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Home-School Agreement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Records Management Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data Protection Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whistleblowing Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grievance Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behaviour Policy

Legal framework

We believe that this policy relates to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Local Government Act 2000
- Education Act 2002
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- Immigration Act 2016
- The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Children, Schools and Families Act 2010
- Education (Admissions Appeals Arrangements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008
- School Admissions (Appeals Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012

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This policy has also due regard to guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- HM Government 'Code of Practice on the English language requirement for public sector workers'
- DfE 'Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2020'
- Complaints About Ofsted: Raising Concerns and Making a Complaint about Ofsted (Ofsted)
- School Admission Appeals Code (DfE)

Headteacher:	<i>S Powell</i>	Date:	October 2025
Chair of Governing Body:	<i>Matthew Peatfield</i>	Date:	October 2025

Review Date:	October 2026
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