

WINDLESHAM HOUSE SCHOOL

Procedure: COMPLAINTS



Updated: November 2018

Procedure: 14.01

Responsible Member of Staff: Head of Marketing & Admissions, Lucy Thornton

Responsible Governor: Douglas Moody-Stuart

Summary Policy Statement: *We need to ensure that we act in line with the wishes of parents, children and the community at large. Any complaint against the school will be dealt with in a fair, open and responsive way, with the aim of achieving a speedy and satisfactory resolution. The school recognises that a willingness to listen to questions and criticism and to respond positively, can lead to improvements in school practices and provision for pupils. To that end we welcome feedback to which we respond in a structured way.*

1) Complaints Procedure

Windlesham has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. The School is here for both parents and children, and we welcome suggestions and comments from parents, and take seriously any parental concerns that arise.

This procedure document explains the steps which parents should take if they are dissatisfied about any aspect of our provision and outlines the procedures which they can expect the school to follow in dealing with their complaint.

The Complaints procedure is available not only to parents but also to all staff and pupils. Pupils are not penalised for making a complaint in good faith.

This policy also applies to our Early Years Foundation Stage and after school care.

2) Informal Resolution

- a) It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- b) If parents have a complaint they should normally contact one of their son/daughter's House Parents. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. However, if the person consulted cannot resolve the matter alone, it

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may be necessary for them to consult the head of another department, or the Deputy Headmaster, or the Headmaster.

- c) Complaints made directly to the Deputy or to the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant House Parent unless the Deputy or the Headmaster deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- d) The House parent will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received.
- e) Should the matter not be resolved within seven days or in the event that the House parent and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this Procedure.

3) Stage 1 – Formal Resolution

- a) If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint (written formal complaint) in writing to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take and may consult with the Chairman of Governors in the process.
- b) In most cases, the Headmaster will meet with the parents concerned, or make contact in respect to parents living outside the UK, within four days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- c) It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations. The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- d) 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 parents will be informed of this decision in writing (normally within seven working days of the head receiving the complaint). The Headmaster will also give reasons for his/her decision.
- e) If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 2 of this Procedure.

4) Stage 2 – Panel Hearing

- a) If parents seek to invoke Stage 2 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Chairman of Governors, who will acknowledge the complaints and schedule a hearing to take place, normally within fourteen working days.
- b) The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration.
- c) The Complaints Panel will be appointed by the Governors and will consist of three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint: two Governors other than the Chair plus one member who is independent of the management and running of the School.
- d) 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 not later than three days prior to the hearing.

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- e) 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.
- f) If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- g) Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- h) 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 days of the hearing. The findings will be sent in writing to the parents.
- i) The Panel will write to the parents within seven days of the hearing informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing by e-mail or otherwise, to the parents, the Headmaster, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained about. Once all parties are satisfied, each party will sign and date the papers to evidence their agreement. The School will maintain a record of the resolution of the complaint raised, available for inspection by the Governors and the Headmaster on the School premises.
- j) The decision of the Panel will be final. If a complaint remains unresolved they may be referred to the Department for Education (DfE). Please note that the Independent School Inspectorate (ISI) is unable to become directly involved in investigating or resolving individual complaints or disputes or in any contractual matters.
- k) The DfE cannot investigate individual complaints about private schools. But it has certain powers as a regulator if a school is not meeting the standards set by the DfE for education, pupil welfare and health and safety, school premises, staff suitability, making information available to parents and spiritual, moral, social or cultural development of students. The DfE will consider any report of a major failure to the standards. A complaint can be made to the DfE by filling in the school complaints form on www.gov.uk/complain-about-school/private-schools. For EYFS complaints, the above process must be completed within 28 days. Records of EYFS complaints will be available to Ofsted and ISI on request.

5) Confidentiality

It is very much the School's Policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them. A record of any written formal complaint will be held by the School for six years after the resolution of the complaint.

6) Monitoring of written formal complaints

- a) The School records details of all written formal complaints. Such record will indicate:

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- i.** Whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
 - ii.** The actions taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld)
- b)** The school received **0** written formal complaints during 2016/17 and **0** to date in the current academic year (2017/18).