



Wilkinson Primary School Complaints Procedure

From 1st September 2003 Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools were required, under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school or facilities it provides, including issues around child protection, exclusions and SEND.

Dealing with Complaints – Initial concerns/ informal procedures

Everyone at Wilkinson has the children's best interest at heart. We are always keen to be told of any concerns that parents or children have, in the hope that we can handle and resolve them informally.

An unreasonable refusal by the complainant to attempt an informal resolution may result in the concern or complaint being taken no further.

Dealing with Complaints – Formal procedures

The Formal Complaints Procedure will need to be invoked when informal attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful or the complainant remains dissatisfied.

There are 4 stages to the Complaints Procedure:

1. Receiving the complaint
2. Complaint heard by Head or Deputy
3. Complaint being shared with Chair of Governors
4. Complaint heard by Governor's Complaints Panel

Concerns will be dealt with in a way that:

- Respects confidentiality
- Addresses the points raised
- Provides a response
- Appropriate redress

Investigating Complaints

The person investigating should:

- Establish what has happened and who is involved.
- Clarify the complaint
- Clarify what the Complainant feels would resolve the issue
- Interview those involved.

Resolving Complaints

- The person dealing with the complaint should endeavour to find a resolution.
- A positive atmosphere must be created for discussions to take place.
- Complainants must share what their expectations are, and understand this may not be possible.

- It may be appropriate and sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or part – an admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as negligence.
- It may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:
Expression of regret, an explanation, assurance that every effort will be made to ensure the event will not recur, an explanation of steps taken to try to ensure it will not happen again, an undertaking to review school policies.

Resolution will depend upon any recommendations made from the evidence from the investigation.

Of course no evidence may be found for the complaint or the complaint is groundless.

There will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedure having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. The Chair of Governors will inform the complainant in writing that the matter is closed.

Time –Scales

- A concern or complaint will be acknowledged as soon as it is received and attempts to deal with it informally, started as soon as practicable.
- Once a complaint has been lodged formally, an investigation should begin within 5 working days and a reasonable timescale set for completion (Written/verbal feedback within 10 working school days of an investigation completing.
- Where further investigations are necessary, new time limits can be set.

Complaints Procedure

1. Receiving a complaint:

If the complainant wants a resolution to a problem which is relatively straightforward, this is more likely to be suited by the informal process, members of staff generally deal with these.

A formal process is required if the nature of the complaint is such that it requires

- An investigation
- For the matter to be seen and recorded to have been dealt with.

A complaint should be acknowledged as soon as it is received.

If a member of staff receives a complaint, they should pass it on to the appropriate person.

If the complainant feels uncomfortable discussing their complaint with a certain member of staff, then concerns should be directed to a Senior teacher.

If the first approach is made direct to a governor, they should direct it to a member of staff. Governors must not act unilaterally, as this may compromise future action regarding the complaint.

2. Complaint dealt with by Staff Member

A senior staff member will attempt to resolve the complaint, this may involve talking to pupils, other staff and the complainant.

If the complainant is dissatisfied then it should be referred to the Headteacher.

3. Complaint dealt with by Headteacher

The Headteacher will attempt to resolve the matter using whatever reasonable means are appropriate, including interviewing staff. Feedback should be given, either verbal or written within 10 days. The Headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of staff.

If the complainant is still dissatisfied or if the Headteacher is the subject of the complaint, then the complainant should contact the Chair of Governors.

4. Complaint dealt with by the Governing Body

The Governing Body has responsibility for ensuring any formal complaints are dealt with, however they must be in writing.

If the Chair decides that the concern has been dealt with reasonably, then the complainant should be told that, and that their only grounds for appeal may be on the basis of the way their complaint was handled not against the decision made.

If the Chair decides that the complaint may not have been dealt with reasonably, then a hearing by the Complaint Panel should be arranged. The Chair will designate a panel to hear the complaint.

The designated governors will deal with the complaint on an impartial basis via a panel hearing.

In deciding the make-up of the panel, governors should try to ensure that a cross section of categories of Governor are represented – sensitive to the issues of gender, religious affiliation and race.

The aim of the private hearing is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation.

The Panel will:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or part.
- Uphold the complaint in whole or part
- Decide upon action to be taken
- Recommend changes to school systems or procedures to ensure problems of a similar nature do not recur.

It must be recognised that the complainant may not be satisfied with the outcome.

The complainant will receive written feedback, including decisions, recommendations and next steps. Written feedback should be issued within 10 working days.

Date Approved: October 2020

Date to be reviewed: October 2022