

Woodrush High School

An Academy for Students Aged 11-18

Complaints Policy



Policy author / reviewer	N Rancins
Responsible LGB committee	FGB
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Complaints procedure & policy

The Complaints Procedure & Policy is for Woodrush High School. This policy applies to any matter (other than matters relating to admissions and exclusions which have their own processes) which has been raised by parents/carers of a student as a matter of concern, which has not been capable of resolution informally and which the complainant considers should be dealt with on a formal basis. The Complaints Procedure & Policy is available to parents/carers of students.

Stage 1- Informal Resolution

The Academy will publish guidance on how matters of concern should be raised on an informal basis. It is expected that where the matter relates to a student it will have been raised with the student's Form Tutor, Class Teacher, Head of Year or Progress Leader before a request is made to deal with it under this policy.

It is a precondition to the operation of this policy that the complainant shall have made reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution and shall have acted in relation to the matter in a reasonable and measured way consistent with the Academy's home school agreement. The Chair of Governors shall have discretion, which will be exercised reasonably, not to allow a complaint to be pursued where this precondition has not been met.

Where the matter is not resolved at the informal stage, the parent may elevate it to the formal stage.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution (Investigation by a member of the Senior Leadership team (SLT))

1. The complainant must put the complaint in writing, addressed to the Headteacher, setting out briefly the facts and stating what it is that the complainant considers should have been done or where the Academy has not met reasonable expectations.
2. An investigation will be carried out by a member of the Senior Leadership Team - made up of the Headteacher, the Deputy Head Teachers, the Assistant Head Teachers and the Business Director - which may include the offer of a meeting with the complainant. Whenever reasonably possible, any meeting with the complainant will take place within 15 school days of the written complaint being received. The investigator may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member, but not the decision on the action to be taken. The investigation should involve the review of any relevant documentation and information. If necessary, witnesses will need to be interviewed and statements taken from those involved. If the complaint centres on a student, the student will also usually be interviewed.

3. The investigator will put her/his findings in writing and will indicate what, if any, steps should be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 15 school days of the meeting with the complainant and if no meeting is to take place within 15 school days of the complaint being received.

Any complaint relating to the Headteacher must be raised in the first instance with the Chair of Governors (or Vice-chair in the absence of the Chair) who will, if an informal resolution cannot be reached, designate a Governor to investigate in the same way as in the first stage of the formal process outlined above.

Stage 3 – Formal Resolution (Panel Hearing)

1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the investigator, she/he may request that the complaint be considered by the Complaints Panel of the Governing Body which will comprise at least three people who have not previously been directly involved in the matter including one person who is independent of the management and running of the Academy. That request must be in writing, addressed to the Clerk to the Governors at the Academy, within 10 school days of the response being sent to the complainant and must set out briefly the reasons why the complainant is dissatisfied with the response.
2. The Clerk will invite the Academy to put in writing its response to the complainant's reasons. The Academy will do this within 15 school days and at the end of that period (whether or not the Academy has responded) the Clerk will convene a meeting of the Complaints Panel of the Governing Body. That meeting will be held as quickly as practicable given the need to find a date that is reasonably convenient for the complainant, the Academy and the members of the Panel. Whenever possible, the meeting will be held within 15 school days of the end of the Academy's response time. At any meeting, the complainant will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend but legal representation will not be allowed.
3. The meeting is not a court case and will be as informal as circumstances allow. The complainant will have the opportunity to put forward her/his reasons for dissatisfaction and to enlarge on them but may not introduce reasons that were not previously put in writing. The Academy will have the opportunity to put its side of things and each side, as well as the Panel members, will be able to ask questions. The complainant will have the opportunity to make final comments to the Panel.
4. The Panel may make findings and recommendations and a copy of those findings and recommendations will be
 - (i) sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
 - (ii) available for inspection on the Academy premises by the Academy Trust and the Headteacher.

5. The Panel will formulate its response as quickly as reasonably possible, aiming to do so within 10 school days, and the Clerk to the Governors will notify all concerned.

Attendance at a Complaints Panel Hearing

The Complaints Panel will only proceed if the complainant and/or their representative attend. If the complainant does not confirm attendance or fails to attend on the day without compelling reasons, the Complaints Panel will not proceed and the complainant will lose their right to the complaint being heard. Any further attempt to re-open the matter will be considered as falling under the serial/persistent complaint section as below.

Serial or persistent complainants

If a complainant attempts to reopen an issue or a closely related issue that has already been dealt with under this complaints procedure, the Chair of Governors may write to the complainant to inform him/her that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter closed, and that continued correspondence is vexatious and that the Academy Trust will not respond to any further correspondence on this issue or a closely related issue.

Record Keeping

A written record will be kept of all complaints that were resolved at the formal stage of the complaints procedure. Records will contain details of whether the complaint was resolved at stage 2, or whether it proceeded to a stage 3 panel hearing. The action taken by the school as a result of a complaint (regardless of whether they are upheld) will also be recorded.

Confidentiality

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.