

# WOODHOUSE ACADEMY

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

Reviewed: Spring 2017  
To be reviewed: Spring 2019

**Complaints expressed in person or on the phone in a loud and aggressive manner will not be tolerated by the school.**

**You will calmly be asked to leave or the phone call politely terminated. Contact with school staff and teachers will not be permitted.**

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This policy should be read in conjunction with the LEA's leaflet for parents "*Your School – Compliments, Comments and Concerns*".

### **Introduction**

The main purpose of the complaints procedure is to solve problems and to give parents a means to raise issues of concern and have them addressed.

Complainants will be treated respectfully during and after the course of any complaints investigation.

All members of staff will be aware of the complaints procedure and understand:

- The importance of attempting to resolve problems before they become formal complaints
- The importance of treating complaints respectfully

### **Expressing Concerns**

At this informal stage the school will consider the best way of dealing with the concerns raised according to the circumstances. It is preferable for all concerned that concerns are resolved now rather than later. This stage will usually involve a meeting with the complainant.

### **Formal Complaints**

#### **Stage 1 – the Principal**

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It may be that the principal has not been aware of the concern raised prior to this point. At this stage the principal should consider whether the complainant can be satisfied without recourse to the governing body.

The response to the complainant will be as described in the paragraph "Outcomes" below.

Action through a complaints procedure may lead to action being initiated under other procedures. This may be disciplinary or child protection procedures and consideration should be given to this possibility at the earliest stage. In these cases the investigations under the complaints procedure will be suspended until action under the other procedures (including appeals) has been concluded. The complainant should be advised if this is the case and also informed of the likely delay in the final resolution of their complaint.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Complaint to the Governing Body**

Where a complaint cannot be resolved informally or by the principal, this must then be addressed to the Chair of the Governing Body. Complaints at this stage will only be accepted in writing, the complainant will be supplied with a pro forma complaint form (appendix 1) to be completed, in order to ensure that details have been collected accurately and correctly. The school will record when the complaint is received. A complaint will then be acknowledged in writing by, or on behalf of, the chair of the governing body. The acknowledgement will include an explanation of what will happen next, time scales involved and the name of the person from whom they will next hear about the progress of the investigation. Details of a complaint will be kept confidential except in so far as they need to be shared with people who might contribute to their resolution.

### **The Role of the Chair of Governors**

The chair of governors will need to consider whether the investigation can be completed by the principal (who will already have been involved), the chair him/herself, or whether to refer the complaint to a complaints committee of the governing body. If the latter course of action is followed the chair shall present a full report to the committee and, if necessary, external advice may be sought.

The committee is to be made up of at least 3 governors, not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The principal will not be included in the committee and at least one committee member will be independent of the management and running of the school.

The committee should meet at a time convenient to the members of the committee, the chair (who will present the report), the parent (in order that they may make representations in person and be accompanied if they wish) and any witnesses.

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### Outcomes

In all cases where a complaint has been investigated the complainant (and where relevant the person complained about) will be given a written response, by electronic mail or otherwise, covering:

- The complaint
- The scope of the investigation
- The conclusion of the investigation
- Any action which has resulted

The committee may wish to offer the complainant the opportunity to discuss the response.

A copy will be available for inspection by the governors and the Principal.

**If the investigation upholds the complaint**, redress should be appropriate to the complaint and may include:

- An appropriate expression of regret
- Providing the solution desired by the complainant
- Changing the procedures to avoid future problems

The school will take responsibility for:

- Deciding who can take remedial action
- Ensuring that the remedy is carried out
- Ensuring that any remedy is within the school's powers
- Ensuring the approach to remedies is reasonable and consistent

**Where a complaint is not upheld** the complainant must be given a response and informed of any further action that might be appropriate in their situation.

### Stages 3 and 4 – The role of the Education Funding Agency and Department for Education

Parents do not have a general right of appeal should they disagree with the governors' decision. They may, however, raise the matter with the Education Funding Agency or Secretary of State if they consider the complaint wasn't investigated properly and fairly. If the governors have followed a proper procedure and considered the complaint reasonably, neither the Local Education Authority nor the Secretary of State can reverse their decision.

### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

1. Parents should complete the complaints form as appropriate, giving details of the complaint and what they would like as an outcome of the investigation. A copy of the form should be kept.
2. School will forward the completed form to the chair of the governing body for consideration.
3. If considered appropriate a complaints committee of the governing body will be established to investigate the complaint.
4. The complainant will be invited to meet the complaints committee to make the complaint in person.

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5. After hearing the complaint and considering the relevant facts, the committee will make a decision and convey, in writing, to the complainant within 48 hours of the hearing.
6. There is not a general right of appeal against the decision of the governors. However, if parents feel that proper procedures were not followed or reasonable consideration given to the complaint, they can raise the matter with the Education Funding Agency.
7. Complaints to the Education Funding Agency can be made via the school complaints form (available via the website)

### **FUNDING AGENCY**

They will consider complaints that fall into one of three areas:

- Where there is undue delay or the Agency did not comply with its complaints procedure when considering a complaint.
- Where the Academy is in breach of its funding agreement with the Secretary of State.
- Where an Academy fails to comply with any other legal obligation.

**PLEASE NOTE COMPLAINANTS SHOULD NOT CONTACT THE LOCAL AUTHORITY UNTIL THE HEADTEACHER OR GOVERNING BODY HAS CONSIDERED THE COMPLAINT.**