



WILSON'S SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Date approved by governors: 2018

WILSON'S SCHOOL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

This procedure applies to any matter which has been raised with the School by parents/carers of pupils* as a matter of concern but which has not been capable of resolution informally and which the complainant considers should be dealt with on a formal basis.

Matters relating to admissions and exclusions, statutory SEN assessments, cases involving child protection, whistleblowing, staff grievances, discipline, capability or pay matters or school re-organisation proposals will not be considered as they have their own appeal or complaint processes. Where necessary the School will exercise its discretion in determining what should properly be dealt with under this procedure.

For the avoidance of doubt this procedure does not apply to those who are not parents/carers of pupils at the School. Complaints from those who are not parents/carers of pupils at the School will be dealt with as follows:

Complainants should first attempt to address their complaint to the School informally. Only if this fails to resolve the situation should the complaint be submitted in writing to the Head (if the complaint is about the School in general) or to the Chair of Governors (if the complaint is about the Head specifically). The Head / Chair of Governors (as appropriate) will acknowledge receipt of the complaint before considering it and issuing a final written response.

*Where a complaint process has been started but not completed whilst parents/carers have had a son at the school, but their son has since left, this Complaint Procedure should continue to be followed. Where the complaint is started by parents/carers of former pupils after they have left the school, albeit about incidents that arose during the pupil's time at the school, then the shorter process outlined above should be used.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

It is expected that where the matter relates to a pupil it will have been raised with the pupil's Head of Year before a request is made to deal with it under this procedure. If the matter is not related directly to a pupil, the parent/carer should raise it with the most appropriate staff member. If it is not clear to the complainant who that staff member would be the matter can be raised, in the first instance, with the Director of School Administration.

It is a precondition to the operation of this procedure 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. Matters can be resolved at this stage in a variety of ways which include (but are not limited to) verbal conversations by telephone or in person, or in writing by electronic mail or letter. The Head and or Chair of Governors shall have the discretion, which will be exercised reasonably, not to allow a formal complaint to be pursued where this precondition has not been met.

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

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution (Investigation by a Nominated Individual)

1. The complainant must put the complaint in writing, addressed to the Complaints Co-ordinator (the Director of School Administration), setting out briefly the facts and stating what it is that the complainant considers should have been done or where the School has not met reasonable expectations (see Complaint Form attached).
2. An investigation will be carried out by the Complaints Co-ordinator (or if this is not possible or appropriate in the circumstances a member of the Associate Leadership Team) who may offer the complainant a meeting and speak to others involved. Whenever reasonably possible, any meeting with the complainant will take place within 15 school days of the written complaint being received.
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 25 school days of the complaint being received.
4. Any formal complaint relating to the Head which has not been resolved informally with him 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 3 people who have not previously been directly involved in the matter including one person who is independent of the management and running of the School. That request must be made in writing, addressed to the Clerk to the Governors at the School, 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 School to put in writing its response to the complainant's reasons. The School will do this within 15 school days of receiving the request and at the end of that period (whether or not the School has responded) the Clerk will convene a meeting of the Complaints Panel of the Governing Body. That meeting will be held on School premises as quickly as practicable given the need to find a date that is reasonably convenient for the complainant, the School and the members of the Panel. Whenever possible, the meeting will be held within 15 school days of the end of the School'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 her/his reasons for dissatisfaction but may not introduce new information or issues which were not previously put in writing. The School will have the opportunity to put its side of the matter 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 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.
5. 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;
 - (ii) available for inspection on the School premises by the School Governing Body and the Head
6. Once the complaints process is concluded (or a complaint has been terminated due to undue delay or failure to lodge a Stage 3 request within the time stated in the procedure) the matter is closed and further correspondence on the matter will not be responded to.

Attendance at a complaints panel hearing

The Complaints Panel will proceed irrespective of whether or not the complainant and/or their representative attend. If the complainant fails to attend on the day without compelling reasons, the Complaints Panel will still proceed in their absence and the process will continue to its conclusion. Any further attempt to re-open the matter will be considered as falling under the unreasonable, serial or persistent complaints section as below.

Unreasonable, Serial or Persistent Complaints

The School is committed to dealing with complaints fairly and impartially. However the School does not expect staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

The Chair of Governors may write to the complainant to inform him/her that continued correspondence is vexatious and the School will not respond to any further correspondence in the following circumstances:

- a) If a complainant attempts to reopen an issue, or a closely related issue, that has already been dealt with under the complaints procedure;
- b) If a complainant attempts to use the Complaints Procedure to make repeated complaints (on any matter) in a manner which in the opinion of the Chair of Governors is an unjustified, inappropriate or improper use of the formal procedure and where the Chair of Governors is satisfied that the School has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs.

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.

Records will be kept for a minimum of 6 years from the date the matter was resolved or concluded after which time a review will take place to determine whether further retention may be appropriate depending on the subject matter of the case.

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 or otherwise where to do so is prohibited by law.

WILSON'S SCHOOL COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete and return to Mrs C Lowe, Director of School Administration (Complaints Co-ordinator) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Relationship to pupil:
Name of pupil:
Address:
Postcode:
Day time telephone number:
Evening telephone number:
Mobile telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint. What is your concern?
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please list below:
Have you discussed this matter with a member of the Senior Leadership Team before filling in this form? If so, who did you speak to and what was the response?
What actions do you feel might resolve your concerns at this stage?
Signature:
Date: