

**Warblington School**

**School Complaints: Information for Parents and Carers**

**ealth & Safety, Safeguarding**

**Why do we need a procedure?**

Most concerns raised by parents and carers about school matters are handled quickly by school staff without the need for formal procedures. However, not all concerns can be resolved in this way and, under section 29 of the Education Act 2002, Governing Bodies of all maintained schools must have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school, and any community facilities or services that the school provides. It is an important legal principle that the particular procedure used, and the resolution of each complaint, are the responsibility of each individual Governing Body and not the Local Authority. The Governing Body must, however, have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education.

The school’s complaint procedure, is summarised in this leaflet and is available in full on the school website (www.warblingtonschool.co.uk). It is important to note that not all complaints fall within the remit of the Governing Body’s complaints procedure, and that matters of staff grievance or discipline are dealt with under separate arrangements.

**What to do if you have a complaint**

It is in everyone’s interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The experience of the first contact between the complainant and the school can be crucial in determining whether the complaint will become more serious. To that end, any member of the school staff should be able to deal with a complaint at the first stage.

If you have a concern that you would like to take up with the school you should initially inform a member of staff either in person, over the telephone or in writing. You may wish to approach your child’s form tutor first as they will be best placed to help you directly or by letting you know which other member of staff you should be speaking to.

**Initial Informal Meeting: Complaint heard by staff member**

When a concern has been received, you may receive a telephone call from the member of staff or head of year to discuss your concerns, or you may be invited to attend a meeting with a member of staff.

All staff will do their best to ensure your concerns are dealt with appropriately and efficiently, but if an agreement cannot be reached, or if you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you can escalate your complaint as follows:

**Stage 1 – Complaint heard by the Assistant Headteacher**

If you feel that your concern has not been dealt with as you would like, are unhappy with the outcome of your informal meeting or feel that the issue is serious enough that it warrants it, you can make a formal complaint. It is preferable for you to make your formal complaint in writing via email or letter, but complaints can also be made in person or by telephone.

The assistant headteacher will acknowledge your complaint in writing or offer a full response within **5 school days**. The assistant headteacher may invite you to attend a meeting to discuss your complaint and possible solutions, or to explain what has happened or will happen as a result of your complaint.

The assistant headteacher will keep a record of all interactions with you and other staff, meetings and decisions made in reference to your complaint.

If the assistant headteacher has decided not to take any further action, they will explain what they have decided and how they reached the decision. You will also be advised of your right to take the matter further if you are not satisfied with the response.

**Stage 2 – Complaint heard by the Headteacher**

If parents or carers are not satisfied with the response at Stage 1 they should write formally to the Headteacher, headteacher@warblingtonschool.co.uk

The headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The headteacher can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

The Headteacher will investigate the complaint further and respond in writing within 10 days (where further investigations are necessary that will exceed this time period, new time limits will be communicated with an explanation for the delay).

If your complaint is about a member of staff, the headteacher will talk to that employee and invoke the relevant procedure if required. It will not be appropriate to inform you of the outcome of any investigation in relation to an individual member of staff.

If the complaint is against the Headteacher the complaint should be addressed to the School’s Chair of Governors.

**Stage 3 – Complaint heard by the Chair of Governors**

If, having spoken to the headteacher, you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you should write to the chair of governors c.swettenham@warblingtonschool.co.uk within 10 school days, explaining your concern and the steps that have resulted in you taking this course of action.

For matters that are the headteacher’s responsibility, the chair of governors is empowered only to look at whether the headteacher’s decision or action was reasonable in the light of the information available at the time.

If the chair of governors has decided not to take any further action, they will explain what they have decided and how they reached the decision. You will also be advised of your right to take the matter further if you are not satisfied with the chair of governor’s response.

**Stage 4: Complaint heard by Governing Body’s Complaint Panel**

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you should write to the clerk to governors within 10 school days of the outcome of stage 2, explaining your concern and the steps that have resulted in you taking this course of action.

The complaints panel will usually be convened within 20 school days of receiving the request for your complaint to be heard by the governing body’s complaints panel.

The Panel can:

* dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
* uphold the complaint in whole or in part
* decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
* recommend changes to the school’s systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

**The Panel’s decision**. The Chair of the Panel should ensure that the complainant and the Headteacher are notified of the Panel’s decision.

Any further appeal should be addressed to the Secretary of State for Education. The Local Authority has no role in reviewing any school’s complaints procedures or in investigating individual complaints.

**School Complaints Procedure: Flowchart**

**Initial complaint heard by staff member**

* Child’s form tutor, class teacher or head of year

* Acknowledge receipt of complaint
* Write to complainant with outcome of investigation

Issue not resolved

Issue resolved

* Invite complainant and Headteacher to a meeting
* Issue letter confirming panel decision
* Ensure complainant and Headteacher are informed of outcome

**Formal Complaint**

**Stage 3: Heard by Governing Body’s Complaint Panel**

Issue resolved

Issue not resolved

* Acknowledge receipt of complaint
* Write to complainant with outcome of investigation
* Acknowledge receipt of complaint
* Write to complainant with outcome of investigation

**Formal Complaint**

**Stage 2: Heard by Chair of Governors**

Issue resolved

Issue resolved

Issue not resolved

**Formal Complaint**

**Stage 2: Heard by Headteacher**

Issue not resolved

**Formal Complaint**

**Stage 1: Heard by Assistant Headteacher**