



WESTWARD HOUSE SCHOOL

Complaints Procedure Policy

Ratification

Role	Name	Date
Proprietor	Harriet Harrison	10/1/23
Lead Teacher	Michelle Dunne	10/1/23
Review Date:		January 2024

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

We welcome suggestions for improving our work in school. Be assured that, no matter what you want to tell us, our support and respect for your child will not be affected in any way. Please tell us of your concern as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to investigate an incident or problem properly if it took place some time ago. We do appreciate the assistance we receive from parents in addressing any problems that arise.

Problems sometimes arise from misunderstandings which are easily addressed. Most concerns and complaints can be sorted out quickly by speaking to us.

We will investigate any problems and discuss our findings with you so that we can find a way forward together which serves the best interests of both the school and your child. In the unlikely event of the problem remaining unresolved you can put your complaint in writing and, if necessary, could subsequently refer it to our Independent Panel

The procedure to be followed in the event of a complaint being made is summarised in the following stages:

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

Referral to the School

It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally **within 15 working days**. Naturally, more time may be needed if the school is not in session (eg: Winter, Spring and Summer breaks).

- If parents 'the complainant' have a complaint they should normally contact the lead teacher in the first instance.
- **Within 3 working days** the complaint will be acknowledged and a mutually convenient time for a meeting will be arranged with the complainant to clarify and supplement any information given.
- The Proprietor will be involved in order to assist in resolving the matter within the timescale provided. ***A record of any complaints will be kept securely and confidentially in a digital format. This will be a record of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation.***
- The Proprietor and lead teacher will investigate further, interviewing witnesses as appropriate. If the complaint centres on a pupil, the pupil would normally be interviewed with a parent present or, if this is not possible, with a member of staff who is not directly involved.
- Once all relevant facts have been established, the Proprietor will respond
- If no satisfactory solution has been found, parents are asked if they wish their concern to be considered further.
- If the complaint is against the Proprietor, the Stage 1 procedures are carried out by the lead teacher.

Stage 2: Formal resolution Review by the Independent Panel

If the complainant is not satisfied or if a resolution is not reached within fifteen working days (or within a reasonable timeline when over a school break), the complainant may determine to proceed with their complaint formally in accordance with Stage 2.

The complainant is advised to write to the Independent Panel (who must not have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint):- C/O Mrs Harriet Harrison (Proprietor) who will ensure that all members receive a copy of the letter. The Independent Panel consists of three local professionals who are involved in some way with young people. A list is available on request. They are all independent of the management and running of the school

The Proprietor will acknowledge receipt of the request to implement Stage 2 **within 3 working days** upon receipt of the request and will inform the complainant that the complaint is to be heard by the panel of three members **within 20 working days**.

The Proprietor arranges to convene a Complaints Panel. The members should have no prior involvement with the complaint and they should elect a person to record all minutes of the meeting. All relevant documentation regarding the complaint should be given to the members of the panel as soon as possible.

The Proprietor will write and inform all concerned of the date, time and place of the meeting **at least 5 working days in advance**. The notification to the complainant should also inform him/her of the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend and the right to submit further written evidence.

It is the responsibility of the Proprietor to ensure that the meeting is properly minuted.

Outcome

After the meeting, the panel will consider the evidence and a written decision detailing all findings will be sent to the Proprietor, the lead teacher and the complainant, and where relevant, the person complained about, **within 15 working days**.

Records of all complaints, correspondence, minutes of meetings and telephone calls will be kept securely indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing.