

# Complaints Policy

*Updated Dec 2020*

## **School Ethos**

The Head Teacher and Governors expect an ethos where every child has a right to learn without disruption. Good manners and politeness are key features of our school and all stakeholders are committed to expecting the best. Our ethos statement is:

'We strive to establish a caring community, whose attitudes and values are built on mutual trust and respect for all. Our intention is that every member of the school community feels valued and respected, and that each person is treated fairly and well. We promote an effective learning environment, so that everyone can feel happy, safe and secure. We endeavour to show compassion, understanding, good manners and conduct in all that we do so that Woodside School and all the people within it are proud of where they belong.'

**Our Values** are Friendship, Respect, Self-Belief, Determination, Tolerance and Courage. These shape our ethos.

## **1. Introduction**

Woodside Primary School Governors and staff believe that the school provides a good education for all of the children, and that the Head Teacher and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents/carers. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases. A copy of this policy is available on the school's website.

## **2. Aims and objectives**

The school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint giving careful consideration to all complaints and dealing with them as swiftly as possible. The aim is to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and in all cases putting the interests of the child above all other issues. There will be sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

## **3. Child Protection**

Please note that all complaints against any member of staff with regards to child protection, will refer to the Child Protection Policy.

## **4. The Complaints Procedure General Principles:**

- This procedure is intended to allow parents, carers and other stakeholders to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the services that it provides.
- An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- To allow for a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, the school will not consider any complaint raised more than 3 months after the event.

The Governors have adopted the principles outlined in the Department for Education 'Best Practice Advice for Schools Complaints Procedures 2019'. This document has been used to inform the school's policy. Governors have adopted the advice regarding serial and persistent complainants; unreasonable complainants and barring from the school premises. This document can be found in full on our school website in 'Policies and Documents'.

## **Concern**

A concern can be defined as a query or an expression of a worry about possible danger or apparent failure in respect of the school. A matter should be viewed as a concern if it is capable of being resolved locally and does not require a formal response and is described more fully in Stage 1, below.

## **Complaint**

A complaint can be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with the school. It requires a formal response. The school will deal with any matter as a complaint as described more fully below, when:

- the person raising the matter requests the matter to be dealt with as a formal complaint or
- when informal attempts to deal with the concern have been exhausted and the person who raised the concern remains dissatisfied.

Any concerns/complaints must be made within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. Only in exceptional circumstances will complaints outside of this timeframe be considered.

We will not normally investigate anonymous concerns/complaints. However, the headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Any concerns/complaints received outside of term time will be considered to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the concern/complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against Woodside Primary School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

In any event, the following procedure should be followed when a concern or a complaint is raised:

## **Stage 1 - Informal Procedure**

### **How to share a concern**

If a complainant is concerned about anything to do with the school or the services it provides, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher, or the Head Teacher if the concern is about the teacher. Should a complainant have a concern about the Head Teacher, s/he should first make an informal approach to the Chair of Governors. The concern can be made in person (subject to an appointment) in writing, or via telephone.

## **Procedure for dealing with concerns**

The teacher, Head Teacher or Chair will endeavour to resolve the concern informally, during the course of which investigation they may invite a third party in to observe any relevant meetings. The member of staff complained against will be kept fully informed of the content of the complaint and will be given an opportunity to explain their actions. During this period the parent will be regularly updated as to the progress of the investigation if requested. The outcome of an informal investigation will be communicated to the parent within 20 school days of the headteacher being made aware of the concern.

### **What to do if the matter is not resolved through informal discussion**

Where a complainant feels that a situation has not been resolved or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature a formal complaint should be made in writing, using the attached form, addressed to:

- the Head Teacher if a member of staff is involved **or**
- the Chair of Governors if the Head Teacher or a Governor is involved.

## **Stage 2 - Formal Procedure**

### **How to take the matter further**

If the concern is not resolved at the informal stage a complainant must put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Head Teacher, (or to the Clerk to the Governing Body, for the attention of the Chair, if the complaint is about the Head Teacher or a Governor) who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. Please use the Complaint Form attached.

It is very important that the complainant is encouraged to include a clear statement of the actions that they would like the school to take to resolve the concern. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.

The Head Teacher (or Chair) may invite the complainant to a meeting to discuss the complaint and to seek a resolution. If the parent accepts that invitation, s/he may be accompanied by a friend, if they wish, to support them in explaining the nature of the complaint.

It is possible that the complaint will be resolved through a meeting with the Head Teacher (or Chair). If not, arrangements will be made for the matter to be referred to the Chair of Governors. In any case the complainant should be informed in writing, usually within 5 school days of the school receiving the formal written complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. This notification may include an indication of the anticipated timescale.

The Chair of Governors may invite the complainant to a further meeting to discuss the complaint and to seek/agree a resolution. Again, if the complainant accepts that invitation, a friend may accompany them to help the complainant explain the nature of the complaint. In any case, the complainant will be informed in writing, usually within 20 school days of the Headteacher/Chair of Governors receiving the formal complaint, of the outcome.

If a complainant is not satisfied with the way in which the process has been followed, s/he can request that the Governing Body reviews the process followed by the school in handling the complaint. A request must be made in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure. The procedure described below will be followed. A Review Request form is provided.

### Stage 3 – Review Process

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of 3 members of the Governing Body. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of your request, but it could take up to 20 days depending on the availability of school Governors in their voluntary capacity.

The Governors on the Review Panel will normally consider written submissions, but will sympathetically consider any reasonable requests to make oral representations.

The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant of perceived failures to follow the procedure.

The panel will then invite representatives of the school (usually the Head Teacher or the Chair of the Governing Body panel that has considered the matter), as appropriate, to make a response to the complaint.

The panel may also have access to the records kept of the process followed.

The complainant and the school representatives, will be informed in writing of the outcome, usually within 5 school days of the panel meeting, however, this again may take up to 20 days depending on the availability of school Governors in their voluntary capacity. **The matter will then be closed as far as the school is concerned.**

### Next Steps

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 3.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Woodside Primary School. They will consider whether Woodside Primary School has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus), by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

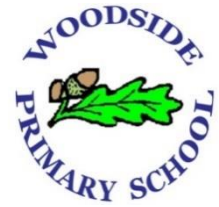
### **5. Monitoring and review**

The Governors monitor the Complaints Procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Head Teacher logs all formal complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved.

Governors examine this log on an annual basis. Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the Complaints Procedure.

# Woodside Primary School

## Complaint Form



Please complete this form and return it to the Head teacher (or Clerk to the governing body if about the Head Teacher or a Governor), who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name	
Your address	
Daytime telephone number	
Evening telephone number	
Email address	

Relationship to school (e.g. parent of a child on the school's roll)	
Child's (or children's) name (if relevant to your complaint)	

Please give concise, clear details of your complaint (including dates, names of witnesses etc) to allow the matter to be fully investigated. You may continue on separate paper or attached additional documents if you wish.

Number of additional pages attached:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint (i.e. who have you spoken to or written to and what was the outcome?)

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature:

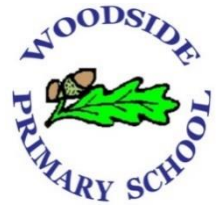
Date this form was submitted:

**SCHOOL USE ONLY:**

<b>Received by:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Acknowledgement sent by:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Complaint referred to:</b>			
<b>Name</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Name</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Name</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

# Woodside Primary School

## Complaints Review Request Form



Please complete this form and return it to Head teacher (or Clerk to the governing body if about the Head Teacher or a Governor), who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name	
Your address	
Daytime telephone number	
Evening telephone number	
Email address	

Dear sir/madam,

I submitted a formal complaint to the school on

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

My complaint was submitted to

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

and I received a response from

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

on

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the responses from the school.

I am dissatisfied with the way in which the procedure was carried out because:

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of additional pages attached

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature

Date

**SCHOOL USE ONLY:**

<b>Received by:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Acknowledgement sent by:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Complaint referred to:</b>			
<b>Name</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Name</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Name</b>		<b>Date:</b>	



## Flowchart – Summary of Complaints Procedure

Concern raised and heard by staff member/head teacher/governor

