

# Complaints Policy





## COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy covers any **general** complaints which complainants may wish to raise. It is **not** intended to cover those aspects of school life for which there are specific statutory requirements, in particular:

- Arrangements under Section 409 of the Education Act 1996 for complaints about the delivery of the National Curriculum and the provision of collective worship and religious education
- Parents who are not satisfied with a Local Authority decision about special needs assessments
- Concerns about schools admissions and exclusions
- Allegations of child abuse, financial improprieties or other criminal activities
- Complaints about general matters of policy, such as the overall resourcing of a school
- Teacher performance

### Purpose of the Policy

This policy aims to reassure complainants that any complaint raised will be dealt with in a fair, open and responsive way with the aim of achieving a speedy and satisfactory resolution. The school recognises a willingness to listen to questions and criticisms and to respond positively and in a way in which improvements can be made to school practices.

### Concerns and Complaints

The complainant should initially raise any concern directly with the class teacher informally at a mutually agreed time.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response from the class teacher they should:

- Raise any concerns that they have directly with the head teacher, preferably in writing, using the attached formal complaints form.
- The head teacher will investigate the complaint via discussions with the parent and those involved.
- Once all of the relevant facts have been established, the head teacher will produce a written response to the complaint and/ or may wish to speak to the parent/ carer to resolve the matter directly.
- The response will document the decision reached and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, it will also include what action the school will take/has taken to resolve the complaint.
- As far as is reasonable this will take place within 10 school days of the initial complaint being received by the head teacher.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the head teacher's response then they have the option to put their complaint in writing within 10 school days of the head teacher's

response, addressing their correspondence to the chair of governors, either via the school in a sealed envelope or addressed to:

Chair of Governors, Whickham School & Sports College (Academy Trust)  
c/o Burnthouse Lane  
Whickham  
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE16 5AR

It is helpful at this point if the complainant can indicate in writing how they would like the matter to be resolved and what outcome they would like to see achieved.

**If the complaint relates to the head teacher, the complainant should write directly to the Chair of Governors with their complaint.**

## Second Contact: Referral to the Chair of Governors

The chair of governors will acknowledge the complaint in writing within five school days of receipt. The chair will provide an opportunity for parents/ carers to meet with them to discuss the complaint.

The chair will conduct their own investigation into the complaint. If a pupil/student needs to be interviewed as part of the investigation it shall only be done with the parent/carers consent; and an appropriate adult will be asked to be present during the interview. The chair may request an independent officer to assist them with the investigation if they feel this is appropriate.

The Chair will decide, on the basis of the information gathered, whether the complaint is justified in whole or in part and decide on the appropriate action, if any, to take. Possible outcomes may include:

- Recommending changes to the school's systems and procedures to ensure similar issues do not reoccur in the future
- An apology
- An admission that the situation could have been addressed differently or better, and reassurance that similar events will not reoccur
- An undertaking that school policies will be reviewed in light of the complaint
- No fault found, complaint not upheld, no action taken

All decisions will be recorded in writing within 10 school days of the chair completing their investigation, as far as is reasonably practical, and a copy provided to the complainant. The letter to the complainant will offer the right of appeal to the governing body complaints committee (vice chair of governors to chair this committee).

**If the complaint relates to the Chair of Governors or Governing Body the complainant should write directly to the clerk to the body at the above address who will consider how to best address the complaint.**

## Third Contact: Referral to the Complaints Committee

If the complainant wishes to appeal they must do so in writing to the vice chair of governors (via the school or at the above address for Governor Support Service) within 10 school days.

The complainant will be offered the opportunity to attend a meeting where they will have the opportunity to discuss their complaint with the committee (minimum of three governors, not previously involved) and why they are not satisfied with the chair's decision. The chair will also attend this meeting.

The complaints committee will consider the issue and write to inform the complainant within 10 school days of their decision. Possible outcomes may include:

- Recommending changes to the school's systems and procedures to ensure similar issues do not reoccur in the future
- An apology
- An admission that the situation could have been addressed differently or better, and reassurance that similar events will not reoccur
- An undertaking that school policies will be reviewed in light of the complaint
- No action taken

### **This is the last stage at which the complaint may be heard at school level**

Should the complainant not be satisfied with the outcome then they may complain to the Education Funding Agency. Complaints about the maladministration of the EFA services (the school), including the way it operates any complaints policy may be made to the agency. However, the agency does not look at internal school management matters.

### **Monitoring the Policy**

The governing body will review the policy on a three year cycle (or more often if required) and monitor the number of complaints received, how these were addressed and any action taken.

### **Anonymous Complaints**

The governing body will not consider anonymous complaints. Any anonymous complaints will be retained and the number reported to governors to enable governors to monitor any patterns of complaints.

### **Vexatious Complaints**

There may be occasions when, *despite all stages of the procedures having been followed*, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the chair of governors will inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

## FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Postcode:</b>	
<b>Pupils Name (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Pupils Class Teacher (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Telephone Number – Daytime</b>	
<b>Telephone Number – Evening</b>	

<b>What is your complaint about?</b>

<b>Have you complained to the class teacher?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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<b>When did you do this?</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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<b>What happened when you complained to the class teacher? If you did not complain to the class teacher, why not?</b>
<b>What would you like us to do to put things right?</b>

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<b>Name: (please print)</b>	
<b>Signed:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

**Please return this form to the head teacher**