

WEST KIRBY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Complaints Policy 2018

General Principles:

- This procedure is intended to allow you 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 enable a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than 3 months after the event, being complained of, will not be considered.

Definitions and Scope

What is the difference between a concern and a complaint?

“A ‘concern’ may be defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought’. “

A complaint may be generally defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action’.

DfE Best practice Advice for Schools Complaint Procedure January 2016

The school aims to address concerns and to resolve complaints informally wherever possible, at the earliest possible stage.

There may be occasions where the Complainant wishes to raise their complaint formally: This policy outlines the procedure for handling such complaints.

This complaints procedure covers all complaints about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides with the exceptions listed below, for which there are separate (statutory) procedures.

| Exceptions | Who to contact |
|---|--|
| Admissions to schools Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN) School re-organisation proposals Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation | Concerns should be raised direct with local authorities (LA). For school admissions, it will depend on who is the admission authority (either the school or the LA). Complaints about admission appeals for maintained schools are dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman. |
| Exclusion of children from school | Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/schooldiscipline-exclusions |
| Whistleblowing | Schools have an internal whistleblowing procedure for their employees and voluntary staff. Other concerns can be raised direct with Ofsted by telephone on: 0300 123 3155, via email at: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or by writing to: WBHL, Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD. The Department for Education is also a prescribed body for whistleblowing in education. |
| Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures | These matters will invoke the school's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures. Complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation. |
| Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities. | Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. They should be contacted directly. |

Raising a concern or complaint

Informal Stage

It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment, requested via the school office. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage within 5 school days. (Form 1 on p3 may be used)

In the case of serious concerns it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Head Teacher (or to the Chair of the governing body, if the complaint is about the Head Teacher).

If you are uncertain about who to contact, please seek advice from the School Office.

Formal Stage

If your concern or complaint is not resolved at the informal stage you may choose to put the complaint in writing for the attention of the Head Teacher, who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated properly. If the complaint is about the Head Teacher, your complaint should be passed to the School Office staff, for the attention of the Chair of the governing body.

A Complaint Form is provided to assist you. (Form 2 on p4-5)

You should include details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents.

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

Please pass the completed form, in a sealed envelope to the school office. The envelope should be addressed to the Head Teacher, or to the Clerk to the governing body, as appropriate

The Head Teacher (or Chair) may invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to explore the possibility of an informal resolution. If you accept that invitation, you may be accompanied by a friend, if you wish, to assist you in explaining the nature of your concerns.

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

Any investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, you will be informed in writing of its conclusion.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, you may request that the governing body reviews the process followed by the school, in handling the complaint. Any such 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 for your convenience. (Form 3 on p6-7)

Review Process

Please complete the Review Request form (Form 3 on p6-7) and return it to the School Office for the attention of the clerk to governors. This is to request a review to ascertain whether the procedures in this policy were adhered to, not to review the original complaint.

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of three members of the governing body. This will usually take place **within 15 school days** of receipt of your request.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests to make oral representations will be considered sympathetically.

Once the review is complete, you will be notified in writing of the outcome.

Appendices- Forms to use with this policy

WEST KIRBY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Meeting Request Form (1)

I wish to meet *[name of teacher]* to discuss the following matter:

Brief details of topic to be discussed:

Dates/times when it would be most convenient for a meeting:

Your name:

Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school roll):

Pupil's name (if relevant to the matter to be discussed)

Your Address:

Telephone numbers

Daytime:

Evening:

e-mail address:

Signed

Date

[Please complete this form and return it to the school office]

School use:

Date Form received:

Date response sent:

Received by:

Response sent by:

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Formal Complaint Form (2)

Please complete this form and return it to the school office or to the Head Teacher who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:

Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school roll):

.....

Pupil's name (if relevant to your complaint):

.....

Your Address:

Telephone numbers

Daytime:

Evening:

E-mail address:

Please give concise 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 attach 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 with or written to and what was the outcome?)

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

Signature:

Date:

School use:

Date Form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

| | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
| Complaint referred to: | | | |
| Date: | | | |

Complaint Review Request Form (3)

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

Your name:

Your Address:

Telephone numbers:

Daytime:

Evening:

E-mail address:

Dear Sir/Madam

I submitted a formal complaint to the school on and am dissatisfied by the procedure that has been followed.

My complaint was submitted to and I received a response from on

I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the response(s) 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

Date Form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|--|--|
| Request referred to: | | | |
| Date: | | | |

WEST KIRBY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Acknowledgement of receipt of formal complaint *and* invitation to meet (2a)

Dear [Name of Complainant]

I have received your formal complaint, dated I am grateful that you have brought this to my attention.

The school and governing body take any complaint seriously. Therefore, I would like to meet with you, as soon as possible, so that I may understand the details of your concerns more clearly. You are welcome to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend, if you would find this helpful. *Please telephone..... in order to arrange an appointment. **OR** I can offer you an appointment at on ,..... Please let me know if this is convenient.*

I hope that we will be able to resolve your concerns through our meeting, but if not I will ensure that the appropriate investigation takes place.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

or Chair of Governing Body

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Acknowledgements of receipt of formal complaint and advising complainant that the matter is being dealt with under a confidential school procedure (2b)

Dear [Name of Complainant]

I have received your formal complaint, dated I am grateful that you have brought this to my attention.

The school and governing body take any complaint seriously. Therefore I have initiated an immediate investigation. It is possible that the investigator will wish to meet with you to clarify the evidence that you have provided so far. If so, he/she will write to you to make suitable arrangements.

As your concerns relate to the conduct/capability of a member of staff, the investigation will be carried out under the school's personnel procedures. This means that the detail of the procedure and its outcome **must** remain confidential to the school and the member of staff concerned.

OR

As your concerns relate to the behaviour of a pupil, the investigation will be carried out under the school's pupil conduct and disciplinary procedures. This means that the detail of the procedure and its outcome must remain confidential to the school and the parents of the child concerned.

In due course, I may be able to provide you with some information about the outcomes of the investigation and the processes that have been followed, but in any event will let you know when the matter has been concluded.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do let me know.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

Or Chair of Governing Body

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Acknowledgement of receipt of formal complaint referred by a third party (2c)

[e.g. LA, MP]

Dear [Name of Complainant]

I have received a copy of the documentation that you sent in to setting out a complaint about This has been passed to the school as it has responsibility for these matters.

The school and governing body take any complaint seriously. Therefore I would like to meet with you, so that I may understand the details of your concerns more clearly. Please telephone, in order to arrange an appointment. **OR** I can offer you an appointment at on Please let me know if this is convenient.

Meanwhile I would be grateful if you would complete and return the Formal Complaint Form that is enclosed, along with details of the school's complaints procedure.

I hope that we will be able to resolve your concerns through our meeting, but if not I will ensure that the appropriate investigation takes place.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

Or Chair of Governing Body

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Response to spurious complainant (2d)

Dear [Name of complainant]

Thank you for submitting your concern in the letter received on the [insert date]. After careful consideration, unfortunately, I am unable to deal with this matter under the Governing Body's Complaints Procedure. This is because:

- The substance of your complaint has been addressed under the complaints procedure already.

OR

- The concerns that you raise do not fall within the scope of this procedure *[suggest alternative for example: admissions policy, exclusion policy, behaviour policy, grievance procedure etc]*

If you wish my decision to be reviewed then you can follow the school's Formal Complaint Procedure, by writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

Or Chair of Governing Body

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NOTIFICATION OF DECISION REGARDING FORMAL COMPLAINT (2e)

Dear [Name of Complainant]

Following receipt of your complaint and careful consideration of all the available relevant evidence, I/the panel have/has concluded that:

The concern is not substantiated by the evidence in that

OR

The concern was substantiated in part/in full, as The school will review its practices/procedures..... with the intention of avoiding any reoccurrence. Parents will be informed in due course of any policy changes.

OR

In order to address fully the matters investigated, the school has initiated appropriate internal procedures. Due to the nature of these procedures, their outcome must remain strictly confidential. We are confident, however, that the circumstances that gave rise to your complaint should not recur

OR

In order to address fully the matters of concern that you identified, the panel recommended that the governing body should review its policy, as a matter of urgency. We are confident that this should prevent similar concerns arising in future.

I hope that this will now conclude the matter and we can look to the future working together for the benefit of your child's and the school.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher or Chair of Governing Body

WEST KIRBY PRIMARY SCHOOL
REVIEW OUTCOME NOTIFICATION (3a)

Dear [Name of Complainant]

Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Review Panel has concluded that the school followed the relevant procedure appropriately in respect of your complaint.

Summary of reasons

Therefore, we now consider the matter closed.

Or

Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Review Panel has concluded that the school followed the relevant procedure appropriately in respect of your complaint except

Therefore, the following action will be taken

Once this action has been completed the school will consider the matter to be closed.

Or

Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Review Panel has concluded that the school followed the relevant procedure appropriately in respect of your complaint except

However the panel determined that this procedural failure did not affect the outcome of the consideration of your complaint so, while we regret this error, we will now consider this matter to be closed as far as the school is concerned.

Yours sincerely,

Chair of Complaints Review Panel

c.c. Head Teacher and Chair of Governors