

Complaints Policy

Rationale

This policy is intended to set out how the school will deal with general complaints. At Willow, we welcome suggestions for improving our work. We aim to assure parents that they may express their views in the full knowledge that they will be dealt with fairly. We also aim to assure parents that, no matter what they may want to tell us, our support and concern for them and their child will not be affected.

Principles

Every complaint is a matter of concern to the school and will be investigated with due urgency and thoroughness. Whenever a complaint is upheld, every effort will be made to rectify the issue and, if necessary, action will be taken to prevent a reoccurrence of the problem. The school will not investigate anonymous complaints, but confidentiality will be respected at all times.

Definition

Parents will often raise legitimate concerns about their child's education. Most parents do not regard such inquiries as "complaints" in the formal sense. Nevertheless, their concerns will be addressed with similar urgency and thoroughness. If matters raised are not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, the dissatisfied party may wish to appeal through the formal complaints procedure.

Complaints procedure

Stage 1 Dealing with concerns and complaints informally.

- Most concerns and complaints can be resolved informally. On most occasions, issues can be resolved straight away through the class teacher.
- If the complaint relates to the Headteacher, the parent is advised to contact the Chair of Governors.
- The person dealing with the complaint at this stage makes sure that the parent is clear what action (if any) or monitoring has been agreed.
- Where no satisfactory solution has been found and parents are clear that they want to take the matter further, they are asked to make a formal complaint in writing. (Appendix A) This form can be obtained from the school secretary and should be submitted to the Headteacher

Verbal complaints received by governors

In normal circumstances, the governor should advise the complainant to contact the school directly. If the complainant is reluctant to do so, the governor should ensure that s/he understand the full facts as perceived by the complainant and without making any commitment or comment on the issue except that it will be investigated and a response will be provided either directly to the complainant or via the governor. The governor should then discuss the matter with the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher.

Stage 2. Formal complaint to the Headteacher

- The Headteacher will acknowledge the complaint in writing within 3 working days. This acknowledgement will give a target date for providing a response to the complainant and will normally be within 10 working days. If this is not possible, a letter will be sent giving the reason for the delay and giving a revised target date.
- The Headteacher will provide an opportunity to meet with them to supplement any information provided previously.
- The Headteacher will keep a written record of any meetings, telephone conversations and documentation.
- Once the relevant facts have been established, the Headteacher will produce a written response to the complainant, although may wish to talk through this response in person. The complainant is advised that, if s/he wishes to take the matter further, s/he should notify the Chair of Governors within 5 weeks of receiving the outcome letter.
- If the Headteacher has already been closely involved at Stage 1, the Governors' Complaints Panel should carry out all stage 2 procedures.

Stage 3. Formal complaint to the Governors

- Upon receipt of a written request for the complaint to proceed to this stage, the Clerk to the Governing Body should acknowledge this, also in writing. This acknowledgement should inform the complainant that the complaint will be heard by three members of the school's Governing Body within 20 working days of receiving the complaint.
- The Clerk to the Governors should arrange to convene a Governors' Complaints panel elected from members of the Governing Body.
- The Chair will write and inform the complainant, the Headteacher, any relevant witnesses and the members of the panel at least 5 working days in advance, of the date, time and place of the meeting.
- This meeting should allow for:
 - (i) the complainant to explain their complaint
 - (ii) the Headteacher to explain the school's response

- (iii) the Headteacher to question the complainant about the complaint
- (iv) the complainant to question the Headteacher about the school's response
- (v) any party to have the right to call witnesses
- (vi) panel members to have the opportunity to question both the complainant and the Headteacher
- (vii) final statements by both the complainant and the Headteacher
- Following the meeting, the Panel will consider its' decision and will convey that decision, in writing, to the complainant and to the Headteacher within 15 working days. This letter should explain whether a further appeal can be made and, if so, to whom.

Reviewed: Spring 2025

Next review: Spring 2027

Appendix A See next page:

School Complaints Procedure

Please complete and return to the Headteacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Address:

Postcode:

Daytime Telephone Number:

Evening Telephone Number:

Please give details of your complaint:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.
(Who did you speak too and what was the response?)