

Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy 2023

A copy of this Policy / Guidance will be available to all new parents and carers on their young person's admission to our school. A copy of this policy / guidance will also be sent with information for all those potentially interested in sending their young person to one of our services if requested. A replacement copy is also available on request at any other time and is also available on our website.

This is how we will set out to handle any complaint made to us and the time scales that you can expect us to work within. As a parent with a young person at Wood Edge School you can help us by letting us know about any problems as soon as possible. By working together, we can help to ensure that our services are meeting your and their needs.

Please note that all correspondence relating to complaints, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential. We at Wood Edge School appreciate that if things go wrong; there are four things that matter:

- You know who to complain to.
- You know how your complaint will be dealt with and how quickly.
- You feel confident that we will take your complaint seriously.
- Where appropriate, we will put things right quickly.

Wood Edge School is committed to providing high quality services and we are constantly seeking ways to improve that quality. Your complaint will be taken seriously and dealt with according to these guidelines. We view complaints as an opportunity to identify anything that is going wrong in our organisation and as an opportunity to put it right. All complaints will be treated seriously and dealt with in a swift manner. All complaints will be treated as confidential.

If the matter is deemed to be a protection from abuse issue, we will follow our school's protection from abuse protocols. This would involve immediate investigation and contact with all relevant professionals involved in your young person's welfare. A protection from abuse worker that is unconnected to our school, and allocated by the Local Authority, will lead any further safeguarding young person's investigation. Please see Policy / Guidance for Safeguarding / Child Protection.

For all other complaints we consider ensuring good relations between yourself and the school vital. We will encourage honest and open communication between the school and all parents/carers. We want to work in partnership with our parents/carers, and hope that you would feel free to discuss any issues of concern to yourself immediately that these arise.



In the first instance, we would wish to deal with any issues that arise by encouraging you to raise any concern with us informally. Informal verbal complaints may be made at any time to your young person's key worker or directly to the **Head of Education (Antony Maynard)**. Informal verbal complaints will be acknowledged immediately by the **Head of Education**. The **Head of Education** will acknowledge your complaint and will make contact with you within **24 hours** of you raising your initial concern. The points raised in this informal telephone call will be noted and dated in your young person's personal file.

All comments will be carefully considered and responded to on an individual basis. Most matters can usually be dealt with by talking your issue through and all parties coming to a mutually agreed approach to how the matter will be resolved. Our experience shows that most concerns can usually be addressed by clear and open communication.

If the initial informal verbal discussion has not resolved your concern an informal meeting will be arranged for you to meet in the school with the relevant staff. This meeting will be an informal way to develop communication to resolve any issue and will be arranged within **5 working days** of us receiving the initial complaint. You may be accompanied at this meeting if you wish by a friend or other support. In the majority of cases we anticipate that a solution to resolve the issue will be agreed.

In the unlikely event that no resolution to your concern has been negotiated between yourself and Wood Edge School, we would ask that your complaint is formalised and put into writing. All written complaints will be acknowledged by a dated letter within 5 working days of our receipt. We will immediately begin a formal investigation of your complaint. Our investigation will be carried out by three people not previously involved with the issue led by a dedicated member of staff who has not been directly involved in the matter over which you have complained and is independent of the management of the College. In the letter you receive from us you will be told the name of the person who has the responsibility of investigating your complaint.

A copy of any **written complaint or email** will also be sent by considered appropriate, a copy of your formal complaint will also be sent to **named other external professionals** involved in your young person's welfare such as their **social worker**. Your complaint will then be formally investigated further; this will take the form of gathering written information from all relevant people and / or documentation which we hold. Your complaint will be formally investigated as quickly as possible. Detailed records are kept of each stage of the investigation process along with the results of each stage. A copy of these records will be given to you and to other people involved in the investigation.

Throughout the investigation and up to the completion of our investigation should you wish to track the development of your complaint, you may contact



the school for this information. Please note we are not able to discuss any confidential information over the telephone.

Within 28 days of our receipt of your formal written complaint, we will write to invite you into the school for a further detailed discussion at a panel meeting. Our investigation will be carried out by three people not previously involved with the issue led by a dedicated member of staff who has not been directly involved in the matter over which you have complained and is independent of the management of the school. At this meeting you will be able to question the panel members on their conclusions. At this panel meeting you will be given written documentation detailing the process of the enquiry and the outcome of the investigation. You may be accompanied to the panel meeting by a friend or other support. A detailed discussion about the investigation will be undertaken and include details of how the investigation's conclusions were reached. You may request your information at the panel meeting to be in an alternative form such as Braille, if this is required. At the panel meeting you will be asked to sign that you have received all of the relevant documentation.

From the time of your attendance at the panel meeting, you will be given a further **5 working days** to consider the findings of our investigation and either accept or reject in writing the investigating manager's decision. If we do not hear from you in this time, it is assumed that you have accepted the investigations' conclusions.

If you write to confirm that you reject the findings of our internal investigation, the **appeal** will be dealt with by the **Responsible Individual**. A further meeting will be called that will be held **within 56 days** of the original receipt of your written complaint. At this meeting the **Responsible Individual** will review all the information on how the panel progressed the investigation and its conclusions. The **Responsible Individual** will reach a decision either to call in more information or to support the findings of the panel meeting. The **Responsible Individual's** decision will be **final** and there will be no further internal appeal procedure. You will be advised that you are free to take your complaint to an **external agent** should you wish to continue.

Please note: In exceptional rare cases in the unlikely event that your complaint issue is complex and concerns outside professionals or other external contacts, their written statements may take longer to obtain. **The calling for external contacts statements may prevent us from resolving the investigation with a panel meeting within our specified 28 days, we will contact you before the 28 days is up to inform you of any delay.** You will be informed as to why we are not in a position to resolve your complaint and we will indicate when we will be in further contact. You will be kept up to date with the progress of the investigation of your complaint by weekly contact from us. **No investigation involving external statements will take longer than 56 days.**

Wood Edge School will monitor and evaluate our system for dealing with complaints to ensure that we respond effectively and efficiently to any parental



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or carers concern or issue. A record is kept of the number and outcomes of all complaints procedures undertaken by ourselves each year.

All correspondence and records will be kept confidential.

If you are still not satisfied that your complaint has not been resolved to your approval you are free to take this further to external agencies. The numbers below may be helpful to you.

Complaints – Important Telephone Numbers:

Wood Edge Independent School : 07989418579

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If you still have difficulties or complaints and feel that the company's internal complaints procedure is not addressing your complaint, you should refer them to:

West Lancs LSCB 0300 123 6720

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Antony Maynard

A. Maynard

Head Teacher

October 2023