

Complaints, Concerns, Suggestions & Compliments Policy

This policy has been written for...	All staff and students at West Heath School
Copies of this policy may be obtained from...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The School web site - http://www.westheathschool.com It is available as a hard copy on request from the school office Hard copies for reference are filed in the staff room
This policy links with the following policies	This policy is referenced in a number of other policies for example the Positive Handling Policy
Participants and consultees in the formulation of this policy were...	The Principal, Senior Leadership Team, Student Services Committee and the Trustees of the School.
Edition, Review frequency and dates	This is edition 3.5, released November 2018 It is due for review in November 2019
Relevant statutory guidance, circulars, legislation & other sources of information are...	<p>Useful links:</p> <p>Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards, NMS18. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/residential-special-schools-national-minimum-standards</p> <p>The Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2015 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/..</p> <p>Ofsted: http://www.ofsted.gov.uk DfE: http://www.education.gov.uk/</p>
The Lead Member of staff is	Principal
Definitions and key terms used in this policy...	None
The Rationale and Purpose of this policy	To provide a clear and transparent procedure should a parent or carer want to raise a concern, make a complaint, give a compliment or make a suggestion.
Appendices	This policy has no appendices.
Copying	No school policy is ever written in isolation. Acknowledgement of sources of advice and significant influence in the development and recording of policies at West Heath School are noted on the front page. We request that any schools or organisations incorporating large sections of this policy without alteration should make similar appropriate acknowledgement.

The Aim and Objective of this policy.

Complaints are listened to and responded to appropriately, along with learning from complaints being taken forward. Concerns are dealt with as early as possible. Compliments are acknowledged celebrated and strengths identified are built on. Suggestions are taken seriously and where appropriate used to improve our school.

Introduction

We pride ourselves on being a “listening” school and this policy makes clear how a parent, carer or student can raise a concern, make a complaint, give a compliment or make a suggestion.

We actively encourage students to participate in sharing ideas, for example through the Student Council, Boarding Council, Key Working Sessions, Standard 20 Visits, Annual Reviews and daily target setting. There may be occasions when a student may wish to make a complaint about their experience, in which case they are encouraged to speak with a member of staff who will try to resolve the situation speedily.

Additionally, we have appointed the services of an independent visitor who conducts Standard 20 visits to the boarding houses. A regular feature of such visits involves the visitor listening to young people describe their experiences of school. The intention is to ensure that no student, having a need to make a representation or complaint feels unable to do so.

Students and parents/carers have the right to expect that we will try to provide the best possible service for them. For a variety of reasons things can sometimes go wrong. We will always try to put things right and yet the procedure described below can be used when necessary.

Our procedure is as follows:

The school follows a four-stage approach to resolving complaints.

1. **Problem Solving (informal)**
2. **Formal Complaint**
3. **Appeal to Chair of Trustees**
4. **External Procedure**

1. Problem Solving (informal)

Complaints and concerns are often due to misunderstandings. Please tell someone at the school what the problem is and how you think it can be resolved.

We will try to find a solution to the problem in a way that is acceptable to all the people involved.

Many informal concerns/complaints can be resolved informally. We will normally respond to informal concerns/complaints at a problem solving level within two school-term weeks.

If it is not possible to resolve your complaint informally then you may wish to follow the formal complaints procedure.

2. Formal Complaint

You can make a formal complaint in writing which will be investigated and you will be informed of the outcome. The complaint will be investigated by a senior member of staff. If the complaint relates to the Principal & Chief Executive, the Chair of Trustees will deal with this type of complaint.

Procedures & Practices

We will normally respond to your formal complaint within two school-term weeks, although this can / may take longer depending on the complexity of the complaint and investigation required. You will receive a response in writing following the investigation with our findings and recommendations.

3. Appeal to Chair of Trustees

Finally, if a parent or carer is not satisfied with the response to a written complaint, they may appeal to the Chair of Trustees who will arrange for a panel to hear and consider the complaint. In this case the panel hearing will normally be held within five school-term weeks of the complainant notifying the school they wish to proceed to this level. although this can / may take longer depending on the complexity of the complaint, investigation required and dependent upon the availability of panel members.

The panel will comprise of at least three people, at least one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school. Parents or carers may attend the panel hearing and may be accompanied if they so wish. Copies of the panel's findings and recommendations from the panel hearing will be distributed to all parties having a direct interest in the issue within two school-term weeks.

4. External Procedure

Our complaints procedure does not preclude students or parents/carers going to the statutory agencies such as the Local Authority, or Ofsted in order to pursue their complaint. See contact details for Ofsted below.

Record keeping

The following information is required:

- Name of student or parent complaining/complimenting
- Nature of representation, compliment or complaint
- The date of the representation, compliment or complaint was made
- The action taken and things that have happened to try and resolve the situation including how successful they were
- If the matter was not resolved at this stage, the advice given about how to take it further
- Name of recorder together with name of student, parent or carer.
- The date the entry was made

Records of complaints are kept by the Vice Principal, Care and Safeguarding and all complaints, concerns and compliments are made available to Ofsted inspectors.

Compliments and Suggestions

Students, parents, carers and stakeholders are very welcome to make a compliment or a suggestion. Compliments and suggestions will be filed in the Complaints, Concerns, Suggestions and Compliments file and taken to the Student Services Committee, along with complaints and concerns.

Grievance Procedure for Staff

Where a complaint relates to matters associated with an individual's employment, staff can follow the grievance procedure. (See Staff Handbook).

Monitoring

Our independent Standard 20 visitor.
Student Services Committee
Senior staff

Persons with particular responsibilities

Student Council Members
The Principal
Vice Principal Care and Safeguarding
Independent Standard 20 Visitor

Other Participants & Stakeholders

Ofsted welfare department - **0300 123 4666** for complaints or concerns about any service Ofsted inspects or regulates (8.00am to 6.00pm)

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Monitoring & Evaluation

SLT
Student Services Committee
Trustees