

Widford Lodge
PREPARATORY SCHOOL



Complaints Policy

Review Date: June 2011

WIDFORD LODGE SCHOOL

Policy for Complaints Procedure for Parents

Widford Lodge School has long prided itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated to the school in accordance with this procedure.

Stage 1: Informal Resolution:

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and **informally**.
- If parents have a complaint, they should contact their son/daughter's Pre-School Key Worker/Form Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parent's satisfaction. If the Pre-School Key Worker/Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Pre-School Supervisor/Head of the Pre-Prep/or Head of Prep School, as appropriate.
- Complaints made directly to the Pre-School Supervisor, the Head of Pre-Prep/or Head of Prep School will usually be referred to the relevant teacher unless the 'line manager' concerned deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally. In this event the 'line manager' will attempt to resolve the matter in **five days** or as soon as is practicable.
- The relevant teacher will make a written record of all complaints and concerns and the date on which they were received. Should a matter not be resolved within five days, or in the event that the relevant teacher and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2: Formal Resolutions:

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents will be asked to put their complaint **in writing** to the Head, who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate action to take.

- In most cases, the head will speak to the parents concerned within forty-eight hours of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the head to carry out further investigations. These will be completed in seven days or as soon as is practicable.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint
- Once the Head is satisfied, so far as is practicable, that all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The head will give reasons for the decision.
- The written decision will be issued within fourteen days of receiving the complaint. If for any reason this is not possible, the head will write to the parents within the fourteen day period referred to above, stating the reason or reasons why he/she is unable to issue his/her decision and informing the parents when he/she will do so, which will be within twenty-eight days of receipt of the complaint in any event.
- If parents are not satisfied with the decision, they may take the opportunity to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3: Panel Hearing:

- Upon receipt of the written decision, if parents seek to involve Stage 3 of this procedure, following a failure of earlier resolution, they are to write to the head informing him/her of their decision to do so within 28 days, whereupon the matter will be referred to a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the chairman of directors/proprietor.
- The panel will consist of at least three persons who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One of these shall be independent of the management and running of the school. A list of those people who may form this panel can be gained on request from Louise Gear.
- Louise Gear on behalf of the panel will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen days.
- If the convenor of the panel and/or the panel members deem it necessary, they may require (in writing) that further particulars of the complaint or any other related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than five days before the hearing. Any such further particulars

received within five days before the hearing shall be disregarded and inadmissible to the panel because it may not be possible to provide copies to all parties within that timescale.

- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible the panel will resolve the parent's complaint at the hearing without the need for further investigation. However should the panel decide at the hearing that further investigation is required, the panel shall decide how such investigation should be carried out and by when they should be concluded. The panel will reconvene and, after due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, will reach a decision and may make recommendations. This procedure will be completed within fourteen days of the first hearing wherever possible but within twenty-eight days in any event unless otherwise agreed with the parents. The panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision together with the reasons. The decision of the panel will be final.
- The panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the head/proprietor and where the complaint relates to an individual, to that individual.
- Provision will be made for a written record to be kept of all complaints, and of whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing. This record will be kept for a minimum of three years.
- Parents can be assured that all complaints and concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6 (2) j of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003; by the Secretary of state for Children, Schools and Families; or where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails. The school will resolve any complaint within a period of 28 working days from the time of the first lodging of the complaint.

Parents of children in the EYFS setting have the additional option of making a complaint to OFSTED on 08456014772 or at Royal Exchange Buildings, St Anne's Square, Manchester M2 7LA.

The school will provide Ofsted and ISI, on request with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

Any parent is entitled to make a complaint to the Independent Schools Inspectorate at CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA.

Person Responsible for the Complaints Procedure Policy: The Head.

Date of next Review of Policy June 2011