



## The Wherry School – Complaints Policy 2017

### Complaints Policy Statement and Procedures 2017

#### **Purpose**

The Wherry School's values are concerned with meeting the needs of pupils, parents/carers and others who have a stake in the school. The governing body believes that constant feedback is an important ingredient in self-improvement and raising standards and is an important part of the partnership that exists between all involved with our school.

Pupils, parents, carers, or other adults who have concerns or complaints should feel that they can be voiced and will be considered seriously.

All complainants have the right to be accompanied when making the complaint, and pupils may be accompanied by a parent or another adult.

A - There are various principles behind this procedure:

- We will seek to resolve complaints by informal means wherever possible.
- Investigations will be full, fair and swift, and people will be kept informed of progress and the decisions reached.
- Every effort will be made to respect confidentiality.
- Feedback will be actively sought from those voicing complaints in order to minimise complaints and maximise accountability.

B - We believe that most parents/carers, pupils or members of the public who may have concerns wish to resolve these as quickly as possible – therefore we suggest that they should:

1. Discuss their concerns with the member of staff most directly involved and, if not satisfied, or perhaps they do not want to do this then: -
2. Discuss their concerns with a senior member of staff (Assistant Head/ Vice Principal) and, if not satisfied, with the Principal

C - At each stage in the procedure we will attempt to resolve the complaint or concern. It might be sufficient to:

C.1 - Acknowledge that the concern or complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology
- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again
- An undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

Complainants will be encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage. If, following a more thorough enquiry, there is an admission that the school could have handled the situation better, we recognise that this is not the same as an admission of negligence.

C.2 - Only when there has been a thorough and full investigation by Senior teachers and/or the Principal and the above steps have been tried and found unsatisfactory, by the complainant, then the complainant should take their concern/complaint to the Chair of Governors, Barry Payne or Clerk to the Governing Body.

However, if a complaint is about the behaviour/conduct of the Principal and the situation has not been resolved through informal discussion, then such a complaint needs to be directed to the Chair of Governors.



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Should complaints be referred to the Chair of Governors, a complaint will be directed to a Discipline and Review Committee; this can be created from non-involved Governors, e.g. Associate Governors or members of other school/Academy Governing bodies, who can be co-opted as required.

### **Roles and responsibilities of Principal, Staff and Governing Body**

#### **Role of the Principal**

The Principal will ensure that:

- This complaints policy and the procedures are made known to all stakeholders through the school website
- All complaints are dealt with in the order suggested above (B), and all staff including the Principal will document the concern – if this escalates to a complaint, all staff including the Principal will document the complaint further - (names, dates, times, events), acknowledge in writing within three days of receipt, and consult with all those directly concerned
- The complainant receives a written explanation of the action taken within ten working days following the complaint.
- All staff are expected to encourage pupils, parents and carers who have concerns to follow the complaint procedures

#### **Role of the Governing Body**

The governing body will ensure the following:

- It has identified members of the governing body who will hear a complaint should it not have been resolved by the Principal or Chair of the Governing Body – the Governors instructed to take on this role make up the Discipline and Review Committee (unless a complaint directly involves a member of this group)
- At least one of the panel has received training/guidance on how to conduct a hearing – or support sought from the purchased Governor Support Services
- Where there is evidence that the complaint is justified appropriate action is to taken to prevent a recurrence.

#### **Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation**

All complaints and the action taken will be documented and a summary discussion added to a subsequent Governing Body Agenda, with advice on any implications for policies.

#### **Relationship to other policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies. The following policy informs advice to parents/carers on the DfE website:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>



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### Complaints Procedures:

If you need to complain an aspect relating to our school, we would ask that you speak with the member of staff most directly involved, where a problem has occurred, this can be arranged via the school office. The school complaints procedure tells you what kind of complaints the school will deal with, such as bullying or bad behavior – this is referred to as an **Informal Complaint**.

**Informal complaint** - You can contact the school by telephone, email or letter, or speak to staff directly by appointment. The school aims to deal with all complaints sensitively and carefully, ensuring relevant timescales are adhered to, to ensure that all issues and concerns are resolved as quickly as possible.

Telephone: 07557 196745

Email: [office@thewherryschool.co.uk](mailto:office@thewherryschool.co.uk)

Address: The Wherry School  
280, Hall Road  
Norwich  
NR1 2GB

If you do not wish to talk to the member of staff most directly involved, please discuss your concerns with a senior member of staff such as the Vice-Principal, Mr Rob Speck or Assistant Headteacher, Miss Dani Winteringham; and if not satisfied, The Principal, Miss Rachel Quick – contact details as above or:

Email: Mr Rob Speck - [viceprincipal@thewherryschool.co.uk](mailto:viceprincipal@thewherryschool.co.uk)  
Miss Rachel Quick – [principal@thewherryschool.co.uk](mailto:principal@thewherryschool.co.uk)

**Timescale** - Most complaints can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that the majority of complaints will be resolved at the this **informal stage** – where further action from the school is required following this stage – we aim to resolve the complaint at this stage within **15 working days**.

### **Formal written complaint heard by Principal or Senior Manager** (Vice Principal/Assistant Principal)

If the complaint is not resolved at the Informal stage, we would ask you, the complainant, to put the complaint in writing and pass this to the Principal, or a member of the Senior Management Team, who will be responsible for the investigation of the complaint.

The Principal or their representative will collect all other evidence that they think is necessary; this may involve an interview with the member of staff subject of the complaint.

The investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has concluded, you, the complainant, will be informed in writing of the outcome.

**Timescale for Formal written complain Process (Investigation)** - If you, as the complainant, remain dissatisfied with the way in which the process has been followed by the Principal or Senior Leadership team member, then this will proceed to a panel hearing convened by the Governing Body.

**This request must be made in writing within two weeks of receiving notice of the outcome from the Principal and include a statement explaining any perceived failures to follow the procedures.**



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**Formal written complaint panel hearing** - The panel will consist of 3 members of the Governing Body, including Associate Governors or members of other school/Academy Governing bodies, who can be co-opted as required, who have not prior knowledge of the complaint and are not involved in the complaint itself, and one member of the panel is independent of the management and running of the school. You, as the complainant, may wish to be accompanied by a friend or a representative at the panel hearing.

The panel will make findings and recommendations, providing a copy of these to the complainant and where relevant to person complained about. The panel will decide the relevant distribution of the findings and recommendations.

The findings and recommendations of the panel will be kept confidential along with all correspondence, statements and records of the complaint, except where the Secretary of State, or Ofsted under Section 109 of the 2008 Act request access to these findings.

The school will keep written records of all complaints, specifying whether they were resolved following the formal procedure or proceeded to the panel hearing and the action taken by the school as a result of those complaints, regardless of whether they were upheld.

**Timescale for resolution of the complaint at panel hearing is 15 days** and the principal or chair, as appropriate will be informed in writing of the outcome, this should be responded to in 15 **working days**.

### Complaints about the whole school

- You can complain to Ofsted if you think a school isn't run properly and needs inspecting. They won't look into problems with individual students, such as exclusions or not getting a place at the school.
- You can only complain to Ofsted if you have already followed the school's complaints procedure.
- You should get a response within 30 working days. It will tell you if Ofsted will investigate or not, and why.

The Wherry School is a free schools (Academy) – you can also complain to Education Funding Agency (EFA) if:

- there's a problem with the school's complaints procedure
- the school is not following the terms of its funding agreement

Please note - You may not be able to complain directly to academies or free schools if you don't have a child at the school.