



Westwood C.P School, Buckley
Ysgol Gynradd Westwood, Bwcle

Complaints/ Concerns Policy and Procedure

Introduction:

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints. Westwood C.P School is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow the school's formal complaints procedure.

The prime aim of Westwood C.P School's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by the school.

Staff Rights to be Respected and Protected

Although raising a concern or complaint can be stressful and upsetting, appropriate behaviour, language and mannerisms are still expected. Should the complainant be abusive (verbal or physical), threatening, using bad language or confrontational the member of staff has the right to refuse to deal with the concern/ complaint at that time. In these circumstances the Headteacher will be informed and could issue a letter warning the complainant that repeated actions will not be tolerated and they will not be permitted to enter the school grounds.

Procedure

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

The Policy has three main stages.

In summary they are as follows: -

- **Stage 1 ~** A concern is raised informally with a staff member. (INFORMAL)
- **Stage 2 ~** Complaint is heard by Headteacher. (INFORMAL)
- **Stage 3 ~** Complaint is heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel. (FORMAL)

Stage 1 – Raising a concern with a staff member

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. The school requests that parents make their first contact in a calm, reasonable manner with the appropriate class teacher. On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within 5 school days. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 1, please write to or call the school within 10 school days and state what you would like the school to do. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 2 – Complaint heard by Headteacher

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 1, the Headteacher will arrange for a further investigation. Following the investigation, the Headteacher will normally give a response within 10 school days. If you are dissatisfied with the result at stage 2, you will need to let the school know within 10 school days of getting the response.

Stage 3 – Complaint heard by the Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 2, then you will need to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint. Within 5 school days, The Chair or a nominated Governor will convene a complaints panel. The hearing will normally take place within 15 school days of the receipt of the written request for Stage 3 investigation.

The aim of the Appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the panel's decision in writing within 5 school days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further.

The Governors appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.

For further advice and guidance about the school's Complaints Procedure please contact Flintshire County Council, County Hall, Mold on (01352) 752121. In respect of school complaints, the council will consider a complaint when the school procedure, as set out in their policy, has been fully exhausted.

Recording and Monitoring Complaints

- Staff and Governors will always endeavour to learn from all concerns and complaints.
- Keep a full record of complaints at each stage (and the process used by the Governing Body in any formal minutes).
- Records can provide an opportunity to demonstrate that a policy, process is fair.
- The Headteacher will provide periodic summary report to the Governing Body of complaints received. (Quantity, Subjects, Trends)

Impartiality and Fairness

- Governors have a duty and responsibility to resolve complaints.
- Decisions must be reached in an unbiased and fair way.
- Complaints should be kept confidential and only those involved in investigating and making a decision should be made aware of the content.
- Members of the complaints committee must be impartial and have no conflicts or potential conflicts of interest.

Role of Individual Governors

- Governors must act corporately as a nominated group.
- Governors should not investigate a complaint before it has been formally made to the Governing Body.
- Governors should advise complainants to follow the school's procedures.
- Nominated governors must be impartial.

Role of the LEA

- No statutory or direct role in resolving complaints about a school.
- LEAs must refer complaints about a school to the Governing Body.
- Can provide advice and support if requested.
- Procedures may allow for the LEA to be involved for the purpose of reviewing the procedure, not reviewing the decision itself, nor to act as an appeal mechanism.

Role of the Welsh Assembly Government

- WAG will not usually consider a complaint unless the Governing Body has pursued the matter formally with the relevant parties.
- WAG will consider actions of the Governing Body in trying to resolve the complaint and refer to LEA as needed.
- WAG cannot overturn a decision taken by the Governing Body.

Complaints Involving Pupils

Pupils may be involved as complainants, as the subject of a complaint or as a witness. At each stage, a pupil may be accompanied by their parent/ guardian or adult of pupil's choice. Pupils may provide evidence to committees by voluntarily and with parent's consent. WAG holds separate guidance for dealing with complaints involving pupils.

Allegations Against Staff Members and Volunteers

Allegation of abuse against a professional, staff member or volunteer in contact with children cannot be investigated by the Headteacher or Governing Body. All such allegations will be referred to Children's services. This policy should be read alongside the current guidance The Wales Safeguarding Procedures for Children and Adults at risk of abuse and neglect.

The Headteacher is the designated case manager for allegations against all staff and volunteers when not in relation to the above context of abuse. A nominated Governor (usually the Chair of Governors) is the case manager for managing allegations against the Headteacher. The Local Authority Designated Officer please contact Flintshire County Council, Mold on (01352) 752121. The purpose of managing allegations against adults working with children.