



Customer Care and Complaints Policy

Updated: November 2016

Review Date: November 2017



Wellington School



Excellence in Everything

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| Policy Title | Customer Care and Complaints Policy |
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CUSTOMER CARE

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

- Visitors will be acknowledged promptly on arrival (within 2 minutes).
- If you have an appointment we will aim to see you on time but certainly within 10 minutes.
- When contacting or visiting school every member of staff, teaching and non-teaching will be courteous, polite and professional, treating individuals with respect.
- When telephoning school, your call will be answered promptly (within 6 rings); staff will request how they may help. Messages taken will be 'logged' and passed to the appropriate personnel.
- Voicemails will be responded to within 48 hours.
- When writing to us, you will get a response usually within 48 hours from receipt of your letter.
- Email and fax communications will be prioritised and responded to within 48 hours where appropriate.
- If you are not satisfied with any aspect of the service you received your concerns will be addressed in line with our published Complaints Policy, a copy of which is available from the School Office.
- All concerns will be investigated thoroughly.
- If we get things wrong, we will apologise, explain what went wrong and put things right promptly.

An annual survey of clients will be conducted and the findings will be available on the School's website.

Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 We are committed to meeting the needs of all pupils and parents. However, there may be times when you may have a concern or complaint about the School.
- 1.2 Most concerns and complaints can be dealt with informally, and without the need to use a formal procedure, just by speaking to the relevant person in School. The intention of this policy and procedure is to provide a clear and transparent process that will enable concerns and complaints to be dealt with promptly, fairly and proportionately. The procedure has been developed in accordance with guidance issued by the Department for Education and the Education Funding Agency and satisfies the requirements of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010.

2. Scope of Procedure and General Principles

- 2.1 The procedure covers complaints received from individuals who have parental responsibility for pupils of the School.
- 2.2 Our definition of a complaint is 'an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to the School or a member of its staff that the complainant feels requires a response from the School'.
- 2.3 We will consider all complaints in an open and fair way. At all times the School will respect the rights and feelings of those involved and make every effort to protect confidential information. There may be occasions when the person dealing with your complaint will need to consider whether anyone else within the School needs to know about your complaint or whether the consent of another individual (for example, a pupil) is required, so as to address it appropriately.
- 2.4 Some types of complaint may raise issues that have to be dealt with in another way (other than under this complaints policy); in which case we will explain why this is so, and will tell you what steps will be taken. For example, where complaints are raised regarding members of staff, this procedure may be put on hold pending consideration of the issues under appropriate staff procedures. In addition, the procedure will not apply where there is an alternative School policy or procedure relevant to the issues raised. For example, it will not apply to complaints regarding admissions and exclusions, some safeguarding issues and SEN assessments.
- 2.5 Complaints that are made anonymously will be handled at the discretion of the School and may be considered using other procedures, depending on the nature of the complaint. For example, anonymous complaints relating to (or appearing to relate to)

a child protection matter or alleged criminal activity will be referred as appropriate to the relevant authorities.

2.6 All references to School days refer to days on which the School is open to pupils and for staff training days. Timescales for dealing with complaints may need to be extended. Where this is the case, you will be advised of the extension which is necessary and any reason(s) for this.

2.7 The School will keep a written record of all complaints (including complaints raised informally and formally), including the date on which the complaint is received, the steps taken in relation to it, any documents used or created when considering the complaint (for example, notes of meetings held) and details of any findings, decisions and recommendations.

3. **Informal Procedure**

3.1 In most cases, complaints can be resolved informally.

3.2 If you have a complaint, you should raise it with the appropriate teacher (for example, form tutor, classroom teacher or Director of Year). You should raise your complaint as soon as you can; normally we would expect you to raise this within 10 School days of any incident. The longer you leave it the harder it might be for those involved to deal with it effectively.

3.3 In some situations, it may not be appropriate for the person with whom the complaint is raised to deal with your complaint under the informal procedure. Where this is the case, an alternative member of staff will be asked to deal with your complaint under the informal procedure. Depending upon the nature of the issues raised in the complaint, it may be appropriate for your complaint to be considered by the Headteacher, or a member of staff appointed by the Headteacher. You will be advised where this is the case and in these circumstances your complaint will be dealt with under Stage 1 of the formal procedure.

3.4 The member of staff dealing with your complaint under the informal procedure will keep you informed of the progress being made in relation to your complaint.

3.5 We will normally respond to your complaint within 10 School days of it being raised with the School, but if this is not possible, we will advise you of the revised timescale and any reason(s) for this.

4. **Formal Procedure – Stage 1**

4.1 If your complaint under the informal procedure has not been resolved to your satisfaction you should put your complaint in writing to the Headteacher. Your

complaint will be dealt with by the Headteacher, or by a member of staff appointed by the Headteacher, at this stage.

- 4.2 Normally, you would be expected to do this within five School days of you receiving a response to your complaint under the informal procedure.
- 4.3 If your complaint is about the Headteacher, you should put your complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors, addressed to the School.
- 4.4 Where it is considered necessary and appropriate, the Headteacher (or the member of staff appointed by the Headteacher) will invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint. In such circumstances, we will aim to have a meeting with you, normally within 10 school days of receiving your complaint. You will not have the right to be accompanied during any such meeting, save where required by law.
- 4.5 Having investigated your complaint, the Headteacher (or the member of staff appointed by the Headteacher) will respond to the complaint in writing, normally within 10 school days of completing the investigation.

5. **Formal Procedure – Stage 2**

- 5.1 If your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction under Stage 1 of the formal procedure, you should write to the Chair of Governors setting out your reasons for asking the School to consider your complaint under Stage 2. We would normally expect you to do this within five school days of you receiving the School's response to your complaint under Stage 1 of the formal procedure.
- 5.2 We will write to you to confirm receipt of your complaint under Stage 2 and inform you of the process which will be followed under Stage 2.
- 5.3 A Complaints Panel will be convened to consider your complaint. The Complaints Panel will consist of two Governors, who are not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and a person independent of the management and running of the School.
- 5.4 A hearing before the Complaints Panel to consider your complaint will be arranged. This will normally take place within 15 school days of the School receiving your complaint under Stage 2.
- 5.5 You may attend the hearing and be accompanied during the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative or friend. You may not be accompanied by a lawyer. You must confirm to the School the identity of your proposed companion at least five school days before the hearing.

- 5.6 You will be asked to provide the School with copies of any documents you wish to present and details of any relevant witnesses who you wish to call during the hearing, at least five school days before the hearing. You will be provided with copies of any documents which the School wishes to present and details of any relevant witnesses which the School proposes to call during the hearing, at least five school days before the hearing.
- 5.7 We will write to you by electronic mail or otherwise (and, where appropriate, any person(s) complained about) within 10 school days of the hearing to confirm the Panel's findings and decision in relation to the complaint and any recommendations made by the Panel.
- 5.8 A copy of the Panel's findings and any recommendations will also be available for inspection on the School's premises by the School and the Headteacher. In light of the School's obligations in respect of confidentiality and data protection, these documents will be redacted as appropriate.
- 5.9 If you have been through all the stages of the School's complaints procedure but remain dissatisfied, you can ask the Education Funding Agency to review the handling of your complaint. You may contact the Education Funding Agency by:
- accessing the complaints about academies page on the Department for Education website;
 - e-mailing academyquestions@efa.education.gov.uk;
 - writing to Academies Central Unit (Academy Complaints), Education Funding Agency, Earlsdon Park, 53-55 Butts Road, Coventry, CV1 3BH; or
 - telephoning the Department for Education's Public Communications Unit on 0370 000 2288.

6. **Monitoring Complaints**

- 6.1 The School's Governing Body shall be responsible for reviewing this policy and procedure to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.
- 6.2 The School's Governing Body will be provided with a report produced by the Headteacher regarding the operation of the policy and procedure on an annual basis.