

WOLVERHAMPTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy aims to ensure that:

- parents of pupils at Wolverhampton Grammar School know the school takes all concerns and complaints seriously and will respond in a courteous and efficient manner;
- effective procedures are in place for making and adjudicating complaints from WGS parents;
- parents wishing to express a concern or wishing to make a complaint know how to do so;
- all those involved in handling concerns and complaints make every effort to resolve matters within a reasonable period of time and amicably.

Raising concerns (informal complaints)

- Parents can raise a concern in the first instance with the person most closely connected with the concern e.g. the subject teacher, form tutor or Head of Year.
- A concern may be referred by parents to a Deputy Head (Jill Trevor with respect to Students in WGJS, Nic Anderson with respect to students in Years 7-9, Toby Hughes for students in Years 10, 11 and Sixth Form), the Head of Junior School Dan Peters, or directly to the Head, Kathy Crewe-Read.
- Concerns should be raised by telephone, email or letter and will be acknowledged within 2 working days during Term Time. During the school holidays concerns should be raised via concerns@wgs-sch.net and they will be forwarded onto a member of the Senior Management Team who will respond within 10 working days.
- The School will endeavour to resolve all concerns informally and swiftly and no later than 20 working days of the receipt of the concern.

Making a formal complaint

- In serious cases a formal complaint should be made in writing to the Head, making clear that the complaint is formal. This provision will apply where:

- a. Parents do not believe the matter is suitable for informal resolution
 - b. Where informal resolution has failed to result in an amicable resolution of the matter.
- Where the Head is the subject of the complaint a separate procedure applies (see separate section of this policy).
 - A senior member of staff will make contact with the parent(s) concerned to provide an initial response and to explain how the school intends to investigate the complaint. An indication of the time needed to investigate will be provided. Written records of all meetings held in relation to the complaint will be kept.
 - Once all the relevant facts have been established, the Head will consider all evidence and a decision of outcome will be made. The parents will be informed of the outcome in writing.
 - Every reasonable step will be taken to ensure that a complaint is resolved within 25 working days of the complaint being lodged. During the school holidays more time may be required but will be no more than 30 working days of the complaint being lodged.

Panel Hearing

- Where a parent is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation into a formal complaint or the manner in which a complaint has been handled, the Head should be informed in writing within 7 working days of the receipt of the Head's conclusion of the formal complaint. The Head will refer the matter to the Chair of Directors. Alternatively the Chair (details below) can be contacted directly by letter. The letter should state as clearly and fully as possible the reasons why a panel hearing is being sought.
- Upon request for a panel hearing, the Chair of Directors will convene a panel to hear the complaint. The panel will consist of three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school. The Chair, on behalf of the panel, will acknowledge the complaint and will schedule a hearing to take place within 25 working days, notifying parents of the names of the panel members.
- If the panel deem it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars will be supplied to all parties not later than 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may attend the panel hearing and may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

- If possible, the panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- The panel will consider the complaint and will make findings and may make recommendations as appropriate.
- If the parents decide not to attend the panel hearing, the panel will consider the complaint in the parents absence and issue their findings on the substance of the complaint raised, thereby bringing the matter to a conclusion.
- The panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, within 10 working days of the hearing (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the hearing). The decision of the panel will be final. A copy of the panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person(s) complained about as well as the Chair and the Head. A copy of the panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be kept in the Head's office where it can be inspected by the Head and Chair of Directors.

Complaints against the Head

- Where the complaint is against the Head the matter should be referred directly to the Chair of Directors, via the School's Bursar, who acts as company secretary.
- The Chair will contact the parent to explain how the complaint will be investigated and state the approximate time span for the investigation.
- The conclusions reached and reasons for those conclusions will be provided for the parents in writing.
- Every reasonable step will be taken to ensure that the complaint is resolved within 25 working days of the complaint being lodged. During the school holidays more time may be required but will be no more than 30 working days of the complaint being lodged.
- If the parent is dissatisfied with the response the parent should write to the Chair requesting a panel hearing within 7 working days of the receipt of the Chair's conclusion of the formal complaint.
- The composition and working of that panel will match that noted above.

Written records and confidentiality

- Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all complaints, whether they are resolved at the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing and any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld). Additional records may also be kept which may contain the following information: date of complaint; name of pupil/parent; description of complaint; records of investigations; witness statements; names of staff involved; and related correspondence.
- Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills 2008 Act requests access to them.
- Knowledge of the complaint will only be shared on a 'need to know basis.' There may be circumstances where the Chair of Directors will need to be informed.
- In circumstances involving a criminal offence or in matters relating to child protection it may be necessary for the school to involve relevant external agencies. The school might in such circumstances cease its own investigations.
- The number of complaints registered under this procedure during the preceding academic year will be made available upon request to the Head.

Addresses:

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KCR
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