



## Complaints Policy (A14)

Scope:	Whole School
Release date:	September 2016
Review date:	September 2017
Author:	Senior Deputy Head
Reviewer:	Deputy Head Operations
Approval body:	Risk and Governance Committee of the Board of Governors

### Linked Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following published documents

- Exclusions Policy (A1)
- Behaviour Policy (A4)

### Acronyms

EYFS Early Years Foundation Stage

### Availability

This policy may be viewed on the School website and a printed copy is available on request from the School office/Pupil Services Team.

### Policy Statement

Wisbech Grammar School is committed to providing the best education possible for all pupils. We recognise the right of a parent to raise their concerns. We understand the value to all concerned of dealing fairly and effectively with any such concerns. If parents do make a complaint, the following procedure will be followed.

This complaints procedure applies to all elements of the Wisbech Grammar School Foundation: Wisbech Grammar School (Senior School), Magdalene House Preparatory School, and the Magdalene House EYFS.

## **Complaints or Concerns**

"I don't want to complain as such, but there is something bothering me"

The School is here for you and your child, and we want to hear your views and your ideas. Contact a member of staff, as described below.

"I am not sure whether to complain or not."

If, as parents, you have concerns, you are entitled to complain. If in doubt, you should contact the School as we are here to help. We will help you to decide if you are making a formal complaint.

A formal complaint differs from a complaint, register of concern or a query. It may be the case that a parent or guardian is dissatisfied with the way that their question, query or register of concern has been dealt with, in such cases the query would become a formal complaint. Complaints become formal when the Chair of Governors becomes involved.

A Formal Complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which needs a response. It is usually made once all other avenues of discussion and mediation have been exhausted. This policy and process is regularly reviewed.

## **Complaints Process**

"How should I complain?"

You should speak directly to a member a staff, or write a letter, send an email, or call by telephone. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you.

"What will happen next?"

Any member of staff will be happy to help with a query or concern. It is probably best to start with your child's Form Tutor. The Tutor may be able to sort things out quickly and easily. However, in some circumstances you may prefer to take the matter to a senior member of staff, for example, the Head of Section or the Senior Deputy Head. Official written complaints should always be addressed to the Headmaster.

"How will my complaint be resolved?"

If your complaint is taken to the Form Tutor, they will contact you within a week of being notified by you about the complaint. The Form Tutor will aim to resolve the issue with you, having investigated the matter in question. The Head of Section or another member of staff may be consulted if appropriate. The complaint may be referred to the Head of Section or Senior Deputy Head where necessary.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, you may choose to take the matter instead to the Subject Teacher. They will contact you within a week of being notified by you about the complaint. The Subject Teacher will aim to resolve the issue with you, having investigated the matter in question. The Head of Department or another member of staff may be consulted if appropriate.

The complaint may be referred to the Head of Department or Senior Deputy Head where necessary.

If you believe your complaint is of a more serious nature, you may choose to take the matter directly to the Head of Department, the Senior Deputy Head or, if appropriate, the Headmaster. They will aim to resolve the issue and meet with you within ten days of the complaint.

If your complaint cannot be resolved by the process described, you should put the complaint in writing to the Headmaster (at this point it may be a formal complaint). Alternatively, you may decide the matter is of such seriousness that you wish to deal with the Headmaster in the first instance. On receipt of the complaint, the Headmaster (or his nominee) will be in contact with you within five days to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. The matter will be investigated and, if appropriate, a meeting will be arranged with the involved parties. The Headmaster will decide whose presence is appropriate at such a meeting. The Headmaster will provide a response to the complaint within ten days, to explain the decision(s) reached and any action taken or proposed. Appropriate information will go to all involved parties.

We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, and that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered.

## **Governing Body**

If you are not satisfied, the matter can be referred to the Chairman of the Governors as a formal complaint. The Chairman can be contacted by writing c/o the School. The Clerk of the Governing Body (Mrs K Massen, Headmaster's Secretary) will forward the letter. Your formal complaint would be acknowledged by the Chairman within five working days (if the Chairman is unavailable then his nominee may fill this role). A report from the Headmaster would be called for, and the Chairman would examine matters thoroughly, and then make contact with you within ten days. This should result in the matter being resolved. If it does not, you can make an Appeal. The Chairman would invite you to attend an Appeal Panel hearing, which should then take place within three weeks. You may wish to be accompanied by another person at the hearing, although legal representation would not usually be appropriate.

It is the Appeal Panel's task to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. The decision of the Appeal Panel will be notified within five working days of the hearing. Their decision is final. The Panel's findings and recommendations will be sent to the complainant, and, where appropriate, to the person being complained about. In addition it will be available for inspection on School premises by the Chairman and the Headmaster. A written record will be kept of all formal complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a Panel hearing.

The Appeal Panel is appointed by the Chairman, and comprises three people who were not directly involved in the matter detailed in the complaint. One of the Panel will be someone who is independent of the management and running of the School. Parents or guardians may attend and be accompanied at a Panel hearing if they wish.

## **Confidentiality**

Parents can be assured that all complaints and queries will be treated seriously and in confidence. Knowledge will be limited to the Headmaster and those directly involved. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidentially except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 requests access to them. Action which is needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints would be handled confidentially by the School. We do not commit to pursue anonymous complaints.

## **EYFS and Ofsted**

A record of complaints will be made available to Ofsted for complaints regarding the EYFS at Magdalene House Preparatory School.

## **Summary**

- Parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so
- We respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in an efficient way
- Parents realise that we listen and take complaints seriously
- We take action where appropriate

In the academic year 2015-16 there were four formal complaints, all of which have been successfully resolved.