

The Wren School

Complaints Procedures



Purpose and background

The Wren School is committed to providing high standards of teaching and pastoral care for all students. The school has a consistent approach of making parents and carers feel welcome, and governors hope that parents find it easy to discuss their child's progress with members of staff. All parents should feel that their concerns or complaints can be voiced and will be considered seriously.

Please note that although we have referred to 'parents' throughout this document, the school also recognises its students' voice and that of its community, therefore this policy also includes any member of the school and the wider community.

Policy objectives

These procedures concern lodging a formal complaint once all informal steps to resolve the concern or complaint have been exhausted. Parents and carers must refer to and comply with the Complaints Policy before embarking on the following process.

Status

As an academy, The Wren School abides by [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#).

Formal complaints procedure

Stage 1 – Complaint heard by Headteacher*

Any formal complaint should be made in writing, using the school's Complaint Form (see Appendix 1). Governors urge parents and carers to have contributed towards resolving the matter via mediation before starting this process.

If the complaint relates to the Headteacher, the parent should proceed directly to Stage 2.

The Headteacher will investigate and endeavour to establish what has happened so far, who has been involved and what the parent feels would put things right. Any misunderstandings which might have occurred will be discussed. The Headteacher will respond in writing to the parent or carer within 15 school days of receipt of the completed form. Mediation will again be offered.

* The vast majority of processes are the responsibility of the school, and fall under the delegation of the Headteacher. There are, however, some processes which are solely the responsibility of the academy trust, and complaints relating to these will be heard by the Chair of Governors, on behalf of the members and trustees of the trust. In these cases, mediation is not usually relevant, but the above deadlines still apply.

Stage 2 – Complaint heard by Governor

If the complaint relates to the Headteacher, the parent or carer should send the completed Complaint Form (see Appendix 1) to the Chair of Governors. If the Chair considers that mediation has not been explored sufficiently and is appropriate, they will write to the complainant within 5 school days to offer this. Mediation should take place within 15 school days of the offer. Should the offer not be taken up, the complaint will be considered closed and this will be advised in writing.

Complaints relating to the Headteacher would originally have been raised with the Chair of Governors, and so they will delegate the matter to another, impartial governor to investigate. This governor must not have had dealings with the matter, have a child in the same tutor group or know the family. Due to these restrictions and the small cohort of the Governing Body, the Chair of Governors may appoint a suitable external person to investigate. The governor will investigate and endeavour to establish what has happened so far, who has been involved and what the parent or carer feels would put things right. Any misunderstandings which might have occurred will be discussed. The governor will respond in writing to the parent within 15 school days of receipt of the completed form. Mediation will again be offered.

Stage 3 – Appeal heard by Panel of Governors

If the parent or carer is still not satisfied they may appeal in writing to the Chair of Governors within 10 school days, clearly stating:

- why they feel that the processes followed at Stage 2 were not sufficient or proper
- what they feel would resolve this matter for them.

The Chair will consider if this appeal is justified and if not, will write to the complainant with their decision within 5 school days, offering mediation as appropriate.

The Clerk to the Governors to convene a Complaints Panel, the membership of which will comprise three governors who are not directly involved in the matter. At least one of these members will be independent of the running of the school and a person of standing in the community (typically a governor from another school). The governors also reserve the right to invite a professional advisor.

The panel will be convened with 21 school days of the receipt of the appeal, and the Clerk will circulate the agenda and papers to all parties at least 5 school days prior to the hearing. Parents may attend the hearing and may be accompanied by a friend or relative. Legal representation is neither necessary nor appropriate. Each side will be given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions. All parties will see written material. Clear expectations of behaviour will be outlined prior to the hearing and failure to abide by these will lead to exclusion from the hearing.

Parents and carers must be clear that the remit of the panel is to determine if the processes which form these procedures and those of the Complaints Policy were carried out properly by the school and/or governors. It is not to re-investigate the complaint, however the panel can order a re-investigation at a later date (see below).

The panel can:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part

- decide on appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint, including commissioning a new investigation
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not occur again.

The panel's findings and any consequent recommendations will be based on the balance of probabilities. The outcome shall be recorded in writing and sent to the parent, the Headteacher, the Clerk to the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained about. This will be communicated within 5 school days of the hearing. The outcome of the hearing will be reported to the Governing Body at its next meeting.

If parents and carers are not satisfied with the panel's handling of their complaint, they should complete the ESFA [school complaints form](#).

Records and confidentiality

Records will be retained on site confidentially, accessible only to the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors, the Chair of the SAT Members, Her Majesty's Inspectors (Ofsted) conducting an inspection under section 162a of the 2002 Act, or the Secretary of State for Education. The numbers of complaints but not the details will be reported annually.

The school will keep a written record of all logged formal complaints, the dates on which they were made, and the stage at which they were resolved. In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will be retained until 6 years after the resolution of the complaint. The governing body will then consider further retention in case of contentious disputes, but otherwise they will be destroyed. In exceptional circumstances records may be subject to specific orders from external parties, and will be retained for a period conforming with their instructions.

Management of the procedures

School: These procedures are implemented by the Headteacher on behalf of the Governing Body and managed by the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors. The Headteacher will report any complaint to the governors via the next available Full Governing Body meeting as a confidential item.

Governing Body: Governors will regularly review the complaints log. If convened, the Chair of the Complaints Panel will report the outcomes to the governors via the next available Full Governing Body meeting. The governing body will review and update this policy every three years or upon changes in relevant legislation.

Approval: Approved by Full Governing Body – September 2018

Next review due: Autumn 2021

Associated policies

Complaints Policy

Associated documents

Complaints Guidelines for Staff and Governors

Complaints Form

Named individuals

Headteacher: Jo Broadhead
Chair of Governors: Julia Cottee
Chair of SAT Members: Mike Windsor

jbroadhead@wrenschool.org
clerktogovernors@wrenschool.org
clerktogovernors@wrenschool.org

Appendix 1

What actions have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? Who did you speak to, when, and what was the response? Why are you dissatisfied with this? If you have not taken up an offer of mediation, please say why not.

Please attach a continuation sheet if necessary

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature

Date

Official use

Date of
acknowledgement

By whom

Next steps identified