
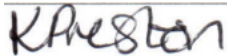




Policy/Procedure Name:	COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE		
Last Update:	August 2024	Next Update Due:	January 2027

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Signature of Authorised Individual	
Signature of the Director	

[Part 7 Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#) requires that all Independent schools implement an effective complaints procedure.

Who can make a complaint to Willow Park School?

This policy is primarily for parents of children that attend Willow Park school, for them to highlight their concerns to the directors regarding the provision of their child's education. Although this complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Willow Park School regarding the provision of the facilities of education that we provide.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A complaint may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'. It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the Complaints Procedure.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, Willow Park School will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, Willow Park School will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand, however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Willow Park School will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.



Willow Park School we will address complaints:

- With the pupil at the heart of decision making.
- Recognising the pupil's individual difficulties needs and challenges.
- Without prejudice.
- To resolve the complaint in a timely fashion.
- To ensure a fair investigation into the complaint.
- Keeping information on record available for Inspection and Directors.
- Reviewing complaints and outcomes to further develop our school.

Complaints can be made to the directors of Willow Park School:

Oliver Preston or Kimberley Preston

07380 956651

01788 524683

Email: kpreston@willowparkschool.warwickshire.sch.uk

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Willow Park School, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

- Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs should be raised with your local authority.
- Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation

Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Exclusion of children from school

Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at:
www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions.

Whistleblowing

The school has a robust whistleblowing procedure which can be located on the school website



The Complaints Process

Our aim is to ensure the highest quality of education, behaviour and emotional support for children. However, there will be times where there are genuine concerns regarding the child's experience at the school. We pride ourselves in ensuring there is a positive relationship with families and carers as placements work best when all parties are working in conjunction. The moment where it is felt this is not the case, we recommend contacting the school and speaking to the staff where, in most instances, the matter will be resolved promptly and reasonably. At this point, the complaint will be resolved on an informal basis.

We operate a 3 tier process for complaints:

- Informal
- Formal
- Panel

Stage 1 Informal procedure

In the first instance please contact a member of staff informally to discuss your concerns. This may involve a further meeting to discuss the concern in greater depth and may involve other members of staff.

If you feel the initial concern has not been resolved or is of a significant nature you should contact the Head of School informing of a formal complaint.

Stage 2 Formal Complaint

If you have communicated your complaint to a member of staff but are unable to reach a resolution that you are happy with then please contact the directors of Willow Park School

An investigation will be completed reviewing all information and discussions with parties involved. A formal reply with the outcome of the investigation will be shared within 10 working days.

If you are not satisfied fully with the response, you can contact the board of directors and request for a panel to hear your concerns/complaint.

Stage 3 Panel

The review of the complaint will be led by a Panel appointed by or on the behalf of the Directors that consists of at least 3 people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.

The panel will review the process and outcome of how the complaint was managed at this stage they may consider further investigation into the matter. The Panel hearing will be scheduled within 20 working days of the Panels receipt of the complaint.



The Complainant will be invited to the Panel hearing, though attendance is not mandatory, the hearing will continue in line with this policy. The complainant can be accompanied to the hearing by one other person including family member or friend.

The panel will make their decision following their review of the complaint. The review, findings, outcome and recommendations of this process will be shared with the complainant, person complained about (where relevant), and Directors within 7 working days.

The decision of the Panel will be final. The information of the Panels review, findings, outcome, recommendations and hearing will be available for inspection on school premises by the Directors.

The process reaching Panel aims not to have the requirement for Legal representation. If you feel you require this, we recommend sending this request to the Directors prior to the hearing.

Next Steps

Willow Park School expect the parent to have exhausted the internal complaints procedure of the school before taking further action.

If a parent is unhappy with the outcome of their complaint to the school or the school refuses to deal with their complaint, they can escalate their complaint to the body responsible for inspecting the school. In this case, the responsible body is Ofsted.

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact Ofsted.

Complaints can be taken directly to OFSTED using the contacts below:

Telephone: 0300 123 4666

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about/complaints-enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk>

The Department for Education (DfE) cannot investigate individual complaints about independent schools, but it has certain powers as a regulator if the school is not meeting standards set by DfE for:

- education
- pupil welfare and health and safety
- school premises
- staff suitability
- making information available to parents
- spiritual, moral, social or cultural development of pupils

DfE will consider any reports of a major failure to meet the standards. It can arrange an emergency inspection to look at pupil welfare and health and safety, and make sure serious failings are dealt with.



DfE can ask the school inspectorates to take minor complaints into account when the school is next inspected.

You can complain to the DfE by filling in the [school complaints form](#).

Storage and access

The information and outcome of your complaint whether it is formal or requiring Panel will be stored securely with restricted access within the school's ICT system. This will include the written records of the complaint, relevant correspondence, recommendations and actions completed by the school regardless of whether the complaint is upheld. All records are kept confidential relating to complaints and access to this information is limited to:

- Inspectors including OFSTED and Local Authority
- Directors
- Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.
- Parties involved in the complaint

Anonymous Complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Vexatious Complaints

Where the school considers that a complainant is carrying out unreasonable behaviour, e.g. making unduly frequent and/or repeated complaints, the school is entitled to take such action as it thinks appropriate to manage such behaviour. This may include (but is not limited to) placing limits on contact with staff or opting not to invoke this complaints procedure further. Where such action is being considered by the school, the complainant will receive a written warning. Should the behaviour persist, the appropriate action will be determined proportionately in light of the nature of the behaviour in question and any other relevant circumstances.

Time scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.



Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Equality Statement

At Willow Park School, we actively seek to encourage equity and equality through our teaching and our employment practices. As such, we seek to advance the equality of opportunity between people who share any of the following characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The use of stereotypes under any of the above headings will always be challenged.

Inclusion

Our school is an inclusive school. We aim to make all pupils feel included in all our activities. We try to make all our teaching fully inclusive. We recognise the entitlement of all pupils to a balanced, broadly-based curriculum. We have systems in place for early identification of barriers to their learning and participation so that they can engage in school activities with all other pupils. We acknowledge the need for high expectations for and of all children.



Complaint Form

Please complete and return to Kimberley Preston who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name (if relevant):

Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.

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

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: