

# Woodbridge School

## COMPLAINTS

### 1 Policy Statement

Woodbridge School welcomes informed complaints that may improve the educational experience of pupils. The aim of the procedure is that complaints are resolved, without unreasonable delay, either to the complainant's satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the pupils' rights and duties.

### 2 Procedure

All pupils and their parents should feel welcome to contact the School, at any stage, if they have any anxieties. The procedure outlined below is available to parents, staff, and all pupils. This procedure allows for a maximum of 28 of the School's working days between initial lodging of any complaint with the Headmaster and its agreed or arbitrated resolution.

At the Senior School, the first contact for parents ought to be their son's or daughter's Tutor, Housemaster/Mistress, who will then speak to the Deputy Headmaster or Headmaster, depending on the seriousness of the problem. At the Abbey, the first contact for parents ought to be their son's or daughter's class teacher, who will then speak to the Second Master or Master, depending on the seriousness of the problem. At Queen's House, the first contact for parents ought to be their son's or daughter's class teacher, who may then speak to the Head of Queen's House, depending on the seriousness of the problem. This, of course, does not preclude parents contacting the Headmaster directly at any time. He will always be delighted to speak to parents or to see them.

If they feel that their complaint has not been dealt with seriously, or they are dissatisfied with the outcome, then the next step is to contact, in writing, the Headmaster and in addition, if desired, the Chairman of the School Committee and/or the Chairman of Governors. A letter, in a sealed envelope, addressed to the Chairman of the School Committee and/or the Chairman of Governors, care of the School Office, will be forwarded as appropriate. Obviously, this kind of letter is very rarely written.

An acknowledgement to the letter(s) will be received within three of the School's working days and a written reply within a further ten of the School's working days.

If the above has failed to solve the grievance or addressed the complaint, then under the Regulations of the Education Act 2002, the Governors will convene (within a further fifteen of the School's working days) a panel of at least three individuals not directly involved in the matter that is the subject of the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the School. The parents/guardians, with representatives, are entitled to be at the panel meeting, as is the person complained about, with a representative.

The panel will ensure that findings and recommendations are copied electronically or otherwise to all interested parties (the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about), and are available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair of Governors and the Headmaster. Written records are kept at every stage, but are kept confidential to those attending the panel. At the panel stage any breach of confidentiality by the School, School employer, or complainant may result in legal action (eg in the case of a parent talking about the allegation to another parent, or a teacher talking about a pupil/parent to another teacher).

Written records are kept of all complaints, noting whether they have been resolved at the preliminary stage or have proceeded to a panel hearing. Records are reviewed by the Headmaster annually. All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them.

The School is a community that does generally listen to the worries, problems, suggestions and occasionally grievances of parents. The partnership between School and parents/guardians that is cited in the prospectus is not just an empty phrase.

For pupils who have a complaint the initial process is the same: they should first approach their class teacher (Queen's House and Abbey), tutor or Housemaster/Mistress (Senior School), or if they feel it appropriate any other member of staff as they see fit. The complaint will be noted and the pupils will be given a response as soon as possible, taking into account the nature of the complaint and the actions required to address it. If the pupils feel that the complaint has not been dealt with seriously or sufficiently quickly, or they are dissatisfied with the outcome, then the next step will be to contact the Head of Queen's House, Master of the Abbey, or Deputy Head or the Headmaster. At this stage the notes of the complaint will be formalised and, within three of the School's working days, a resolution sought which balances the pupils' rights and duties. If the pupil remains aggrieved, then the next step is to contact, in writing, the Headmaster and in addition, if desired, the Chairman of the School Committee and/or the Chairman of Governors. At this point the School will contact the pupil's parents or guardians if they have not already been involved in discussions, and the process for handling parents' complaints, outlined above, will be followed.

No complainant, whether adult or pupil, will be penalized for making a complaint in good faith.

With regard to complaints about the Early Years Foundation Stage provision at Queen's House, the record of any complaints made will be kept for at least three years. Parents are entitled to make their complaints direct to Ofsted (see contact details below, under **Boarders' Welfare**) and/or the Independent Schools

Inspectorate, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA (tel. 020 7600 0100) should they so wish.

### **Boarders' Welfare**

In the particular case of boarders and their parents, and complaints they may have concerning boarders' welfare, such complaints can either be pursued through the procedures outlined above, or they can be taken directly to Ofsted by contacting the Complaints Manager (tel. 08456 40 40 40; [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk); or in writing to: The Complaints Manager, Ofsted National Business Unit, Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square, Manchester M2 7LA)

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Governor Agreement	

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