

# Parents/Legal Guardians Complaints Policy

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## For school staff: points of consideration when using this procedure

1.1 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction however made, by a parent or carer with a legitimate interest in the school. It may be about school policies or procedures, the conduct, actions, or omissions of members of staff employed at the school or the standards of teaching and learning.

1.2 This complaints procedure is intended to be used by those persons who have a complaint relating to the school and no other alternative process exists for addressing that complaint.

1.3 Where an appeal mechanism or legislative process takes precedence, then that procedure must be followed, and the procedure outlined below in section 2 will not apply. Examples of where alternative measures would take precedence may include (but are not limited to) some of the following:

- Complaints about the statementing process for children with special educational needs
- Issues relating to members of staff including disciplinary grievances and re-organisation proposals
- Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation
- Admissions and exclusions
- Whistleblowing
- Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities. These service providers should have their individual complaints procedures which should be followed.
- Complaints against a Member of the governing body should be referred to the CEO in the first instance.

1.4 Initially most complaints will be oral. There should not be a requirement for the complainant to put their complaint in writing at the informal stage. However, WINS is mindful that English may not be the complainant's first language and due consideration and appropriate action should be taken where this is known to be the case. Such actions may include for example agreeing to the parent being accompanied by a friend or family member to act as interpreter.

1.5 The School will keep a record of all complaints made and the actions taken.

When receiving anonymous complaints in the majority of cases the only action the SLT/SMT will take is to log the complaint and a record of any actions taking in response to the complaint. However, there may be exceptions to this where the SMT feels further action should be taken and it is for the SMT to use their discretion in making that decision and in deciding how to proceed in



such cases. These may include complaints that raise serious concerns such as child protection allegations or bullying.

1.6 Governors should not attempt to deal with complaints outside of this procedure. Any governor who is approached by a complainant wishing to complain about the school should direct the complainant to the SMT. There will be some instances, for example when the complaint is about a member of the SMT, where it would be appropriate for the complainant to be advised to write to the CEO instead of the member of the SMT concerned.

1.7 The power to investigate school complaints rests with the school. The main exceptions to this are child protection and health and safety where the LA does still have the powers to investigate and intervene. Therefore, in the majority of cases any complainant who approaches the LA (except in such cases as specified above) will be referred back to the SMT.

1.8 It is very important that all complaints are dealt with as swiftly and as fairly as possible. Failure to address complaints promptly frequently results in greater dissatisfaction. Complaints and concerns relating to issues, which occurred more than three months before will generally be ruled “out of time”.

1.9 Member of the SMT should not investigate (or in the case of governors be a member of the review panel) when a complaint is about their own actions.

1.10 When investigating a complaint, the investigator should try to establish what happened, discover what the complainant feels would remedy the situation and interview those involved, keeping notes of the interviews. It may be appropriate to have another person present to take notes on occasions.



## School Complaints Policy

### *Aim of policy*

WINS' objective is to provide a secure, calm, and welcoming environment for students and staff. We recognise that these aspirations can only be achieved by the wholehearted commitment and support of the whole school community.

WINS has adopted a Complaints Procedure, in accordance with the national ruling lawful practices, to help tackle situations which can prevent the fulfilment of those aims and give cause for complaint.

It is important that complaints are raised at the earliest possible opportunity to enable the matter to be dealt with speedily and effectively. An early informal approach is often the best means of resolution of minor problems.

### *Definition of complaint*

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction however made, by a parent or carer with a legitimate interest in the school. It may be about school policies or procedures, the conduct, actions, or omissions of members of staff employed at the school or the standards of teaching and learning.

### *Complaint procedures*

#### **1. Stage one\_Informal**

1.1 In most cases, a problem can and should be resolved by contacting the class teacher, the subject teacher directly involved with the problem. The initial communication with the identified member of staff is via e-mail, or in person by consequent appointment. In the unlikely event this action does not lead to the problem being resolved, then the complaint should be dealt with through the formal stages of this procedure.



## 2. Stage two\_Formal

2.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the response from the member of staff at stage 1 or if the complaint is of a serious nature, the next stage is to put their complaint in writing, including details that might assist the investigation, such as witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of relevant documents, provided the privacy of third parties is fully respected according to the national ruling norms.

2.2 The School Leadership Team (SLT) is responsible for carrying out an investigation or appointing another senior member of staff to carry out the investigation and report their findings back to the SLT who will then reach a conclusion based on the investigation. The person appointed as the Investigator must keep notes of any interviews held as part of the investigation. To clarify the specific details of the complaint, the nature of the complaint and any background to the complaint, the investigator may feel it necessary to meet with the complainant first. A copy of the taken notes will be handed to the interviewees, asking them to sign for accuracy and acceptance.

2.2.2 Where the PYP/MYP/DP Coordinator and or a member of the SLT is the subject of the complaint, then the written complaint is to be addressed the SMT (see Stage three).

2.3 At the conclusion of the investigation the investigator will compile a report detailing their findings and any recommendations or actions they propose need to be considered by the head teacher.

2.4 The SLT will write to the complainant within 5 school days of receipt of their letter, setting out who is conducting the investigation and that the head teacher will write again to the complainant within a maximum further 20 school days setting out the actions taken to investigate the complaint and their findings. However, the investigation period for a more complex complaint could be longer than 20 days. The complainant will be advised if this is the case.

2.5 Once satisfied that the investigation has been concluded and a decision on the complaint has been reached, the head teacher will notify the complainant in writing of the conclusion and decision made. The complainant will be informed of any action that will be taken because of the complaint except where this would be a breach confidentiality e.g., taking any formal action against individual members of staff which would remain confidential. The SLT may also meet with the complainant to communicate the findings in person; in this event the decision will also be confirmed in writing.



2.6 The outcome of the investigation would usually be one of the following but not limited to:

- The evidence indicates that the complaint was substantiated and therefore upheld.
- The complaint was substantiated in part and the part upheld and identified only is upheld.
- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint is inconclusive and not proven.
- The complaint is not substantiated by the evidence and therefore not upheld.

2.7 In the outcome letter the complainant will also be informed that if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they may request that the SMT review the process followed by the head teacher in handling the complaint.

### 3. Stage three\_Formal\_SMT (School Manager and Academic Dean)

If the complaint is not satisfied with the outcome deriving from the formal stage 2, they can ask for the process or the matter to be reviewed by the SMT (School Manager and Academic Dean), depending on the nature of the issue. This request must be made in writing – email or registered letter - within 10 school days of receiving the outcome from the head teacher and must include a statement specifying reasons for the request for the review and any perceived failures arising from the outcome of the investigation.

3.1 The SMT will write to the complainant within 5 school days of receipt of their letter. A maximum of further 20 school days will follow to set out the actions taken to investigate the complaint and their findings. However, the investigation period for a more complex complaint could be longer than 20 days. The complainant will be advised if this is the case.

3.2 Once satisfied that the investigation has been concluded and a decision on the complaint has been reached, the SMT will notify the complainant in writing of the conclusion and decision made. The complainant will be informed of any action that will be taken because of the complaint except where this would be a breach confidentiality. The SMT may also meet with the complainant to communicate the findings in person; in this event the decision will also be confirmed in writing.

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3.4 If the complainant is still not happy at this stage, they should address to WINS CEO via a registered letter or via pec email – isetorino@pec.it – with indisputable proof that the School Manager and/or the Academic Dean:

- a) Did not deal with the issue.
- b) Acted unlawfully.
- c) Failed in sorting out the matter.

#### 4. Unreasonable, serial, or persistent complaints

4.1 WINS defines unreasonable complainants as **‘those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people’s complaints, and/or undermine the school’s reputation’.**

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaint’s investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own time scales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school’s complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;



- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated, and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

4.2 WINS is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive, or threatening.

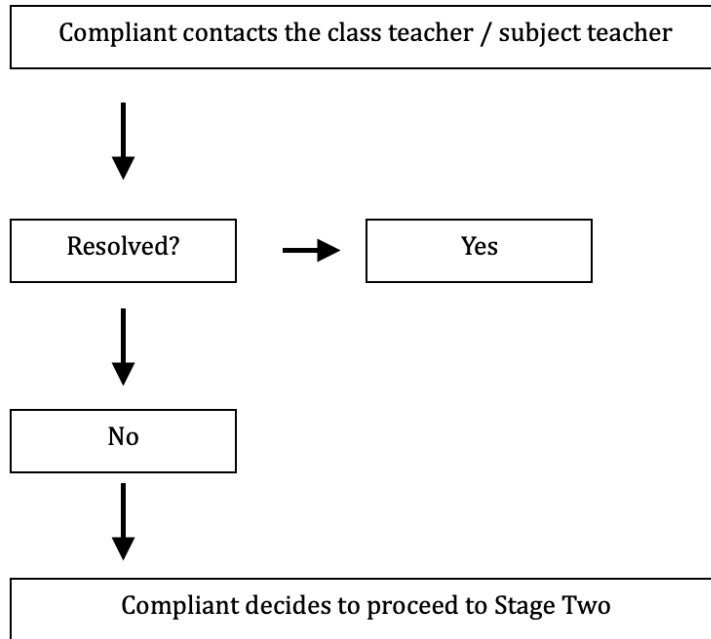
Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email, or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.





## Complaints flowcharts

### *Stage One\_informal*





## Policy Review

The SMT are in charge of the revision process of this Parents/legal guardians Complaint Policy. At the end of each academic year teachers will be asked to provide their feedback on the policy and suggest any updates/amendments that they see fit.

The SLT will look at teachers' feedback and will update the policy taking into account their suggestions. The Academic Dean, the School manager, and the programme Coordinators, will be updating the policy based on indications provided by IB documents, to ensure that school procedures are in line with IB most recent publications.

The amendments added to the Policy will be shared with the teachers at the beginning of each school year, and teachers will be asked to formally agree on these policies.

The most updated version of the policy is made available to teachers and all stakeholders on Managebac. Parents will be asked to formally acknowledge the policies published on Managebac.

This Policy was last updated in August 2023.