

Westfield Middle

SCHOOL COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy should be used in conjunction with the DfE Guidance (School Complaints Procedure – 22 May 2003) and alongside the Westfield Middle School's Home/School Agreement.

Introduction:

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints. Westfield Middle School is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow the school's formal complaints procedure. For the school to be able to investigate a complaint, it needs to be raised as soon as practically possible.

The prime aim of Westfield Middle School's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by the school.

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

The Westfield Middle School Policy has four main stages.

In summary they are as follows: -

- Stage 1 – A concern is raised informally with a staff member.
- Stage 2 – Formal complaint is heard by a Link Team Member or an appropriate member of staff.
- Stage 3 – Complaint is heard by Head teacher.
- Stage 4 – Complaint is heard by a school Governor with a possibility of leading to a Governing Body Panel.

Stage 1 – Raising a concern

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. The school requests that parents make their first contact the child's Form Teacher or Year Leader. On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within a day or two. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 1, please write to or call the school within 10 school working days and state what

you would like the school to do. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 2 – Complaint heard by a Link Team Member or by an appropriate staff member.

Formal complaints shall be put in writing and addressed to the appropriate teacher. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The school will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 school working days of receiving it. In many cases this response will also report on the action the school has taken to resolve the issue. Alternatively, a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. This meeting will normally take place within 10 school working days. The aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 2 please write to or call the school within 10 school working days of getting our response. You will need to tell the school why you are still not satisfied and what you would like the school to do.

Stage 3 – Complaint heard by Head teacher

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2, the Head teacher will arrange for a further investigation. Following the investigation, the Head teacher will normally give a written response within 10 school working days. If you are dissatisfied with the result at stage 3, you will need to let the school know within 10 school working days of getting the response.

Stage 4 – Complaint heard by a school Governor

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 3, then you will need to write to the nominated Governor giving details of the complaint. The nominated Governor will convene a complaints panel. The hearing will normally take place within 10 school working days of the receipt of the written request for Stage 4 investigation.

The aim of the Appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Panel's decision in writing within three school working days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further.

N.B. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the Head teacher, the Head teacher and Chair of Governors will be informed of the complaint. The Chair of Governors will arrange for the matter to be investigated. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of a member of the Governing Body the member will be informed of the complaint.

The Governors appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.

For further advice and guidance about the school's Complaints Procedure please contact Bedford Borough Council's Schools' Area Adviser. In respect of school complaints, the council will consider a complaint when the school procedure, as set out in their policy, has been fully exhausted.