



## PARENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

No formal complaints have been made to Ofsted by any parent during 2009-10

Westonbirt has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be dealt with in accordance with the procedure summarised below.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential, except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003, where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails.

This procedure is available to all parents and staff on the intranet and on the website. It is made available to boarders through their Housemistress.

### **1. Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

- 1.1 It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- 1.2 If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their daughter's class Tutor or Housemistress, depending on the nature of the complaint. In most cases, the matter should be quickly resolved to the parents' satisfaction. If the class Tutor or Housemistress cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Department, the Deputy Head, or in some cases the Head.
- 1.3 Complaints made directly to the Deputy Head or the Head will usually be referred to the relevant class Tutor or Housemistress, unless the Deputy Head or the Head deems it appropriate for her to deal with the matter personally.
- 1.4 All staff who receive concerns and complaints will make a written record of every concern or complaint and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 7 ordinary school days, or in the event that the class Tutor or Housemistress and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2.

### **2. Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

- 2.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head. After considering the complaint the Head will decide on the appropriate course of action.

- 2.2 In most cases, the Head will speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 ordinary school days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- 2.3 It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.
- 2.4 The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- 2.5 Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give the reasons for her decision.
- 2.6 If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3.

### **3. Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

- 3.1 If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to Dr Philip Cheshire, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- 3.2 The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Governing body.
- 3.3 Dr Cheshire, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable, and normally within 21 ordinary school days.
- 3.4 If the panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 5 days prior to the hearing.
- 3.5 The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- 3.6 If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- 3.7 After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may take recommendations, which it shall complete within 7 ordinary school days of the hearing. The Panel will write (or email) to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations, will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person about whom the complaint has been made.
- 3.8 Where the complaint is made by a parent or boarder regarding boarding welfare the intention is to resolve the complaint to the complainant's

satisfaction or there may be another appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils.

If either pupils or their parents have any complaints regarding boarding welfare, they may follow the procedures outlined above or may contact Ofsted or the Independent Schools Inspectorate at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) or [www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net).

### **Whistle Blowing**

In situations where pupils wish to make a complaint, they should be prepared to discuss issues in the confidence that any such matter will be dealt with sensitively and with the necessary degree of confidentiality. Further information can be found in the School's Whistle Blowing policy.

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