

Woodlands Schools



Complaints Procedure

This policy includes the EYFS, Little Acorns
and Before and After School Provision

Excellence for all through teaching, learning, opportunity and achievement

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Complaints Procedure

“This document is available for all parents to download from the school website at any time or is available from the office upon request.”

Introduction

Woodlands Schools including Little Acorns Nursery always take seriously any complaint that might be raised. If parents have a complaint, they can expect to be treated by the school/nursery in accordance with this policy. The primary purpose of this policy which is made available to all parents of pupils who are currently educated and cared for at the schools and Nursery, is that it deals with complaints; this can be any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school/nursery.

Throughout this document, any reference to action taken by the Head Teacher may also refer to any action taken by the Nursery Manager, Bursar or another senior member of staff deputising for the Head Teacher. Any reference to the school will also refer to the nursery. Parents of children in the EYFS can make a complaint to Ofsted or ISI should they wish. Contact details are available at the end of this policy or from the School or Nursery Office.

What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the School as a whole, about a specific class/key stage/phase or about an individual member of staff. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the School has done something wrong, or failed to do something that it should have done, or acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The School is here to support your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you, or your child, raise in good faith.

Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively and all will be acknowledged within 5 working days. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the School's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 20 working days if the complaint is lodged during full term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

The Appeal Panel Hearing will be completed within a further 20 working days, if the appeal is lodged during full term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Concerns or Complaints relating to Child Protection

Any concern involving a potential child protection issue must be directed immediately to the Head Teacher who is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Stage 1 – Informal

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is defined by the regulations as a complaint.
- Please note that the procedures in this document are not intended to limit the availability of the statutory complaints process. Our experience is that in almost every circumstance, parents far prefer an informal and unbureaucratic approach, and it is in this spirit that our procedures operate.
- If parents have a complaint, they should normally, in the first instance, contact the relevant class teacher or key worker. In many cases, the matter should be resolved quickly by this means to the satisfaction of all concerned. If the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult colleagues and/or members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- Complaints made directly to the Head or senior staff will usually be referred to the relevant class teacher unless they deem it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- The class teacher/Head will keep a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within **5 working days**, or where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint then parents should proceed with their complaint in accordance with the procedure in Stage 2. If the complaint is directly about the Head Teacher, a complainant may contact Cheralyn Lewis (cheralyn.lewis@woodlandsschools.co.uk).

Stage 2 – Formal

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parent should put their complaint in writing to the Head Teacher. This does not mean that the formal stage is automatically triggered whenever a concern is expressed in writing, for example, by email. Complaints will usually only progress to the formal stage after first being considered at the informal stage and only then if the complainant intends to escalate a matter to the formal stage.
- In most cases, the Head Teacher will speak or write to the complainant concerned, normally within **5 working days** of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage. Complaints received within the school holidays will be responded to as soon as is practically possible.
- It may be necessary for the Head Teacher to carry out further investigations. Under the formal processes, the Head Teacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. In any case a response will be made within **20 working days** if the complaint is lodged during full term time and as soon as is practicable during holiday periods.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If the parent(s) seek to invoke stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Director of Education.
- The Director of Education will make the arrangements necessary to put the matter to a Panel Hearing for consideration and notify parents within two working days of receipt of their complaint at Level 3. 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. The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person; this may be a relative, teacher or friend.

- Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Directors. One of the members of the Panel will be designated as Convenor who will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and within **20 working days** of the complainant making recourse to the Directors. The Convenor will act as Chair of the Committee during the hearing.
- The panel will make findings and recommendations, a copy of which will be provided to the complainant within 7 working days and, where relevant, the person complained about and will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and the Head Teacher.
- A written record of all complaints will be kept where the parent is not satisfied and has gone to the formal stage of the process. A record will also be kept regarding if they are resolved following a formal procedure or have proceeded to a panel hearing. There will also be a written record of actions taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection of the school under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them. All records will be kept for 7 years.

Alleged abuse by a member of staff towards a pupil

If there is a concern or allegation against a member of staff the procedures, as outlined in our Safeguarding Policy, will be followed.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Woodlands Schools are individually registered for children under 2 years of age with Ofsted on the Early Years Register. As such:

- Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within **28 days**. The record of complaints will be made available to Ofsted and ISI on request.
- Any record of complaints is kept for seven years
- Parents have the right to make a complaint to Ofsted, should they wish or to the ISI.
- Complainants will be notified of the outcome of an investigation within **28 days** of the school having received the complaint.
- The school will provide Ofsted/ISI, on request, with a written record of all complaints during a specified period and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

Contact Details:

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 4666

concerns@isi.net

ISI, Ground Floor, Cap House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

Tel: 0207 600 0100

Annual Record of Complaints

Hutton Manor

	2024/25	2025/26
Number of Stage 2 Complaints	1	2
Number of Stage 3 Complaints	0	0
Number of Fixed Term Exclusions	0	0
Number of Exclusions	1	0