



# Complaints Policy

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**DfE Guidance from Statutory Policies for Schools, February 2014**

Review frequency: Governing body or proprietor free to determine.

Approval: Governing body free to delegate to a committee of the governing body, an individual governor or the Headteacher.

Legislation: Maintained schools (and applied to PRUs) – The Education Act 2002: Section 29.

Academies, free schools and independent schools – The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2010.

Non-maintained special schools – The Education (Non-maintained Special Schools) Regulations 2011.

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## **1. Aim**

Wayland Academy is committed to ensuring the highest levels of communication and partnership with our parents through the pastoral system, publications, regular opportunities for face-to-face communication and the Home-Wayland Academy Agreement. However, from time-to-time misunderstandings can occur. This Policy is intended to address these occasions.

This procedure will apply to most general complaints received by Wayland Academy. It is not intended to cover those matters where a statutory procedure already exists.

This Policy also aims to ensure that parents are fully aware of Wayland Academy's expectations of them in relation to complaints.

## **2. Expectations**

Parents will:

- Abide by the Home-Wayland Academy Agreement
- Engage in dialogue with Wayland Academy staff regarding their child's progress
- Attend parents' consultations and information sessions

WAYLAND ACADEMY will:

- Abide by the Home- Wayland Academy Agreement
- Keep parents informed of key events in the Wayland Academy calendar
- Provide a point of contact – the Progress Tutor – for parents to communicate with
- Keep parents informed about their child's progress and behaviour
- Ensure that parents are regularly consulted, with the Parent Governor as the principal means for feedback to the Governing Body on parents' views

## **3. Communications**

Parents are kept informed of all Wayland Academy activities, events and expectations in the following ways:

- Regular letters providing information about key Wayland Academy issues and activities
- Newsletters
- News bulletins on the website
- Opportunities for on-going dialogue with pastoral staff via telephone and/or email
- Student planners
- Annual parent consultation evenings

a) Specific meetings with parents are also arranged for the following:

- SEN reviews
- Pastoral Support Programmes
- Attendance meetings for punctuality and attendance

b) If there is a concern of any kind about a student, parents/carers will be contacted either by telephone, letter or email.

c) If this initial concern continues or worsens, parents/carers will be requested to meet the appropriate member of staff at Wayland Academy.

d) All staff will be informed of the correct procedures for contacting parents.

e) Copies of all letters sent home, notes taken from telephone calls made and interviews held and monitoring reports will be placed on the student's file.

#### 4. Concerns and Complaints

Concerns can normally be dealt with on an **informal** basis. If parents have a **concern**, they should:

- Raise the concern verbally with the member of staff or, if more appropriate, their Subject Leader or Line Manager as soon as possible
- Allow Wayland Academy sufficient time to investigate and respond

When does the concern become a **complaint**?

- When there is serious concern that cannot be resolved in an informal way
- When a concern is strong enough to require the use of formal procedure eg. the health & safety of students are perceived to be at risk

If a concern becomes a complaint, then at this stage it becomes **formal**. (See Appendix 1)

Complaints in the following areas have separate procedures:

- Admission to the Wayland Academy
- Exclusion of students from Wayland Academy
- Statutory assessment of Special Educational Needs
- Complaints about the curriculum, including religious education and collective worship

Please see the separate relevant policies for the above.

#### 5. General principles

- The complaints procedure works sequentially
- The views of everyone concerned should be both heard and valued
- Confidentiality applies to all complaints

- Full, confidential written records will be kept at all stages of the complaints procedure
- Brief, summary details of all formal complaints will be kept in the Complaints Log by the PA to the Principal; this will indicate whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing.
- The needs and interests of the whole Wayland Academy community needs to be considered alongside those of individual students
- Wayland Academy staff will keep to the timescales outlined

## APPENDIX 1 – CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS/CARERS

### Guidance

- ✓ It is intended that all concerns and complaints are resolved as quickly and amicably as possible
- ✓ To help achieve this, it is usually the case that the relevant member of staff or their line manager should be contacted first: escalating the complaint to the highest level first invariably delays the process
- ✓ Therefore, formal complaints will not be considered until the informal stage have been completed
- ✓ The stages in the procedure set out below are sequential, and must be followed in order

### Stage 1 – Informal Stage - Concern

**Parents:** If parents have a concern, they should raise the concern verbally with the relevant member of staff or, if more appropriate, their Line Manager as soon as possible

**Wayland Academy:** a verbal or email acknowledgement will be made, usually within 24 hours

**Parents:** allow Wayland Academy sufficient time to investigate and respond

**Wayland Academy:** will respond to the concern within 5 working days orally, via email or by letter

### Stage 2 – Formal Stage – Complaint

**Parents:** if parents are dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal stage, or the concern is of very serious nature which affects the health & safety of Wayland Academy students, then an email or letter should be sent to the relevant line manager

**Parents:** Reception or the PA to the Principal will provide line management details

**Wayland Academy:** a verbal or email acknowledgement will be made, usually within 24 hours

**Wayland Academy:** the complainant may be invited into Wayland Academy to discuss the issues, or called to discuss the matter over the telephone

**Parents:** allow Wayland Academy sufficient time to investigate and respond

**Wayland Academy:** will respond in writing, via email or by letter as soon as possible and within 5 working days of receiving the complaint

### **Stage 3 – Formal Stage - Complaint to the Principal**

**Parents:** if the complainant wishes to take the matter further, he/she should write formally to the Principal, setting out the complaint and the reasons why the actions taken at Stages 1 and 2 are regarded as unsatisfactory

**Wayland Academy:** a verbal or email acknowledgement will be made, usually within 24 hours

**Wayland Academy:** the Principal will usually invite the complainant into Wayland Academy to discuss the issues, or call to discuss the matter over the telephone within 5 working days

**Parents:** allow Wayland Academy sufficient time to investigate and respond

**Wayland Academy:** the Principal will respond in writing via a letter, within 10 working days of discussing the matter with the complainant, stating the outcome of any investigation and reporting any action taken

### **Stage 4 – Formal Stage - Complaint to the Chair of Governors**

**Parents:** if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the process, he/she can write to the Chair of Governors

**Wayland Academy:** the Chair of Governors will convene a panel to consider the complaint within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint. The panel will consist of 3 members, all of whom have will not previously have been involved with the complaint. At least one of the panel members will be independent of the management and running of Wayland Academy.

**Parents:** the complainant will be invited to meet the panel in person to put forward their case, parents may choose to be accompanied but must advise the Chair of Governors of whom they wish to invite in advance

**Wayland Academy:** the panel may also invite members of WAYLAND ACADEMY staff to attend the meeting to provide background/further information, including details of actions taken/resolutions offered under the earlier stages of the procedure

**Wayland Academy:** once the panel has concluded their review, a letter will be sent to the complainant stating the outcome, and any recommendations, within 5 working days: the Governors' decision is final

**Wayland Academy:** a copy of this letter and any recommendations will also be sent to the person complained about, a further copy will be kept by the PA to the Principal for inspection by the Proprietor and the Principal.

**If you do not feel your complaint has been resolved by Wayland Academy**

If, after following all the steps outlined in this Policy, you are not satisfied with the way in which Wayland Academy has dealt with your complaint, you can then complain to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. You should include any relevant documents with your complaint.