



## **Guide for anyone with a concern or a complaint**

This policy will be used by Waverley Studio College to address concerns and complaints made by pupils, parents or carers of pupils, as well as members of the public who are not a parent or a carer of a pupil attending Waverley Studio College.

Our school wants to deal with any issues, concerns or complaints as promptly and efficiently as we can. If you have any concerns we encourage you in the first instance, to go directly to the person who is most appropriate. This will usually be the class teacher, another member of staff or the Principal.

## **Overview**

The aim of this policy and procedure is to resolve a concern or complaint in a fair and equitable manner. All concerns and complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner.

## **Principles**

While pupils may, themselves, raise concerns and complaints under this policy and procedure, the school will involve the appropriate parents or carer should this occur. A concern or complaint from a member of the public who is not a parent or a carer of a pupil attending Waverley Studio College should be referred directly to the Principal, unless the complaint is about the Head Teacher in which case it should be referred to either the Executive Head Teacher or Chair of Governors.

Any concern or complaint should be brought to the attention of the school at the earliest opportunity. Any matter raised three months after the event will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

An anonymous complaint cannot be dealt with unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any concern or complaint will be dealt with in a way that:

- respects confidentiality
- addresses all the points at issue

- provides an effective response, and, where necessary,
- appropriate redress

A copy of the concerns and complaints policy can be accessed from the Waverley Studio College website or requested from the school.

### **COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

This procedure is to deal with all concerns or complaints relating to the actions of staff and application of school procedures where they affect individual pupils, except matters directly related to curriculum, or to a particular exclusion, child protection, special needs statementing or admission issue, all of which are dealt with under separate procedures. Details of these procedures are available from the school.

Complaints made by members of staff will usually be dealt with through appropriate separate procedures such as the grievance policy.

Waverley Studio College aims to resolve most concerns and complaints informally. If informal procedures fail to resolve the issue, a formal complaint about any matter, excluding those stated in the above, must be made in line with this Concerns and Complaints Policy.

Every complaint shall receive fair and proper consideration and a timely response. Please refer to the following procedure for the specific timescales.

Waverley Studio College Concerns and Complaints Policy will:

- Encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- Be easily accessible and publicised
- Be simple to understand and use
- Be impartial
- Be non-adversarial
- Have established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of progress
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- Provide information to the school senior leadership team so that services can be improved.

## **STAGE ONE - INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

- Our aim is to resolve most complaints informally. It is expected that in most cases the class teacher or member of staff concerned will be able to resolve concerns without the need to go any further. Complainants can help staff to resolve concerns by arranging to discuss at a convenient time, raising concerns in a positive atmosphere and allowing time in order for the matter to be investigated further.
- Issues can also be raised directly with the Learning Coaches within the school. In the absence of the Learning Coach, please contact the Vice Principal. If availability or the nature of the complaint precludes contacting any of the above then the Principal can be contacted who will delegate to an appropriate designated officer.
- In cases that require urgent consideration the Principal may deal with the matter exclusively and without delay.
- Waverley Studio College will endeavour to resolve any informal complaints within 10 school days of being raised. This will usually involve meeting the complainant to discuss the matter further, and may involve talking to pupils, other staff members or consulting senior staff including the Principal. Should there be a delay in resolving the complaint the complainant will be notified.
- Once an appropriate resolution has been identified the complainant will be verbally notified of the outcome. Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the outcome they will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage Two of the Concerns and Complaints policy.

## **STAGE TWO – PRINCIPAL**

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the complainant should contact the Principal in writing within 10 school days of receiving the outcome from Stage One.
- The complainant must clearly state the reason for the complaint, actions taken to date and what the complainant may feel is an appropriate resolution.
- The Principal may delegate responsibility for undertaking investigation of the complaint to an appropriate designated officer if required.
- The Principal or appropriate staff member will endeavour to resolve the complaint within 10 school days of being raised. Should there be a delay in resolving the complaint the complainant will be notified.
- Once an appropriate resolution has been identified the complainant will be verbally

notified. An outcome letter will be sent to the complainant within 10 school days of the verbal notification. Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the outcome they will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage Three of the complaints procedure.

- The school will keep a written record of all formal complaints, including records of meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint, including the school's decision. These records will be held for one year or where the complaint relates to a pupil of the school for one year after the pupil leaves the school. The record will state if the complaint was resolved at Stage Two or if they were taken to Stage Three or Stage Four.

### **STAGE THREE – EXECUTIVE HEAD TEACHER**

- If the complaint cannot be resolved under Stage Two then the complainant should contact the Executive Head Teacher within 10 school days of receiving the outcome from Stage Two.
- The complainant must clearly state the reason for the complaint, actions taken to date and what the complainant may feel is an appropriate resolution.
- The Executive Head Teacher may delegate responsibility for undertaking investigation of the complaint to an appropriate designated officer if required.
- The Executive Head Teacher or appropriate staff member will endeavour to resolve the complaint within 10 school days of being raised. Should there be a delay in resolving the complaint the complainant will be notified.
- Once an appropriate resolution has been identified the complainant will be verbally notified. An outcome letter will be sent to the complainant within 10 school days of the verbal notification. Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the outcome they will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage Four of the complaints procedure.
- The written record will state if the complaint was resolved at Stage Three or if they were taken to Stage Four.

#### STAGE FOUR – GOVERNING BODY

- If the complaint cannot be resolved at Stage Three, then the complainant should put their complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors within 10 school days of receiving the outcome from Stage Three.
- The complaint must clearly state the reason for the complaint, actions taken to date and what the complainant may feel is an appropriate resolution.
- In cases that require urgent consideration the Chair of Governors may deal with the matter exclusively and without delay.
- The Chair of Governors may refer to School and Governor Support at the Local Authority for advice and guidance in deciding who may deal with the concern or complaint if the nature of it requires this.
- The Governing Body is only obliged to consider the complaint(s) lodged in the initial submission, although may use discretion to consider other relevant and related matters that may subsequently arise.
- If the Chair of Governors decides that the concern or complaint has been dealt with reasonably, then the complainant will be informed, and that the only grounds for appeal may be on the basis of the way the concern or complaint was handled (and not the decision made).
- If the Chair of Governors decides that the concern or complaint may not have been dealt with reasonably, or that a formal appeal is appropriate, then a hearing by a Complaint panel of the Governing Body will be arranged. This will comprise of a minimum of three Governors.
- The Panel will deal with the complaint on an impartial basis. No Governor will sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- The aim of the Panel Hearing, which will be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the School and the complainant.
- The Panel will:
  - Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part, or
  - Uphold the complaint in whole or in part, or
  - Where appropriate decide action to be taken to uphold the complaint, or
  - Recommend changes to the school systems or procedures to seek to ensure

- that problems of a similar nature do not recur
- Written feedback will be given to the complainant within 10 school days of the Hearing.

Please note: If the outcome might lead to action under another procedure or is an internal management issue for the school and therefore the responsibility of the Principal, you may only be told that appropriate action will be taken.

This is the final step of the process for the school (except for carrying-out agreed actions) and there is no more that the school can do. Trying to raise the issue further through the school may force us to treat your complaint as vexatious.

### Further action

If, despite all the stages of this procedure having been followed, you remain dissatisfied, you may take your complaint to the school's Local Authority, which can review the procedures followed by the school's staff and governors. The Local Authority cannot reopen an investigation, but if it is satisfied that the school has not dealt with the complaint appropriately, it can make recommendations

Policy adopted by the Governing Body of Waverley Studio College on: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Policy to be reviewed on: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signed:

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair of Governors

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal