



Westward House School

Qualifications are important. Self-esteem is life changing

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

Ratified May 2024. Reviewed August 24 (new site). Review Date August 2025

This policy is for pupils and parents. We welcome suggestions for improving our work in school. Be assured that, no matter what you want to tell us, our support and respect for you and your child will not be affected in any way. Please tell us of your concern as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to investigate an incident or problem properly if it took place some time ago. We do appreciate the assistance we receive from parents in addressing any problems that arise.

Problems sometimes arise from misunderstandings which are easily addressed. Most concerns and complaints can be sorted out quickly by speaking to us.

We will investigate any problems and discuss our findings with you so that we can find a way forward together which serves the best interests of both the school and your child. In the unlikely event of the problem remaining unresolved you can put your complaint in writing and, if necessary, the complaint could be referred to our Independent Panel

The procedure to be followed in the event of a complaint being made is summarised in the following stages:

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

Referral to the School

It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally **within 15 working days**. Naturally, more time may be needed if the school is not in session (eg: Winter, Spring and Summer breaks).

- If parents or pupils ('the complainant') have a complaint they should normally contact the lead teacher in the first instance.
- **Within 3 working days** the complaint will be acknowledged and a mutually convenient time for a meeting will be arranged with the complainant to clarify and supplement any information given.
- The Proprietor will be involved in order to assist in resolving the matter within the timescale provided. A record of any complaints will be kept securely and confidentially in a digital format. This will be a record of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation.
- The Proprietor and lead teacher will investigate further, interviewing witnesses as appropriate. If the complaint centres on a pupil, the pupil would normally be interviewed with a parent present or, if this is not possible, with a member of staff who is not directly involved.
- Once all relevant facts have been established, the Proprietor will respond

- If no satisfactory solution has been found, parents are asked if they wish their concern to be considered further.
- If the complaint is against the Proprietor, the Stage 1 procedures are carried out by the lead teacher.

Stage 2: Formal resolution

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response to the informal complaint or if they wish to make a formal complaint, they are able to do this in writing in accordance with Stage 2.

The Proprietor will acknowledge receipt of the request to implement Stage 2 **within 3 working days** upon receipt of the request.

Stage 3: Panel hearing

Where parents or pupils are not satisfied with the response to their formal complaint, the proprietor will convene a panel hearing. The panel will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One panel member will be independent of the management and running of the school.

The complaint will be heard **within 20 working days**.

A person to record all minutes of the meeting should be elected. It is the responsibility of the Proprietor to ensure that the meeting is properly minuted.

All relevant documentation regarding the complaint should be given to the members of the panel as soon as possible.

The Proprietor will write and inform all concerned of the date, time and place of the meeting **at least 5 working days in advance**. The notification to the complainant should also inform him/her of the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend and the right to submit further written evidence.

Outcome

After the meeting, the panel will consider the evidence and a written decision detailing all findings and recommendations will be sent to the Proprietor, the lead teacher and the complainant, and where relevant, the person complained about, **within 15 working days**.

Written records of all complaints, correspondence, minutes of meetings and telephone calls will be kept in accordance with the school's policy on data retention securely indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing. Records will include any actions taken by the school and whether or not they were upheld.

Correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential except where the Welsh Ministers or Estyn request access to these documents.