



Complaints Policy

Policy Date	Frequency of Review	Ratified By	Review Date	Next Governor Ratify
September 2018	3 yrs	Headteacher	September 2018 GNE	October 2021
October 2021	Change to annual review in 2021.	Headteacher	October 2021 GNE	October 2023

Introduction

Wapping High School recognises that at times things can and do go wrong. It is in everyone's best interest to resolve concerns and complaints at the earliest possible stage.

This policy outlines the responsibilities of Wapping High School and its Governing Body (The Wapping & Shadwell Secondary Education Trust (WSSET)) in dealing with complaints.

However, it is not intended to cover aspects for which there are specific statutory requirements.

In addition,

- Parents & Carers who are not satisfied with a special needs assessment may appeal to an SEND Tribunal
- Concerns about admissions or exclusions have specific appeal rights to the governors and are detailed in the relevant policies
- Allegations of child abuse will be dealt with through the Child Protection Policy
- Complaints of financial improprieties or other criminal activities will be dealt with through the Whistleblowing Policy

General Principles

Wapping High School Complaints Procedure 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;
- allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- respect people's desire for confidentiality;
- address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;
- provide information to the school's Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body so that services can be improved.

Procedure

Stage 1 An informal discussion / mediation

Stage 2 Referral to the Headteacher for a formal Investigation

(If the complaint is about the headteacher, stage 2 will be carried out by the Chair of Governors)



- Stage 3 Review by the Chair of Governors
- Stage 4 Review by an Independent Panel
- Stage 5 Referral to the Department for Education

Note: If a complaint is made directly against the Headteacher the procedure begins at Stage 2.

Stage 1 An informal discussion / mediation

It is widely accepted that the vast majority of concerns and complaints can be resolved informally to the full satisfaction of those who raise them. There are many occasions where concerns can be resolved straight away, providing the complainant with the benefit of an immediate response, and avoiding the need to submit a formal complaint.

Concerns may be raised with any member of the staff depending on the type of issue to be discussed.

By their nature, we do not impose specific time-scales for dealing with concerns at this stage, or monitor them formally, although all issues will be considered as quickly and effectively as possible.

The person who raised the issue will be informed of any action to be taken to resolve it and if appropriate this will be confirmed in writing.

Should the person who raised the issue be unsatisfied by the outcome the Headteacher should be informed.

Stage 2 Referral to the Headteacher for Investigation

If a complainant is unhappy with the outcome from stage 1, they will be offered, before a formal investigation begins, an informal meeting with the Headteacher to discuss their concerns and wishes. It may still be appropriate to reach an informal resolution at this point. The Headteacher will also support the complainant in deciding whether the complaint is best dealt with through this policy or another statutory procedure, and will advise the complainant on the next steps they may need to take.

If it is agreed to deal with the complaint through this policy, then a formal written complaint should now be provided to the Headteacher. This will be acknowledged within 3 school days of receipt.

The Headteacher will now nominate a senior member of staff who will act as an Investigating Officer (IO) on behalf of the Headteacher who will now conduct an investigation.

During the investigation:

- Interviews and statements will be taken as necessary.
- All persons interviewed will have the right to be accompanied or represented by a friend, relative or colleague at discussions and hearings.

Every effort will be made to ensure that a written response will be sent to the complainant within 10 school days of the initial acknowledgement. The response will determine whether or not the complaint has been upheld, the reasons why and what action, if any, will be taken.

If the person remains dissatisfied after this response, they should refer to Stage 3 below.

A summary of complaints will be reviewed by Governors as per the Quality Assurance Policy.



Stage 3 Review by the Chair of Governors

At this stage, the complainant must submit a written request to the Chair of Governors for their complaint to be further considered. This request will be acknowledged within 10 school days.

The aim of the hearing will be to resolve the complaint and if at all possible achieve a reconciliation between Wapping High School and the complainant.

A written statement outlining the decision of the Chair will be sent to the complainant and the Headteacher. It will also explain whether a further appeal can be made and if so, to whom. Wapping High School will ensure that a copy of all correspondence and notes are kept securely and separate from the records of any students' personal records.

Stage 4 Review by a Panel of Governors and a representative of the Complainant

Should the complainant remain dissatisfied with the outcome from stage 3, the complaint will be heard within a period of 20 school days by a panel of not less than three people who were not directly involved in the matter complained about. One of these panel members will be independent of the management and running of the school.

Both parties would be encouraged to agree ahead of time to abide by its findings since if this is not agreed, the panel can only express a view about the complaint and the means of resolving it. This stage 4 review panel has no legal basis for imposing its will.

Stage 5 Referral to Department for Education

Complaints can be taken to the Secretary of State on the grounds that a Governing Body is acting or proposing to act unreasonably or on the grounds that either has failed to discharge its duties under the Education Act 2011.