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# Complaints Procedures

Company Secretary



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This document has been adopted by the Trustees of The William Willett Learning Trust (WWLT) and is governed by the Education (Independent Trust Standards) (England) Regulations 2010.

### **KEY PRINCIPLES**

The WWLT ('the Trust') will make every effort to provide a high quality service to students, parents and community users.

The Trust will consult regularly with students, parents and community users in order to improve this service.

The Trust welcomes compliments and suggestions to improve its work.

Where complaints are made, they will be treated seriously and considered according to a staged process.

The Trust will publish this process on its website, as part of its Prospectus.

The Trust will strive to resolve complaints fairly and promptly within agreed time limits and to treat all parties courteously and impartially.

All complaints will be managed in a way which respects confidentiality and complies with the current Data Protection Act and with the new General Data Protection Guidelines (from 25 May 2018).

Where complaints attempt to bring the Trust into disrepute, or to undermine individuals or the Trust's work in general, the Trust reserves the right to challenge the complaint.

Complaints will be logged and monitored by the Principal's PA at Coopers and Business Manager at Mead Road Infants/

The Leadership Team in each Trust School will evaluate the complaints received by the Trust and report these to the Trustees and use the outcomes in evaluation to improve practice.



This policy applies to any matter (other than matters relating to admissions and exclusions which have their own processes) which has been raised with the Trust as a matter of concern, but which has not been capable of resolution informally and which the complainant or the Trust consider should be dealt with on a formal basis. The Trust will publish guidance on how matters of concern should be raised on an informal basis. Generally, it is expected that where the matter relates to a student it will have been raised with the student's Class Teacher/Form Tutor and or Head of Year before a request is made to deal with it under this policy.

It is a precondition to the operation of this policy that the complainant shall have made reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution and shall have acted in relation to the matter in a reasonable and measured way consistent with the Trust's Behaviour Code adopted from time to time. The Chair of Trustees shall have a discretion, which will be exercised reasonably, not to allow a complaint to be pursued where this precondition has not been met.

Staff who receive a complaint must alert the Principal/ Head of School immediately to any complaints involving allegations of misconduct made against members of staff.

Where an informal resolution acceptable to the complainant is not reached, the Principal/Head of School will advise the complainant of his/ her right to make a formal complaint.

### **THE FORMAL STAGE**

#### **First Stage**

1. The complainant must put the complaint in writing, addressed to the Principal/Head of School, setting out briefly the facts and stating what it is that the complainant considers should have been done or where the Trust has not met reasonable expectations.
2. The Trust will respond in writing within 5 school days, acknowledging the complaint and enclose a copy of this Policy;
3. The Trust will appoint an Investigating Officer who will offer the complainant a meeting and who will speak to others involved. Whenever reasonably possible, the meeting with the complainant will take place within 10 school days of the written complaint being received.
4. The Investigating Officer will put her/his findings in writing and will indicate what, if any, steps should be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 10 school days of the meeting with the complainant.

The complainant will be advised of their right of appeal.

Any complaint relating to the Principal/Head of School must be raised in the first instance with the Chair of Trustees (or Vice-chair in the absence of the Chair) who will, if an informal resolution cannot be reached, designate a Trustee or a Governor of a Trust School to investigate in the same way as in the first stage of the formal process outlined above.

#### **Second Stage**

1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the Trustees and/or the Investigating Officer, she/he may request that the complaint be considered by the Complaints Panel selected from Trustees and/or Governors of a Trust School.
2. That request must be in writing, addressed to the Clerk to the Trustees at the Trust's address, and sent within 10 school days of the Investigating Officer's response being sent to the complainant.
3. The request must set out briefly the reasons why the complainant is dissatisfied with the response.



4. The Clerk will invite the Trust to put in writing its response to the complainant's reasons. The Trust will do this within 15 working days (including holiday periods) of receipt of those reasons and at the end of that period (whether or not the Trust has responded) the Clerk will convene a meeting of the Complaints Panel of the Trustees and/or Governors from a Trust School. The Panel will consist of at least three people of whom one will be independent of the management and running of the Trust School relating to the complaint. That meeting will be held as quickly as practicable given the need to find a date that is reasonably convenient for the complainant, the Trust and the members of the Panel. Whenever possible, the meeting will be held within working Trust days (including holiday periods) of the end of the Trust's response time.
5. At any meeting, the complainant will be entitled to be accompanied but legal representation will not be allowed.
6. The meeting is not a court case and will be as informal as circumstances allow. The complainant will have the opportunity to put her/his reasons for dissatisfaction and to enlarge on them but may not introduce reasons that were not previously put in writing. The Trust will have the opportunity to put its side of things and each side, as well as the Panel members, will be able to ask questions. The complainant will have the opportunity to make final comments to the Panel.
7. The Panel may make findings and recommendations and a copy of those findings and recommendations will be:
  - a. sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
  - b. available for inspection on the Trust premises.
8. The Panel will formulate its response as quickly as reasonably possible, aiming to do so within working Trust days (including holiday periods), and the Clerk to the Trustees will notify all concerned.
9. A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.
10. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 requests access to them.



## *THE INVESTIGATION REPORT*

Please use the following headings to construct your report.

Complainant:

Other parties involved:

To whom complaint was originally made:

Date complaint received:

Investigating Officer:

Key issues for investigation:

Written statements provided by:

Meetings held with:

Summary of issues:

Conclusion:

**Ms Sarah Cooper  
Clerk to the Trustees**

**Bexley Clerkship Practice  
Directorate of Education and Social Care  
Bexley Civic Offices  
Broadway  
Bexleyheath  
Kent DA6 7LB**