WALTHAMSTOW MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Complaints Procedure

At WMS we provide the highest standards of care and education to all children. However, from time to time, parents/legal guardians may have concerns or complaints relating to the care of their child, the school curriculum, staff, or any other area of the school. Where these do arise, we aim to investigate the concern fully, take actions that promote the best interest of the children at our school and continually monitor all complaints and concerns raised.

We have a Complaints procedure, which is followed by all staff, students and volunteers. The aim of the procedure is to allow parents/carers to raise their concern as soon as possible. Parents can also ask to see appropriate information from the complaints records on request.

Any concerns should initially be discussed with the child's class teacher or a member of staff based in the child's class. Wherever possible this should be done on the day the concern arises so that it can be dealt with promptly.

Any child protection complaint and/or concern should be forwarded to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the deputy DSL immediately. Students and volunteers must not discuss concerns with parents, they must ask a senior member of staff to discuss issues with parents.

Copies of all meetings, investigations and recommendations related to any complaints are kept in the school's complaints file.

Complaints Procedure

Under normal circumstances, the school principal will be responsible for managing complaints. If a complaint is to be made against the principal, the parent can contact the Advisory Chair.

<u>Stage One</u>

As outlined in the Parent Partnership policy, our school is committed to open and regular dialogue with parents/carers and welcomes all comments on its services, regardless of whether they are positive or negative.

If you are concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at the school you should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with your child's class teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that every pupil is happy in school and is making good progress. We always want to know if there is a problem, so that we can take action before the problem seriously affects a pupil's welfare and/or progress. If a parent/carer has a complaint about some aspect of the school's activity, or about the conduct of an individual member of staff, it will often be possible to resolve the problem by simply speaking to the relevant member of staff, if deemed appropriate. If not, the Deputy Head of School should be approached, and they will try to resolve the problem. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be found, then Stage Two of the procedure will formally come into operation.

Stage Two

If informal discussions of a complaint or concern have not produced a satisfactory resolution to the situation, parents/carers should put their complaint in writing to the principal detailing relevant names, dates, evidence and any other relevant important information (a form is attached that you may use for your convenience).

The school will acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as possible – within three working days at least – and fully investigate the matter within 10 school working days of receipt. If there is any delay, the school will advise the parent/carers of this and offer an explanation.

The principal will be responsible for sending the parent/carer a full and formal response to the complaint within 7 days of any investigation into a complaint and will arrange a time to meet the parent/carer concerned, along with any other relevant parties, such as members of staff, to discuss the complaint and the school's response to it.

The principal will decide if it is best for all parties to meet together or if individual meetings are more appropriate.

Records will be kept of all school meetings.

Stage Three (Formal)

If the complaint is still unresolved at Stages 1 and 2, you may ask for the complaint to be heard by our complaints panel.

Provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the principal. It will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The principal will ensure that one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school and allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at the panel hearing if they wish. The school aims to arrange the hearing within 20 school days from the date of informing the school that a Stage 3 panel is required. The school will provide the complainant with at least 10 days' notice of the panel hearing date.

If the Principal has good reason to believe that the situation has child protection implications, they will inform the designated Child Protection Officer and ensure that the local social services department is contacted, according to the procedure set out in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy. If any party involved in the complaint has good reason to believe that a criminal offence has been committed, then they will contact the police.

The formal response to the complaint from the school will be sent to the parent/carer concerned within 7 working days of the panel meeting and copied to all relevant members of staff if appropriate. The response will include recommendations for dealing with the complaint and for any amendments to the school's policies or procedures emerging from the investigation.

Stage Four

If at the conclusion of this process, parents/carers remain dissatisfied with the response they have received, the original complaint along with the organisation's response will be passed to the Advisory Chair who will adjudicate the case. The Advisory Chair will communicate a detailed response, including and actions to be taken, to the parents/carers concerned within 7 working days. They may also wish to meet with all the persons involved to help gain a background before making a decision.

Stage Five - Appeal

At the end of Stage Four, if parents/carers are still dissatisfied, they may wish to raise their concern with Ofsted via the contact details below:

Ofsted
Ofsted National Business Unit
Picadilly Gate
26-32 Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
Telephone 03001231231
Website: https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/

Parents/carers can raise their concern with Ofsted without resorting to any of the stages of our Complaints Procedure, or at any stage of the procedure.

Ofsted can request to see a list of complaints made within a certain time frame including the actions and outcomes of such complaints. The school will keep records of all complaints for a minimum of 3 years and will make these available to Ofsted when requested.

Date last reviewed: 10th September 2026

Date to be reviewed: 10th September 2027