



COMPLAINTS POLICY

VERSION 1

12/10/2017

Complaints Policy

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the multi academy trust's ethos, enables consistency and quality across the academies and is related to the following legislation:

- Local Government Act 1974
- Local Government Act 1988
- Education Act 1996
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Academy Standards and Framework Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Education Act 2002
- Education Act 2005
- Education and Skills Act 2008
- Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009
- Children, Schools and Families Act 2010
- Education (Admissions Appeals Arrangements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008
- Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2010
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (non-maintained Special Schools) Regulations 2011
- School Admissions (Appeals Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Complaints About Ofsted: Raising Concerns and Making a Complaint about Ofsted (Ofsted)
- School Admission Appeals Code (DfE)

Waveney Valley Academies Trust aims to provide an excellent education. Headteachers and academy personnel work very hard to build positive relationships and clear lines of communication with all parents and others, keeping complaints to a minimum.

However, under section 29 of the Education Act 2002, we must have in place clear procedures to deal with any complaint made against the academy or individuals connected with it.

Any complaints are taken seriously and are dealt with professionally, following set procedures.

We are aware that, besides parents/carers of children who are registered at one of our academies, any member of the general public can make a complaint about any facilities or services that we provide.

We have a duty to publish the complaints policy in academy handbooks and on academy websites with hard copies available from all academy offices on request.

We understand that a complaint may be made in writing, by telephone or in person. However, we will endeavour to accommodate those complainants who may be disabled or have learning difficulties by having in place alternative methods of registering a complaint.

Aims

- To deal with any complaint against the multi academy trust, any of our academies or any connected individuals by following the correct procedures.
- To deal with all complaints thoroughly, by being open, honest and fair.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation connected to this policy.

Responsibilities

Waveney Valley Academies Trust will:

- deal with all complaints impartially and in a non-adversarial manner
- maintain accurate records and keep the complainant fully updated at all stages of the process
- seek an interpreter if the need arises
- ensure full and fair investigations are undertaken by an independent person where necessary
- ensure confidentiality at all times
- ensure all complaints are resolved as quickly as possible within realistic time limits
- reserve the right not to investigate complaints considered to be vexatious or malicious
- only consider complaints regarding incidents or concerns occurring within the last 12 months
- not usually be able to consider a complaint if the student involved is no longer on roll at one of our academies

We ask the **complainant** to:

- cooperate with the academy to find a solution to the complaint as quickly as possible
- provide as much information as possible
- be respectful to everyone involved in the complaint process

The **Trust Board** has:

- responsibility to ensure that the complaints policy complies with their obligation under the Equality Act 2010
- responsibility of taking into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, making any modifications necessary to this policy to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation
- responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy
- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy
- responsibility for ensuring that the complaints policy is publicised on the academy and trust websites

The **Local Governing Body** will:

- discuss the concerns/complaints log with the Headteacher at least annually.
- have in place a self-evaluation process to monitor the way complaints are dealt with and to consider what improvements can be made to the complaints procedures, feeding back to the Trust Board.

The **Headteacher** will:

- log all complaints received by the academy and record how they were resolved
- discuss the complaints log with the Local Governing Body at least annually
- ensure all academy personnel, students and parents are aware of and comply with this policy
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff

Complaint Procedure (please see table below for list of responsible parties)

Stage 1 (Informal Stage)

- An informal discussion will take place at the earliest opportunity.
- The purpose of this meeting is to establish the nature of the ongoing concern.
- A timescale to let the complainant know the outcome of their enquiries and the proposed actions should be agreed.
- Every effort should be made to resolve the matter at this stage.

Stage 2 (Formal Stage)

- The complainant submits written details of the complaint, outlining what has been previously discussed and why it is considered that the situation remains unresolved.
- A full and fair investigation will be undertaken.
- The complainant will receive a written response within 20 academic working days.
- Every effort should be made to resolve the matter at this stage.

Stage 3 (Appeal Panel Hearing)

- The complainant formally submits written details of the appeal, outlining the reasons for their dissatisfaction with the outcomes of the investigation.
- A panel of Trustees will be formed and will meet to review the appeal
- The complainant will receive a written response within 20 academic working days.

Responsible parties

| Complaint against | Responsible parties for Stage 1 | Responsible parties for Stage 2 | Responsible parties for Stage 3 |
|---|---|--|---|
| an academy, a staff member or a connected individual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the staff member • their line manager • a person closely involved in the case | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the headteacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Local Governing Body (addressed to the Chair) |
| a headteacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the headteacher • a person closely involved in the case | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Chair of the Trust Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Trust Board (addressed to the Chair) |
| the CEO or a trustee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the CEO or trustee • a person closely involved in the case | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Chair of the Trust Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Trust Board (addressed to the Chair) |

Complaints not resolved through the formal procedure

If the complainant believes that the academy or trust has not properly followed this complaints procedure or has not acted fairly or reasonably in responding to the complaint, the matter may be referred to the Education Funding Agency ([www.https://form.education.gov.uk](https://form.education.gov.uk))

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any student and it helps to promote equality within Waveney Valley Academies Trust.

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