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## Complaints Policy

*How to raise and resolve a complaint about your child's education.*

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### **Policy statement**

It is in everyone's best interest in our School and community to communicate well with one another and to ensure that any concerns and complaints are dealt with promptly and fairly. In addition, concerns and complaints brought to the attention of the school can be an opportunity to inform, review and help improve school procedures. Wize Up wants to listen to the views of parents and carers about their young person's education and wellbeing at school and will try to resolve any concerns or complaints as informally and as quickly as possible.

Wize Up takes all complaints seriously and will provide a thorough and appropriate response.

This policy sets out the procedures which Wize Up School will follow whenever it receives a complaint for which there are not alternative statutory procedures.

In all cases where the complaint directly concerns the school's Headteacher, the Chair of the Management Committee in the first instance, will investigate the complaint.

If and when complaints about the school are brought to the attention of the Royal Borough of Greenwich (the local authority), the complainant will be advised to contact the school and to follow the procedures set out within this policy.

This policy may be used by anyone who has a concern or complaint about any aspect of the school. In the main this will mean parents and carers of the school's students, but may include neighbours of the school or other members of the local community.

### **AIMS**

This Policy aims to:

Encourage the resolution of concerns and complaints by informal means wherever possible

Ensure that concerns are dealt with quickly, fully and fairly and within defined time limits where possible

Provide effective and appropriate responses to concerns and complaints

Maintain good working relationships between the school and all those involved

Ensure that all staff, committee members, parents and carers at the school should be made aware of this complaints policy and which can be accessed on the school website: [www.wize-up.org.uk](http://www.wize-up.org.uk)

## ***PRINCIPLES***

It is a requirement of Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 that all schools in England establish procedures for dealing with complaints relating to the. In establishing or publicising procedures under subsection (1), the management committee shall have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State.

Ease of accessibility for users of this policy

Effective communication such that the process involved in dealing with complaints is clear

Appropriate confidentiality must be maintained by all involved in the process (including any school staff, administrative staff and committee members).

## ***MONITORING AND RECORDING COMPLAINTS***

At all stages of the complaints procedure the following information should be recorded:

- Name of the complainant
- Date (and time if possible) at which the complaint was made
- Details of the nature of the complaint
- Desired outcome of the complaint
- How the complaint is being investigated (including written records of any interviews held)
- Results and conclusions of investigations
- Any actions taken
- The complainant's response
- Record of any subsequent action if required

The Management Committee will monitor the general nature of complaints over each academic year to inform practice and potential improvements to procedures and policies within the school.

## ***UPHOLDING OR NOT UPHOLDING COMPLAINTS***

At each stage of the complaints procedure the conclusion will be either:

- That the complaint is upheld (in part or in full) and where appropriate what action is to be taken or,
- That the complaint is not upheld and the reason(s) for this, where appropriate, are given

## ***WHAT IS NOT COVERED BY THIS COMPLAINTS POLICY***

- Issues relating to child protection Complaints that relate to child protection should be made directly to the school's designated safeguarding lead Mrs L Boyd or to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.
- Employee grievances, disciplinary or dismissal matters
- Criminal investigations

## COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Although we do make every effort to ensure that your young person's education is a pleasant experience we also understand that things may go wrong and accept that parents/carers are keen to have these instances dealt with and resolved swiftly. Wize Up adopts an open-door policy which enables parents/carers who do have concerns to get in contact with us and arrange an appointment with have their views heard in an informal setting. The aim of this is to deal with the problem and outline ways forward so all parties concerned are satisfied with the outcome and forward plans.

### Stage 1 (informal stage)

In most cases, matters of concern can be dealt with informally by raising the issue with a young person's form tutor. However, the staff member may feel it more appropriate to refer the complainant to a more senior or experienced member of staff who will try to resolve the concern informally. This may be any of the following: Curriculum and Pastoral lead, The matter may also be referred directly to the Headteacher at any time.

### Stage 2

If the complainant is not satisfied by the outcome of Stage 1, the complainant may raise their complaint in writing where possible to the Headteacher Wize Up Head Teacher, L Boyd 579 Westhorne Avenue, Eltham, London, SE9 6DN using the form at the end of this policy. If a complaint concerns the Headteacher then the complainant should write in confidence to the Chair of the Management Committee at the school by writing to Mr A Carnegie at [admin@wize-up.org.uk](mailto:admin@wize-up.org.uk). The Chair will seek to resolve the issue informally before, if necessary, moving to Stage 3.

### Timescales:

- Within 5 school working days a letter of acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant confirming the school has received the complaint
- Within 15 school working days the Headteacher will respond to the issues raised.
- If it is not possible to meet these timescales, the Headteacher will contact the complainant advising of an alternative timescale. Whilst every attempt will be made to investigate the issues raised within this timescale, it is not always possible because of circumstances beyond the school's control. In these circumstances, the Headteacher will write to the complainant to advise of an amended timescale.

The investigating personnel will then undertake the relevant investigation in order to provide the Headteacher with such information to either warrant further action or that there is no evidence to support the complaint. The investigating personnel will invite the complainant to discuss their complaint as part of the investigation process. The Headteacher will write to the complainant with the outcome of the investigation.

### Stage 3

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, the complainant may write to the chair of the management committee at the school within 5 working days

- Within 5 school working days the chair will acknowledge receipt of the complaint
- Within 10 school working days the chair On receipt of this information will invite you attend a meeting (accompanied or alone) where your complaint can be heard by at least 3 individuals not directly involved in the issues relating to the complaint. You may be accompanied if you so wish by an advisor or friend. It is important to also note that one of these individuals on the panel will be independent from the running and management of the school. Following this meeting the panel will

reply sent by electronic mail or otherwise within 14 days to make recommendations and findings available to the complainant, Head Teacher and where relevant the person complained about. This report will also advise that any further appeal should be addressed to the Secretary of State.

### ***UNREASONABLE, SERIAL, PERSISTENT, VEXATIOUS OR MALICIOUS COMPLAINTS***

Wize Up School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Wize Up School defines serial and unreasonable complainants as ‘those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people’s complaints, or hinder or disrupt the normal conduct of the school’.

The term ‘complainant’ in this policy includes those who make requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, and the Data Protection Act 1998. Reference to the complaints procedure relates, where relevant, to requests under those Acts.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance.
- Refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- Makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- Repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school’s complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome
- Makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- Maliciously
- Aggressively
- Using threats, intimidation or violence
- Using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language
- Knowing it to be false · Using falsified information
- Publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached. Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Management Committee will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' judgment. If the behaviour continues the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it.

In a case where the school has agreed that the complainant is vexatious the headteacher will have agreed that contact can be restricted. The decision to restrict communication will need to be agreed by the Headteacher with advice if necessary from the other agencies. The complainant would normally be notified in writing and the letter will clearly identify: the reason why the decision to apply this policy has been taken; what impact this will have on their contact with the school; the duration of the restriction; and how and to whom the complainant can appeal the decision.

For complainants who excessively contact Wize Up causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

The restrictions can include all or some of the following: placing time limits on telephone calls/personal contact; limiting the number of telephone calls/personal contacts; restricting the complainant to only one form of communication and with one named member of staff; and refusing all communication regarding an identified subject.

The restriction would not include emergency contact regarding the complainant's young person or information which would be essential to their young persons learning and achievement.

All complaints are confidential unless the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 163 of the 2002 Act requests access to them.

For the academic year 2019 - 2020 Wize Up received 1 complaint.

\* complaint forms are available from the main office.

## Wize Up Complaints Form

Please complete and return to Ms Boyd (Head Teacher) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken normally within 5 working days.

Your Name:		Young Persons Name:	Your relationship to this young person:	
Address:		Day time contact number		
Post Code:		Evening contact number		
Please give details of your complaint:				
What action, if any have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint (who did you speak to and what was the outcome?)				
Please say why you feel this was not a satisfactory resolution for you				
What action/s can Wize Up make that might resolve the problem at this stage?				
Should you be attaching any documents please provide details:				
Signature:		Date:		
<b>Official Use</b>				
Date acknowledgement sent:			By Who:	

Wize Ups actions and dates carried out:

Final outcomes:

Date:

## Wize Procedure for Complaints being heard at Panel

The panel should take the following points into account:

- Although the hearing is a structured meeting it should be conducted as informally as possible.
- Witnesses are only required to attend part of the hearing to give their evidence.
- Once introductions have finished, the complainant is asked to give an account of their complaint, after which the witnesses will give their evidence.
- The Head Teacher may question the complainant and witnesses after each have given their account.
- The Head Teacher will then confirm the schools actions, after which the schools witnesses will also give their evidence.
- The complainant may question both the Head Teacher and the witnesses after each have given their account.
- The panel may at any point ask questions.
- The complainant will then be requested to sum up their complaint.
- The Head Teacher will then be asked to sum up the schools actions and response to the complaint.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
- The chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set timescale normally within 14 working days