

White Trees
independent school



Compliments & Complaints Policy

Our vision is to provide pupils with the confidence, skills and ambition to achieve a successful and productive life. We aim to ensure they leave the school with a 'new day, new opportunity' ethos and are capable of becoming positive members of their communities. To do this, we have 3 principles that underpin our policies, practices and everything we do:

- Everyone can learn, achieve and has the potential to be successful
- Positive relationships are key to success and are underpinned by mutual trust, respect and caring for one another
- We have high expectations in everything we do

Wonderful
Excellent
Lovely
Clever
Outstanding
Magnificent
Enthusiastic

(Acronym created by White Trees pupils)

INTRODUCTION

We believe that our school provides a fantastic education for all our pupils, and that the team work hard to build positive relationships with all parents, carers and other stakeholders. As a school with a wide-reaching community, we acknowledge that from time-to-time parents, carers and others connected with the school may want to explore or share a compliment or concern. Feedback is always appreciated and where positive it is celebrated and shared with the staff team. Times when feedback is negative, we readily accept and seek to resolve the concern. To encourage resolution of such situations we have adopted this simple and clear complaints procedure.

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We consider all complaints fully and aim to resolve them through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the pupil above all other issues. Written records will be kept of all compliments and complaints and in the latter, we also record the stage at which they were resolved. All correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential.

The procedure is devised with the intention that it will:

- Usually be possible to resolve problems by informal means (before or at stage one of the procedure)
- Be simple to use and understand
- Treat complaints confidentially
- Allow problems to be handled swiftly
- Address all points causing concern
- Inform future practice so that the problem is unlikely to recur
- Reaffirm the partnership between families and staff as they work together for the good of the pupils in the school
- Ensure that the school's attitude to a pupil would never be affected by a parental complaint
- Ensure that all staff have opportunities to discuss and understand the school's response to concerns and complaints made by families or other persons
- Ensure that any person complained against has equal rights with the person making the complaint

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS

	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
2023/24	0	1	0	0
2022/23	2	0	0	0
2021/22	0	0	0	0
2020/21	0	0	0	0
2019/20	0	1	0	0
2018/19	1	0	0	0

Policy owner	White Trees School	Last review	November 2024
Date Created	December 2018	Next review	November 2025

OUR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

White Trees School has a simple and transparent complaints procedure. If you have a concern or a complaint you wish to raise, it is your right to do so.

Stage 1: Informal Complaint

If you are concerned about anything at our schools you should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with your child's teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. We always want to know if there is a problem, so that we can act before the problem seriously affects the pupil's welfare and/or progress.

After hearing the concern, we shall act as quickly as we can. Please allow time for any action we may take to be effective. It may be possible to see the member of staff straight away, but it may be better to make an appointment so that you can sit and talk things through.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint to a Member of Leadership

If you are still unhappy, ask for an appointment with one of the leaders within the school. If you wish to do so, it is helpful if you can give a brief outline of your concern when you make the appointment.

Every effort will be made to resolve the situation as quickly as possible; we will keep you updated and will send you a written response within five working days.

Stage 3: Formal Complaint to the Executive Head Teacher

If you are still unhappy, ask for an appointment with Laura Bull, the Executive Head Teacher. If you wish to do so, it is helpful if you can give a brief outline of your concern when you make the appointment.

Every effort will be made to resolve the situation as quickly as possible; the Head Teacher will keep you updated and will send you a written response within ten working days.

Stage 4: Formal Complaint to a Governor

Only if the complaint is still unresolved should a formal complaint be made to a Governor. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far at stages 1, 2 and 3.

You should send this written complaint to Emma Barr at the Head Office address, White Trees Group, The Snap Factory, Twyford Industrial Estate, Twyford Road, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 3LJ, who will investigate and write to you with a formal written response within ten working days of receipt.

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Stage 5: Formal Complaint to our Complaints Panel

If the complaint has still not been resolved at previous stages, you may ask for your complaint to be heard by a complaints panel, which will include at least three members who have been appointed by the school's Governing body. None of the three appointed members of the complaints panel will be subject of the complaint, and at least one will be completely independent of the leadership of the school.

The complaints panel will consider all written complaints within twenty school days of receipt. The panel will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and will invite you to attend the meeting, so that the complaint can be explained in more detail. The complainant is welcome to be accompanied by a family member or friend to the meeting. The school will always give the complainant at least five days' notice of the meeting.

After hearing all the evidence, the complaints panel will consider their decision and inform the complainant, and where relevant the person complained about, their key findings and recommendations which will be provided in writing within two school days.

The complaints panel will do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction. A copy of the findings and recommendations will be made available for inspection at the school by the director of operations and the leadership team.

TIMESCALES

Stage	Timescale
1: Informal Complaint	Within 3 working days
2: Formal Complaint to a Member of Leadership	Acknowledged within 24 hours of receipt, with a response within 5 working days
3: Formal Complaint to the Executive Head Teacher	Acknowledged within 24 hours of receipt, with a response within 10 working days
4: Formal Complaint to a Governor	Acknowledged within 24 hours of receipt, with a response within 10 working days
5: Formal Complaint to our Complaints Panel	Acknowledged within 24 hours of receipt, with a response within a working week. Hearing arranged within 20 working days, informing the complainant 5 working days prior

COMPLAINTS LOG

All complaints are recorded in a folder, kept securely by the Executive Head Teacher. The detail of the complaint is recorded, including brief details of informal complaints (stage 1), as is whether the complaint is resolved at stage 1, or at any stage of the formal complaint's procedure. Any actions taken by the school

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White Trees School Compliments & Complaints Procedure

as a result of a complaint (regardless of whether the complaint has been upheld or not) are also recorded on this log. All information (correspondence, statements, records) related to all individual complaints is kept confidential and locked away, accessed only by the Executive Head Teacher and Chair of Governors.

Published on	
By	
Head Teacher/ Head of Operations Sig/Date	L Bradon - December 2024

Policy owner	White Trees School	Last review	November 2024
Date Created	December 2018	Next review	November 2025