WESTFIELD SCHOOL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Complaints

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PRINCIPAL AUTHOR: N GILBERT

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Westfield School

Complaints Policy

Purpose

This policy sets out the procedure for any stakeholder who may wish to make a complaint against the organisation or an individual.

Rationale

Westfield School's values are concerned with meeting the needs of students, parents/carers and anyone who has a stake in the school. The governing body believes that constant feedback is an important ingredient in self-improvement and raising standards.

Pupils, parents, carers, or other adults who have concerns or complaints should feel that they can be voiced and will be considered seriously. All complainants have the right to be accompanied when making the complaint, and pupils may be accompanied by a parent or another adult.

There are various principles behind this procedure:

- We will seek to resolve complaints by informal means wherever possible.
- Investigations will be full, fair and swift, and people will be kept informed of progress and the decisions reached.
- Every effort will be made to respect confidentiality.
- Feedback will be actively sought from those voicing complaints in order to minimise complaints and maximise accountability.

If parents/carers, pupils or members of the public have concerns they should:

1 discuss their concerns with the member of staff most directly involved and, if not satisfied

2 discuss their concerns with a senior member of staff and, if not satisfied

3 discuss their concerns with the head teacher.

4 If the concern is regarding the head teacher and has not been resolved through discussion at point 1, the concern can be communicated to the chair of governors c/o the school.

At each stage in the procedure we will attempt to resolve the complaint or concern. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the concern or complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology
- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur

- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

Complainants will be encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage. An admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence. Equally, an effective procedure will identify areas of agreement between the parties.

Only where all these avenues have been tried and found unsatisfactory should the complainant take a complaint to the Chair of Governors or clerk to the governing body.

Relationship to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies.

Should complaints be referred to the Chair of Governors the DfE model complaints procedure will be followed (see appendix).

Roles and responsibilities of head teacher, other staff, governors

The **head teacher** will ensure that:

- this complaints policy and the procedures are made known to all stakeholders through newsletters, the prospectus and via the school website
- all complaints are dealt with in the first instance by the head teacher or a member of the leadership team, who will document the complaint (names, dates, times, events), acknowledge in writing within three days of receipt, and consult with all those directly concerned
- the complainant receives a written explanation of the action taken within ten working days following the complaint.

All **staff** are expected to encourage pupils, parents and carers who have concerns to follow the complaints procedure.

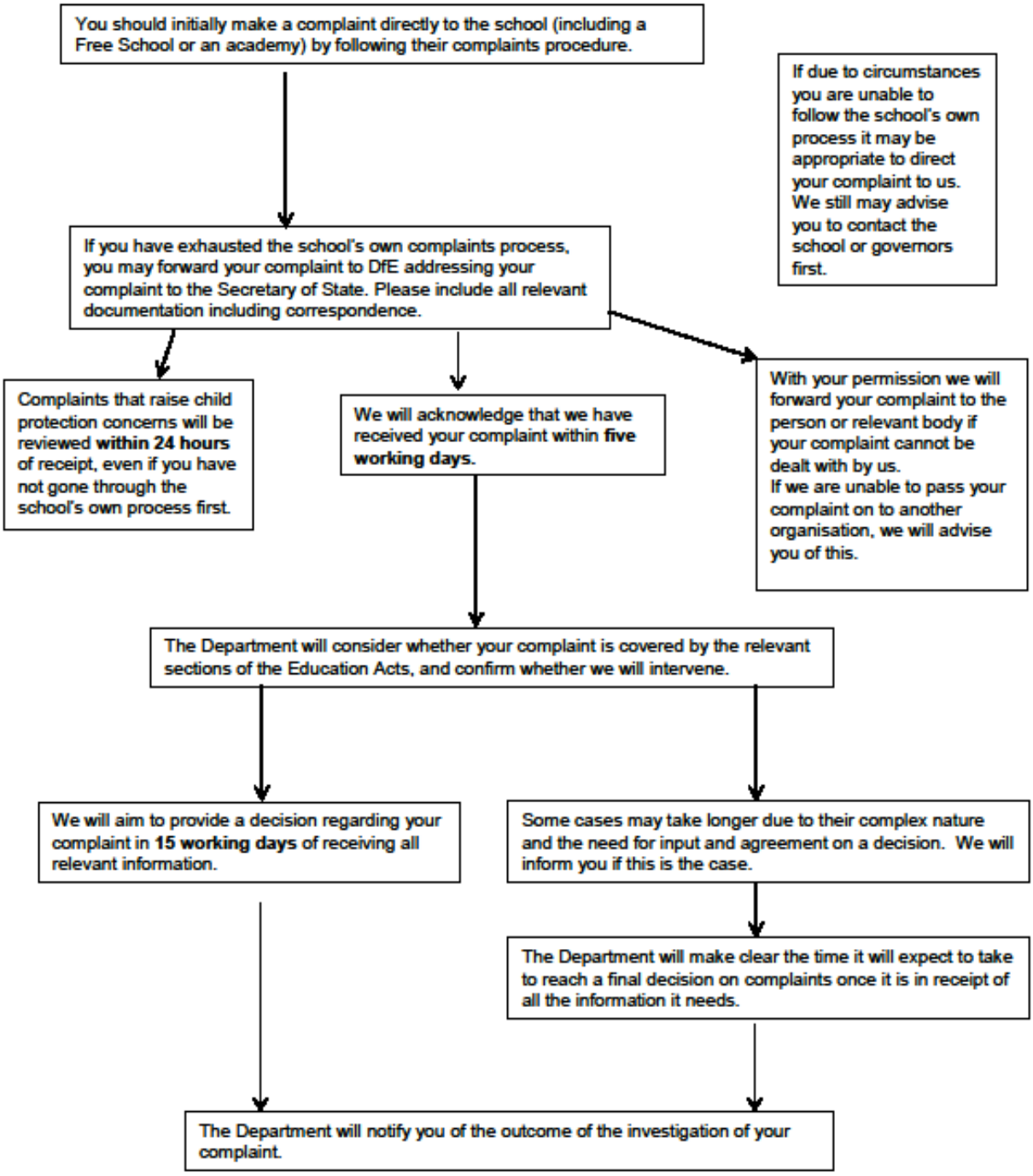
The **governing body** will ensure the following.

- it has identified members of the governing body who will hear a complaint should it not have been resolved by the head teacher or chair of the governing body
- at least one of the panel has received training/guidance on how to conduct a hearing
- the process set out in the DfE model complaints procedure is followed.
- where there is evidence that the complaint is justified appropriate action is to taken to prevent a recurrence.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

All complaints and the action taken will be documented and a summary included in the head teacher's termly report to the governors, with advice on any implications for policies.

This document was recommended for approval by the Children, Families and Community Committee on and subsequently approved by the Full Governing Body. To be reviewed every three years or sooner if necessary.

Signed _____ Chair of Governors

Flow chart – guidance on making a complaint against a school