



# Complaints Policy

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose of the Policy

This policy outlines the procedures for raising and handling complaints, ensuring that issues are managed fairly, transparently and efficiently. It aims to clarify what stakeholders (parents, learners, staff and community members) can expect during the complaints processing procedure.

### 1.2 Scope

This policy is applicable to all staff members, learners, parents, guardians, and other stakeholders related to the Willow Tree community. It covers complaints relating to any aspect of the organisation which could include educational provision, services and activities, staff conduct, and other related issues.

### 1.3 Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that:

- Complaints are resolved effectively and as quickly as possible.
- Complainants feel that they have been heard and treated fairly.
- The complaints procedure improves practice by promoting feedback and learning.

## 2. Legal and Statutory Framework

### 2.1 Governing Law

This policy is underpinned by the Education Act 2002, which requires education providers to have a procedure in place to deal with complaints. We also observe the guidelines provided by the Department for Education (DfE), ensuring adherence to the Equality Act 2010 to prevent any form of discrimination during the complaints process.



## **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **3.1 Willow Tree Management**

Abbey is responsible for the overall management of the complaints procedure and will review and endorse the complaints policy, ensuring it meets regulatory requirements and best practice.

### **3.2 Complainants**

Complainants are expected to provide clear and concise information about their issues, behaving respectfully and cooperatively throughout the process.

## **4. Complaints Procedure**

### **4.1 Informal Resolution**

Initial attempts should be made to resolve concerns informally by speaking directly with the relevant staff members.

### **4.2 Formal Complaints**

If an issue cannot be resolved informally, the complainant can escalate it through a formal written complaint. The complainant should fill out a complaints form detailing the nature of the complaint, which will then be acknowledged within 3 school days.

### **4.3 Investigation**

The nominated person will investigate the issue, maintaining confidentiality at all times. Interviews and document reviews will be performed to gather relevant information.

### **4.4 Response**

Complainants will receive a formal response to their complaint within 20 business days of the complaint being lodged, which will include an explanation of the findings and any actions to be taken.

### **4.5 Escalation**

Should the complainant be unsatisfied with the resolution, further steps include escalation to the relevant support channels.



## **5. Recording Complaints**

### **5.1 Documentation**

All complaints and the actions taken in response to them will be recorded in writing. Records will be maintained securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

## **6. Review and Monitoring**

### **6.1 Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by Abbey to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Adjustments will be made in response to changes in legislation or in response to any issues that may arise.

### **6.2 Monitoring Complaints**

Monitoring and reporting on complaints will help us identify patterns that may indicate a need to review practices or policies.

## **7. Communication of Policy**

### **7.1 Accessibility**

This policy is accessible via Willow Tree's website and as hard copies on request, ensuring it is available to all members of the Willow Tree community.

### **7.2 Awareness**

Staff training includes discussions on the complaints policy to enhance understanding and implementation.

### **7.3 Training**

The policy and its guidelines are included in the induction program for new staff and in ongoing staff development to ensure they are equipped to manage and respond to complaints effectively.

This framework is designed to meet the best practices as suggested by DfE guidelines, ensuring all stakeholders are aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding the complaints process.