The Winterton Federation
Schools Information Complaints Policy

Name and title of Author/s:	Mrs Cheryle Baxter
Name of responsible Committee/individual:	Governing Board
Implementation date:	Autumn 2026
Review date:	Summer 2028
Targeted audience:	Parents/carers; staff; governing board
Related documents: All federation policies referred to are available on the federation website: https://thewintertonfederation.co.uk If English is not your first language, and you require assistance/translation, please contact the Junior school office.	Safeguarding and Child Protection Behavior Staff Code of Conduct Whistleblowing Data Protection/GDPR Records Management Equality and Diversity Health and Safety Disciplinary Grievance FOI SEND
Strategic alignment:	1.4 Objective: Continue to maintain a safe working and learning environment.

"TO BE THE BEACON FOR LEARNING"

"Let your Light Shine so that others can see your good deeds "
(Matthew 5:16)

Definition of an Information Complaint

An information complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction that requires a response about:

- A request for information;
- A request to re-use information;
- The standard of service received in relation to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR), Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) or the Re-use of Information Regulations 2015 (RPSI).

The response may be to put things right straightaway, or to investigate the matter further.

A complaint could include any of the following concerns:

- We **delay** or **fail to deliver** a request for information or a request to re-use information;
- We **fail** to resolve a request to handle your personal information as we should;
- A member of staff's **attitude** or **competence** causes concern;
- We **fail to meet** our statutory responsibilities in relation to FOIA, EIR, DPA or Re-use;
- We **apply** an exemption or exception that you are not happy about.

A complaint **is not:**

- a first request for action;

- a query about progress of a specific issue.

Information Complaints Procedure
Complaints must be made to the federation in writing.

If assistance is required to put a complaint in writing the complaint can be made in person via either federation school office.

Informal complaints can be made in writing but can also be made via the telephone.

Informal Resolution
Where the information complaint is of a general nature, we aim to resolve the issue informally. We encourage complainants in this first instance to contact the Executive Headteacher who will do all they can to put things right.

Formal Resolution
Where the complaint is about a perceived breach of the FOIA, EIR, DPA or RPSI the complaint will be investigated through the federation's formal procedure. The formal complaint process will be carried out as a one stage Internal Review.

Please note - EIR complaints must be made within 40 working days of the alleged failure to apply the regulations.

Formal Process
A senior member of staff will carry out the Internal Review.

The complaint will be logged with a unique identification number. An acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant within 5 working days and a response will be sent within 20 working days. This can be

extended to 40 working days for in depth Internal Reviews. The complainant will be informed in writing about any extension.

We will at all times deal with information complaints courteously, openly and fairly.

Upheld Complaints
Where we have made a mistake or failed to provide the expected standard or quality of service, we will acknowledge and apologise for this. We will also set out the actions we will take to put things right and improve our services.

This could include:

- Providing previously withheld information;
- Permitting the Re-use of information;
- Permitting the Re-use of information with different terms;
- Reviewing school FOIA, EIR, DPA or RPSI policies or procedures;
- Reviewing how we handle personal data;
- Providing appropriate staff training and guidance.

Not Upheld Complaints
Where we have investigated and we still uphold the original decision we made, we will:

- Explain the reasons for our decision clearly;
- Provide any relevant evidence to support the decision;
- Inform complainants how to progress their complaint if they remain dissatisfied.

Persistent and Vexatious Information Complaints
We aim to respond to all information complaints positively and ensure that customers are satisfied with the way their complaint has been handled.

In a small number of cases complainants may pursue a complaint in an unreasonable way, which impacts, on federation resources and capacity to respond to the complaint effectively, such as by:

- Changing the basis of a complaint during the investigation process;
- Refusing to co-operate with the complaints investigation process;
- Refusing to accept investigation conclusions and decisions;
- Repeatedly making the same or similar complaint.

How to appeal against the outcome of an Information Complaint
Where the federation has Internally Reviewed a complaint about the FOIA, EIR, DPA or RPSI and the complainant is still not satisfied, they may appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office, as follows:

Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF; Telephone: 0303 123 1113 or 01652 545700 - www.ico.gov.uk

Appeals about the Education Record in relation to a maintained school should be directed to the Department of Education - Schools Complaints Unit (Complain about a School or Childminder) - https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school/state-schools

Appeal about the Education Record in relation to an academy or other school type should be directed to the Department of Education where the complaint is not related to the Data Protection Act 2018 – Education Funding Agency - https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-funding-agency

Learning from Information Complaints

We collect and review feedback from our customers and use this information to drive service improvement.