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## Complaints Procedure

Approved July 2017

All school policies are reviewed by Governors annually

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The Complaints Procedure applies to parents/carers of students at the school.

### Procedures for Dealing with Complaints

At Bournside School and Sixth Form Centre, we undertake to provide a friendly and safe environment in which students will be helped to achieve their potential, both academically and socially. We recognise that sometimes things may go wrong and parents may wish to make a complaint or raise concerns they have with the School.

#### Informal

Most complaints/issues can be resolved informally by discussion with the member of staff concerned. Alternatively, parents/carers can write to staff clearly outlining the issue and stating their preferred outcome.

#### Stage 1

Where the matter cannot be resolved informally, a formal written notice of the concern or complaint can be submitted in writing to the Headteacher. This written notice should outline any informal contact with the school and state the preferred outcome. This will normally be acknowledged within 5 school days and then responded to by a school leader other than the Headteacher within a further 10 school days. Where a meeting is requested by parents it should normally be arranged to take place within 10 school days of the request being made. Any agreements reached in such a meeting will be recorded in writing by the school and a copy sent to the parent/carer. If the issue is complex, and the matter may need to be further investigated, this will be carried out in a timely manner. The school will endeavour to inform the parent/carer of the anticipated timescale for completion of the investigation. In the case of a complaint being about the Headteacher, the written notice should be addressed to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will respond further and within the same timescales as above.

#### Stage 2

Where the matter cannot be resolved through Stage 1, a further formal written notice of the concern or complaint can be submitted in writing to the Headteacher. This written notice should outline any previous contact with the school and state the preferred outcome. This will normally be acknowledged within 5 school days and then responded to by the Headteacher within a further 10 school days. Where a meeting with the headteacher is requested it should normally be arranged within 10 school days of the request being made. Any agreements reached in such a meeting will be recorded in writing by the school and a copy sent to the parent/carer. If the issue is complex, and the matter may need to be further investigated, this will be carried out in a timely manner. The school will endeavour to inform the parent/carer of the anticipated timescale for completion of the investigation.

#### Stage 3

If the complaint is still not resolved to the parent or carer's satisfaction they may appeal to a Complaints Panel to consider the complaint. The process for this appeal is that the parent or carer writes to the Chair of Governors outlining the grounds on which an appeal is being made. Note that a hearing will not be convened before stages 1 and 2 are completed.

Upon receiving a Stage 3 complaint, the Chair of Governors will appoint a serving governor from the school as the Action Officer. The Action Officer will not have had any previous involvement in the handling of the complaint. The Action Officer will manage the complaint within a defined timescale, which will be shared with the parent or carer.

The Complaints Panel is made up of three members; the Action Officer, an additional governor from the school who has not had any previous involvement in the handling of the complaint and a member independent of the running and management of the school. Staff governors will not form part of the panel.

The hearing should take place at a time convenient to all parties. The appellant, the Headteacher and any member of staff that the action officer feels is appropriate will normally be invited to the meeting. The appellant can be accompanied by a friend or supporter if they wish. The Action Officer will chair the hearing. All parties involved will be required to submit any written documentation in advance and in good time before the meeting in order that it may be considered. A delay in providing documents may result in a delay or postponement of the hearing. The hearing will consider documentation submitted, and also give the appellant and the Headteacher an opportunity to address the Panel. The Chair of the hearing will ensure that those present are treated fairly. The hearing will be minuted and these will be circulated in confidence to the Headteacher, the appellant, the panel members and the Chair of Governors.

Normally all parties will be present at the same time in a hearing but the Panel may hear individuals separately if circumstances dictate that would assist the hearing.

The Action Officer will give a decision, in writing to the appellant, normally within five school days after the meeting, along with the reasons for the decision. The headteacher, panel members and Chair of Governors will also receive a copy of the decision and its reasons.

### **Further Appeal**

If the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction, they can refer to the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

### **Additional notes**

Schools do not need to consider complaints made more than six months after the incident/situation. In line with 'Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England' (DfE 2012), if a complaint relates to a student who has been permanently excluded from the school, but is still on the school roll, this complaint must be made directly to the Chair of Governors, at least 48 hours prior to the respective Governors' Disciplinary meeting. Any complaint received after any of these points will not be considered.

School staff have a right to be respected and to feel safe at work. The school will not tolerate aggressive, abusive or unreasonable behaviour towards its staff. The school requires that parents/carers refrain from such behaviour when raising concerns or making complaints.