



Complaints Procedure

Approved December 2017

All school policies are reviewed by Governors annually

Introduction

At Bournside School and Sixth Form Centre ('the school'), 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. This procedure applies to all parents/carers of students currently attending the school.

Record keeping

We keep a record of formal complaints (those which have proceeded to Stage 2 or 3). This record identifies the status of the complaint as Stage 2 or Stage 3 and records any actions taken by the school as a result. We see this as a helpful way of identifying areas where the school is achieving well and can guide us to improve upon these areas, even more.

Informal

It is hoped that most complaints/issues can be resolved quickly and 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 about the Headteacher, any written notice should be addressed to the Chair of Governors and the complaint will be dealt with as a Stage 2 complaint (omitting Stage 1).

Stage 2

Where the matter cannot be resolved at Stage 1, a formal written notice of the concern or complaint should 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.

If the complaint relates to the Headteacher, the written notice should be addressed to the Chair of Governors who will respond in line with the above timetable.

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. 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 will consist of three members; the Action Officer (or another nominated governor), 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.

If the Panel deems it necessary it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing.

The hearing will take place as soon as practicably possible. . The Panel will decide the format for the Panel Hearing. The parent/carer may be accompanied by a friend or supporter at the Panel Hearing if they wish. 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 parent/carer an opportunity to address the Panel. The hearing will be minuted.

It is a matter for the Panel to decide whether all parties will be present at the same time or if they wish to hear individuals separately. The Panel will give a decision, in writing to the parent/carer, normally within fourteen school days after the hearing together with reasons for the decision.

The Panel's findings will be sent in writing to the Head, governors and where relevant, any individual concerned in the complaint.

Confidentiality

The school will treat all correspondence, statements and records in strict confidence, only disclosing information to those who are directly involved in the matter. The school undertakes to investigate all complaints thoroughly and requires parents/carers to divulge necessary information to allow the school to investigate the complaint, whether informal or formal. All correspondence, statements and records relating to the complaint will remain confidential wherever possible.

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

The schools does 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.

General

It is a requirement that all parties involved in the complaints process act with respect and courtesy towards each other at all times