

Complaints Procedure for Parents



Birchfield School has long prided itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, it will be dealt with by the school in accordance with this procedure, which is published on the School's web site and is available on request to the parents of pupils and prospective pupils at the school.

This policy applies to the parents of all pupils in the school, including those in the EYFS.

Stage 1: Informal Resolution:

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

If parents have a complaint, they should in the first instance contact their son/daughter's form teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parent's satisfaction. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Pre-Prep Leader/ Deputy Head as appropriate.

Complaints made directly to the Pre-Prep Leader/Deputy Head or Head will usually be referred to the relevant teacher unless the 'line manager' concerned deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally. In this event the 'line manager' will attempt to resolve the matter in five working days or as soon as is practicable.

Where complaints and concerns cannot be resolved quickly and informally, the relevant teacher will make a written record of the complaint or concern and the date on which they were received. The written record will be passed to the Deputy Head. Should a matter not be resolved within five working days, or in the event that the relevant teacher and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution:

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents will be asked to put their complaint **in writing** to the Head who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate action to take.

In most cases, the Head will speak to the parents concerned within forty-eight hours of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations. These will be completed in seven working days or as soon as is practicable.

The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Head is satisfied, so far as is practicable, that all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will give reasons for his decision.

The written decision will be issued within fourteen working days of receiving the complaint. If for any reason this is not possible, the Headmaster will write to the parents within the fourteen working day period referred to above, stating the reason or reasons why he is unable to issue his decision and informing the parents when he will do so, which will be within twenty-eight days of receipt of the complaint in any event.

If parents are not satisfied with the decision, they may take the opportunity to proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3: Panel Hearing:

Upon receipt of the written decision, if parents seek to involve Stage 3 of this procedure, they are to write to the Headmaster informing him of their decision to do so within 28 days, whereupon the matter will be referred to a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the Chairman of Governors.

The panel will consist of at least three persons who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One of these shall be independent of the management and running of the school.

The complaint will be acknowledged on behalf of the panel and a hearing scheduled to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen days.

If the convenor of the panel and/or the panel members deem it necessary, they may require (in writing) that further particulars of the complaint or any other related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than five days before the hearing. Any such further particulars received within five days before the hearing shall be disregarded and inadmissible to the panel because it may not be possible to provide copies to all parties within that timescale.

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

If possible, the panel will resolve the parent's complaint at the hearing without the need for further investigation. However should the panel decide at the hearing that further

investigation is required, the panel shall decide how such investigations should be carried out and by when they should be concluded. The panel will reconvene and, after due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, will reach a decision and may make recommendations. This procedure will be completed within fourteen days of the first hearing wherever possible but within twenty-eight days in any event unless otherwise agreed with the parents. The panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision together with the reasons. The decision of the panel will be final.

The panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the Head, Chairman of Governors and, where the complaint relates to an individual, to that individual.

Written records are to be kept of all complaints that are made;

- whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing;
- detailing actions taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld)

Parents can be assured that all complaints and concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially.

Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School by paragraph 7(33) (k) of the Regulations February 2016; where disclosure is required by the Secretary of State or in the course of the School's inspection by ISI or Ofsted; or where any other legal obligation prevails this will be undertaken in accordance with section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act. A written record is kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing, as required by paragraph 7(33)(j). A complaint is kept on record for a period of three years

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Written complaint in respect of the School's fulfilment of the School's EYFS requirements (Reception Class) must be investigated within 28 days and complainants should be notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the initial complaint. The record of complaints must be made available to ISI. A record of any complaint in respect of the EYFS will be kept for at least three years.

Contact Details:

Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9 - 12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA

Enquiries 020 7600 0100

Enquiries info@isi.net

OFSTED
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

General enquiries 0300 123 1231

Responding to Complaints

Complaints should be brought to the attention of the School within a set period of twelve months from the date of the incident or matter occurring.

Signed: _____ P Reynolds (Headmaster)
Signed: _____ T Carver (Acting Chair of Governors)
Date: _____

