

BOLTON SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE: NURSERY / KIDZONE / BEECH HOUSE / JUNIOR SCHOOL / SENIOR SCHOOL

Introduction

The School aims to achieve the highest quality of teaching and pastoral care for its pupils. If parents do, however, have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with the following procedure.

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 normally contact the relevant Head of School who will discuss the matter with the relevant Form Tutor/Subject Teacher/member of staff. In many cases, the matter will be resolved by this means to the satisfaction of both parties. Should the matter not be resolved within 14 days, or in the event that a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, then parents may wish to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.
 - The Form Tutor/Subject Teacher/member of staff will make a **written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received**. Should the matter not be resolved within [14/21/28] days or in the event that the Form Tutor/Subject Teacher/member of staff and the parent **fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2** of this procedure.
 - Complaints made directly to the Head will usually be referred to the relevant Head of School/Head of Department unless the Head deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will meet/speak to the parents concerned, normally within 14 days 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 or an independent person to carry out further investigations.

- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for his/her decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Vice Chairman of Governors (Boys' Division or Girls' Division), who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School (see appendix). Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Governing Body. The Governing Body, on behalf of the panel will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days. The Panel will be supported by the School's Clerk & Treasurer.
- 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. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 7 days prior to the hearing.
- 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 parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 14 days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to

individual complaints will be kept confidential except to the extent required by paragraph 6(3)(f) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 (as subsequently amended), by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required by the ISI under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended), or under other legal authority.

[WRITTEN COMPLAINTS RELATING TO THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE EYFS (BOLTON SCHOOL NURSERY/KIDZONE) will provide Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during a specific period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least 3 years].

APPENDIX

Complaints Procedure – Independent Member of the Panel

The following guidance comes from a letter sent by the DfE to the ISC General Secretary in 2002. Although dated, the advice is extant.

Whilst we do not intend to be prescriptive our general view is that suitable people would be those who have held positions of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments/points. It would add credibility if independent panel members had some standing in the local community. In this connection servicing or retired business people, civil servants, Heads of senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background – perhaps retired members of the Police force – might be considered suitable by schools. Schools will have their own views and may well have other suitable suggestion to make.

You asked if it would be acceptable to appoint former Governors or staff of the school as the independent panel member. The regulations do not preclude this since the stipulation is that the person must be independent of the management and running of the school. Clearly former governors or staff would not have any such involvement. However, school should bear in mind that they may be subject to criticism that such people would remain too close to the school and would not be truly independent.