



BRYANSTON

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1 Introduction

Bryanston has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. As such should there be any general questions about either a child's welfare or academic progress, then parents should not hesitate to raise these concerns directly with either the Hsm or Tutor.

However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School with care and in accordance with this Complaints Procedure. Bryanston makes its Complaints Procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the School's website and in the School office during the School day. The School, will ensure that parents of pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and of the forms in which it is published or available.

Although this procedure is made available to parents of prospective pupils, it is not available for use by them; it may only be used by parents of current pupils.

Complaints by parents of former pupils will be dealt with under this Complaints Procedure only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil, to which the complaint relates, was still registered as a pupil at the School.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 2014, Bryanston will make available, on request, to parents of pupils and past pupils registered at the time of the complaint and provide, on request, to the Secretary of State or and independent inspectorate details of the Complaint's Procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

What Constitutes a Complaint?

The complaints procedure will be invoked if a complaint is made expressing dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the School as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the School has done something wrong or failed to do so something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Actions are taken and relevant lessons learnt in all cases, whether or not a formal complaint is upheld. You can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you or your child raises in good faith. The School has a separate child complaints policy which can be made available on request.



Timeframes for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively and within clear and reasonable timescales. They will generally be acknowledged within 5 working days if received during term time and as soon as is reasonably practicable during holiday periods.

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the School's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 28 working days if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as reasonably practicable during school holidays.

For complaints reaching Stage 3, the Panel Hearing, will generally be completed within a further 28 working days of receipt of the request for a panel hearing, if the request is lodged during term-time and as soon as is reasonably practicable during holiday periods.

Should the 28-day timeframe look as though it may be exceeded due to extenuating circumstances, an amended timescale will be communicated to parents.

Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, working days refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time, excluding bank holidays. This means that during School holidays it may take longer to resolve a complaint, mostly due to the unavailability of key staff, although the School will do what is reasonably practicable to avoid undue delay.

COVID-19 (or other pandemic)

The School will endeavour to work within the timescales mentioned above, however during the period of the COVID-19 (or other) pandemic, flexibility in the timescales may be required as a consequence of disruption or staff absence. Amendment of the timescales are therefore permitted if the process is hampered under these circumstances.

The Three-Stage Complaints Procedure

2 Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that all complaints will be resolved as early and as informally as possible by speaking with the person best able to address the issue.
- If parents have a complaint, they should first contact their son/daughter's Housemaster / Housemistress ("Hsm"), clearly stating the grounds for complaint, who may be able to resolve the complaint without further reference.
 - If there is an academic complaint, the Hsm may, in conjunction with the Tutor, need to consult a subject teacher, the Head of Department and the Deputy Head Academic.
 - If it is a complaint about boarding/pastoral care, a School punishment or other matters the Hsm may need to consult the Deputy Head - Boarding and Pastoral or Second Master.



- Disciplinary matters should first be raised with the Housemaster/Housemistress who may then refer you to the member of staff who imposed the sanction. If unresolved, you may be referred to one of the Deputy Heads.
- A concern or a complaint about financial matters relating to fees or extras should be addressed to the Finance Director.
- The Hsm will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received.
- Should the matter not be resolved in accordance with the timeframe above, or in the event that the Hsm and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory solution, then parents will be advised that they may wish to proceed with their complaint in accordance with the Formal Resolution Procedure. Parents have 14 days from the completion of the Stage 1 to raise the complaint to Stage 2.
- If, however, the complaint is against the Headmaster, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors whose contact details are available from the School office on request.

3 Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- Parents should put their complaint in writing formally, to the Headmaster, clearly stating the grounds for their complaint.
- The Executive Assistant to the Headmaster will make a record of any formal written complaint.
- The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations. Written records will be kept of meetings and interviews held for the purpose of carrying out further investigations in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made, in accordance with the timeframe above, and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmaster will also give reasons for the decision.
- If the complaint is against the Headmaster, the Chair of Governors, or their nominee, will call for a full report from the Headmaster and for all the relevant documents. The Chair of Governors may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair of Governors is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chair of Governors will give reasons for his/her decision.



- If parents are still not satisfied, the complaint may go to Stage 3. Parents have 14 days from the completion of the Stage 2 to raise the complaint to Stage 3.

4 Stage 3 – Panel Resolution

- This stage of the Complaints Procedure will only be necessary if the matter has not been resolved, by the two stages referred to above, to the satisfaction of either the School or the parent.
- If the School initiates this third stage, then the Clerk to the Governors will write to the parents, clearly stating the School's position.
- If the parents choose to initiate this course of action, they should write, within 14 days from the completion of Stage 2, clearly stating the grounds for their appeal to:

The Clerk to the Governors
Bryanston School,
Blandford Forum Dorset
DT11 0PX

- The Clerk to the Governors will acknowledge the request for an appeal panel within 5 working days and write to that effect to the parents. The Clerk to the Governors will arrange for a meeting of the School's Complaints Committee to be convened.
- The Complaints Committee will consist of two Governors and one person not concerned with the management and running of the School. All panel members will not be directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The Chair of the Complaints Committee will be nominated by the Chair of Governors and the composition of the Committee will be determined by the Chair of Governors, together with the Chair of the Complaints Committee.
- Parents, may be accompanied to this meeting by one other person if they wish. The person against whom the complaint has been made, shall also be entitled to be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. The Panel will decide whether it would be helpful for witnesses to attend.
- The manner in which the hearing is conducted shall be at the discretion of the Complaints Committee.
- If possible, the Complaints Committee will resolve the parents' concern without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Committee will decide how to carry out the investigation.
- The Panel is required to undertake a full-merits hearing (which shall not be



limited to a review of the decisions at Stage 2) and accordingly decide whether to:

- Dismiss the complaint(s) in whole or in part;
 - Uphold the complaint(s) in whole or in part; and
 - May make recommendations.
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- After the meeting, the Chair of the Complaints Committee will write within 5 working days to the parents on behalf of the Committee informing them of the Committee's decision, (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the hearing) the reasons for it and of any recommendations (if any) made.
 - A copy of the Panel's findings, reasons for decision and any recommendations will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the Clerk to the Governors will, where relevant, also send a copy of the Panel's finding to the person about whom a complaint has been made.
 - A copy of the Panel's findings will be held by the Clerk to the Governors and made available for inspection on the School premises by the Chair of Governors and the Headmaster.
 - The decision of the Complaints Committee will be final.

6 Persistent Correspondence

Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this can be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of the policy.

7 Recording of Complaints and use of personal data

The School will keep a written record of all complaints from Stage 2, and record at which stage resolution was achieved, and what action the School has taken. The written record of complaints specifically identifies those complaints relating to boarding provision and the actions taken by the school as a result of these complaints. The School will ensure that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education Act 2008 requests access to them.

The School processes data in accordance with its Privacy Notice(s) which are displayed on the School website. When dealing with complaints the School (including any Panel member appointed under the Stage 3 process) may, at its discretion, process a range of information, which is likely to include the following:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil



- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name and contact details of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)
- Notes and minutes of the hearing, and
- The Panel's written decision

This may include 'special category personal data' (as further detailed in the School's Privacy Notice(s), but potentially including, for instance, information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint. This data will be processed in accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy.

The School will keep a record of formal complaints received and of Complaints Panel hearings, as required by regulation. It will do so in accordance with its Privacy Notice(s), Data Protection Policy and Records Management Policy. Complaints which do not have safeguarding implications should be retained for a minimum of 7 years (a period determined by the 6-year inspection cycle with allowance for unforeseen circumstances). Where there is a safeguarding angle, records concerning allegations of abuse must be preserved for the term of the Independent inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if it is longer.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

Anonymous complaints may not be pursued (other than issues of child protection) although they will be kept on file.

Any action that needs to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures will be handled confidentially within the School.

The School has had one recorded Stage 2 complaint to resolve in the last academic year. There were no recorded Stage 3 complaints to resolve in the last academic year.

Reviewed: May 2021
Reviewer: Senior Leadership Team
Next review: May 2022
Author: Chief Operating Officer