



All policies carrying the Bryanston logo apply equally to any other brands or operations of Bryanston including Bryanston Prep

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Author:	Chief Finance & Operations Officer
Reviewer:	Head of Compliance
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1 Introduction

Bryanston (“The School”) 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 houseparent 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. Complaints cannot therefore be raised in respect of pupils that have left the School.

A complaint does not impact the requirement of any fees due or outstanding.

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. This is in accordance with paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 2014.

This procedure applies to all sections of the School, including the EYFS stage.



Any appeal against exclusion or required removal from School will be dealt with under Stage 3 of this Complaints Procedure and should be made in writing to the Clerk to the Governors within five working days of the pupil's exclusion / required removal.

If a decision is taken by the parents to withdraw the pupil, the parents will waive any right to an appeal.

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 the School in 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.

For written complaints relating to the School's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, the School will investigate and notify parents of the outcome within 28 days of having received the complaint.



Pandemic or exceptional business continuity incident

The School will endeavour to work within the timescales mentioned above, however during any period of pandemic, flexibility in the timescales may be required as a consequence of disruption, staff absence and/or school closure. 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 as possible by speaking with the person best able to address the issue.

Bryanston

- If parents have a complaint, they should first contact their son's/daughter's House Parent clearly stating the grounds for complaint, who may be able to resolve the complaint without further reference.
 - If there is an academic complaint, the houseparent 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 houseparent may need to consult the Deputy Head - Boarding and Pastoral or Senior Deputy Head.
 - Disciplinary matters should first be raised with the houseparent 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.

Bryanston Prep

In relation to Stage 1, Bryanston Prep parents should direct their complaint to their child's Form Tutor or Boarding Staff. If the member of staff is unable to resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for a senior member of staff to be consulted.

Complaints made directly to a Head of Department/Senior Staff or the Head of Bryanston Prep will usually be referred to the relevant Form Tutor or Boarding Staff unless the Head of Department/Senior Staff or Head of Bryanston Prep deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

If, however the complaint is in relation to the Head of Bryanston Prep, parents should make their complaint to the Head of Bryanston School, whose contact details are available from the School office or website.



A concern or a complaint about financial matters relating to fees or extras should be addressed to the Finance Director at Bryanston.

- A record of all concerns and complaints received at the informal stage and the date on which they were received are recorded by the Head of Bryanston Prep.
- Should the matter not be resolved in accordance with the timeframe above, or in the event that a satisfactory solution cannot be reached, 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. Please note that 'days' includes: weekdays and weekends (excluding bank holidays).
- If, however, the complaint is against the Head, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors whose contact details are available from the School office on request.
- The School also reserves the right to escalate an informal complaint to the formal stage.

3 Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- Parents should put their complaint in writing formally, to the Head of Bryanston, clearly stating the grounds for their complaint.
- The Executive Assistant to the Head of Bryanston will make a record of any formal written complaint.
- The Head of Bryanston will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. It may be necessary for the Head of Bryanston 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 Head of Bryanston 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 Head of Bryanston will also give reasons for the decision.
- If the complaint is against the Head of either Bryanston or Bryanston Prep, the Chair of Governors, or their nominee, will call for a full report from the relevant Head 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. Please note that, 'days' refers to weekdays and weekends (excluding bank holidays).

4 Stage 3 – Panel Resolution

- This stage of the Complaints Procedure will only be necessary if the matter has not been resolved (i) by the two stages referred to above, to the satisfaction of either the School or the parent, or (ii) the parents wish to appeal an exclusion or required removal from the School.
- 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 (The Panel) 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. This does not however confer a right on a parent to have a legal representative to make representations on their behalf at the hearing. 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.
- 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 Head.
- The decision of the Complaints Committee will be final.

5 Vexatious Complaints

A complaint is defined as vexatious if it:

- It is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious;
- Insists upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason;
- Insists upon pursuing unmeritorious complaint(s) in an unreasonable manner;
- Insists on raising the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages;
- Is designed to cause disruption or annoyance;
- Demands redress that lacks and serious purpose or value;
- Seeks to continually attempt to bring the complaint(s) within the scope of the Complaints Procedure.

Where complainants have been identified as persistent or vexatious under the scope of this policy, the complainant will be notified, in writing, of the reasons why their complaint has been classified as persistent or vexatious and what action will be taken. This notification may be copied for the information of others already involved in the complaint or matters closely related. The complainant concerned will be given an opportunity to modify their behaviour ahead of the School considering what action(s) to take.



If the school considers the behaviour of the complainant is not modified, it will take some or all of the following actions as it deems necessary:

- Notify the complainant in writing that the School has responded fully to the points raised and has tried to resolve the complaint but there is nothing more to add and continuing contact on the matter will serve no useful purpose;
- Withdraw contact with the complainant in relation to the matter(s) considered as vexatious or persistent;
- Restrict contact other than via a designated member of staff;
- The complainant will be notified that any form of contact, either orally or in writing, in relation to their complaint, or any further complaints relative to the same period of time, or the same or similar issues as an earlier complaint, is at an end, and that further contact received will be acknowledged but not answered.

A record will be kept, for future reference, of the reasons why a complainant has been classified as persistent or vexatious.

Once a complainant has been determined as persistent or vexatious, such status needs to be regularly reviewed and, where appropriate, withdrawn at a later date. Such action may be appropriate where a complainant subsequently demonstrates a more reasonable approach or submits a further complaint for which the normal complaints procedures would appear appropriate and within scope.

6 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) 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. Where possible, and if appropriate, the School will seek to establish if the pupil in question consents to their personal data being shared. However, the School is required by law to process parental complaints in a prescribed manner, and it may be lawful and necessary to share pupil or parent information regardless of whether consent is given. 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. Where there is a safeguarding element, records concerning allegations of abuse must be preserved until the accused has reached normal pension age or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if it is longer. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse recommended that the UK Government directs the Information Commissioners Office to introduce a code of practice on the retention of and access to records known to relate to child sexual abuse. The Inquiry recommended that the retention period for such records should be 75 years with appropriate review periods. Although the recommendation is not yet binding in law or practice, Bryanston adopts this recommendation and will keep this under regular review.

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. There may be other circumstances where disclosure of the substance of a complaint or particular confidential records relating to it is required, for example, where there is a legal, regulatory, safeguarding or data protection obligation (e.g., in response to a subject access request) which prevails over the requirement to maintain the records as confidential.

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.

For the academic year 2024-2025, the School received 0 (Nil) formal complaints.

Additional notes for parents of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

A written complaint concerning the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of the complaint being made.



Parents of EYFS pupils should follow the three stages of this Complaints Procedure. If parents remain dissatisfied and their complaint is about the School's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, then parents may take their complaint to the ISI or Ofsted.

Bryanston will provide ISI/Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept in accordance with its Privacy Notice and Records Management Policy.

Parents may also contact:

Children Services Directorate
North Dorset Local office
Bath Road
Sturminster Newton
Dorset DT0 1DE

Tel: 01258 472652
Email: northdorsetsocialcare@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Or Ofsted if parents wish to make a complaint from the EYFS:

Ofsted Picadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD
Tel: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 01616188524

Or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) for boarding complaints:

Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9-12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA
Tel: 0207 6000100
Email: info@isi.net