

Bradford Christian School Policy on Complaints Procedure.

Vision

Bradford Christian school operates as a partnership between home and school and seeks to serve parents in the Biblical mandate of educating their children. One crucial factor in this partnership is clear, effective and open communication between parents, the school and governors. The more active and involved parents are in the life of the school, the more effective we are in communicating and fulfilling the aims of the school. Nevertheless, it is still recognised that there may be times when parents have concerns which need further action.

Responsibilities.

The Chair of Governors ultimately has the responsibility of ensuring that any formal complaints made against the school are dealt with and solution sought. The headteacher also has a responsibility to ensure that the school deals with issues effectively and makes changes to procedures in the school when the need arises to ensure that problems do not reoccur.

Key principles and aims.

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.” Matthew 18:15

- Parents can and do have issues that need resolving with the school
- Concerns will be dealt with promptly and sensitively.
- Formal complaints will be dealt with according to this policy.
- We will seek to solve all issues and restore relationship at the very earliest opportunity.
- As a school we will ensure that all children have the right to attend school in a safe and caring environment.

Means

The procedure that should be followed by both home and school.

In the first instance of a concern the school should contact the member of staff immediately responsible for their child at the time, or the member of staff who who is directly connected with the incident.

The main reason for communication is to clarify the facts and ensure that a more complete account can be ascertained.

The contact will need to be as soon as possible from the incident. It is assumed that almost all issues can be resolved and relationships restored at this point.

If the parents feel that this action has not resolved the issue, the Headteacher will, if appropriate call for a brief meeting to discuss the the main issues with the people involved, either separately or all together. Again we seek to resolve issues and restore relationships as soon as we can.

If after speaking to the Headteacher, parents are and families still feel that the issue has not been resolved satisfactorily and that it needs further action, then they should write to the Chair of Governors at the school who will then follow this policy as a next course of action.

The Hearing

A hearing to listen to the complaint must be convened within 1 month of the complaint being made.

The school will appoint a clerk to deal with the administration of the hearing.

The panel convened will consist of at least three people and will be made up of a combination of the following:

- one person independent of the running of the school who will act as chair to the hearing
- A member of the school's governing body
- The Headteacher or a member of the SMT
- The panel hearing allows for the parent (complainant) to be accompanied if they wish by a representative from the the family's home fellowship or another independent person
- If it is judged to be appropriate, the child concerned (if a pupil is involved) may be invited to attend the panel

All involved must be given 48 hours notification of the meeting.

The Remit of The Complaints Appeal Panel

The panel can:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

The conclusions, findings and recommendations of the panel will be kept confidential but will be distributed to the complainant, person complained against and made available to the proprietor and the Headteacher.

If the complainant refers to an accessibility issue for disabled pupils of the family should arrange a meeting with the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors in the first instance to discuss their issues and concerns. If they still feel that the matter has not been resolved satisfactorily, then they should put the complaint in writing to the Chair of the Governors at the school and a panel hearing will be arranged.

Date of last review of policy: March 2017

Date of next review of policy: March 2018

This policy is made with reference to Sections 29 and 39 of the 2002 Education Act and pays due regard to the DfE guidelines.

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Appendix 1

The Role of the Clerk

The Department strongly recommends that any panel or group of governors considering complaints be clerked. The clerk would be the contact point for the complainant and be required to:

- set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
- collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing;
- meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing;
- record the proceedings;
- notify all parties of the panel's decision.

Appendix 2

The Role of the Chair of the Governing Body or the Nominated Governor

The nominated governor role:

- check that the correct procedure has been followed.
- if a hearing is appropriate, notify the clerk to arrange the panel.

There are several points which any governor sitting on a complaints panel needs to remember:

- a. It is important that the appeal hearing is independent and impartial and that it is seen to be so. No governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it. In deciding the make-up of the panel, governors need to try and ensure that it is a cross-section of the categories of governor and sensitive to the issues of race, gender and religious affiliation.
- b. The aim of the hearing, which needs to be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it has to be recognised the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously.
- c. An effective panel will acknowledge that many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The panel chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible. The layout of the room will set the tone and care is needed to ensure the setting is informal and not adversarial.
- d. Extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child. Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings will ensure that the child does not feel intimidated. The panel needs to be aware of the views of the child and give them equal consideration to those of adults. Where the child's parent is the complainant, it would be helpful to give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the hearing, if any, the child needs to attend.
- e. The governors sitting on the panel need to be aware of the complaints procedure.

Appendix 3

The Role of the Chair of the panel.

The Chair of the Panel has a key role, ensuring that:

- the remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- parents and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease
- the hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy
- the panel is open minded and acting independently
- each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions;
- written material is seen by all parties. If a new issue arises it would be useful to give all parties the opportunity to consider and comment on it.

no member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure.

Appendix 4**Checklist for a Panel Hearing**

The panel needs to take the following points into account:

- The hearing is as informal as possible.
- Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.
- After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses.
- The headteacher may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The headteacher is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses.
- The complainant may question both the headteacher and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The headteacher is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
- The chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set time scale.

Appendix 5

Please complete and return to Heather Thomson (complaints co-ordinator) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

**Bradford Christian School
Formal complaint against the school.**

Your name:
Pupil's name:
Your relationship to the pupil:
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint.
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: