



# BENSHAM MANOR School

## Complaints Policy

Last reviewed: September 2017



## INTRODUCTION

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring the highest standards across all spheres of the school's work. However, we recognise that dissatisfactions may arise. This policy has been written to ensure that all issues are dealt with fairly and efficiently. It is based on the model policy issued by Croydon Schools Support Team in September 2010.

This complaints policy does not apply to a decision about admissions to the school, or a matter in respect of which the pupil or parent has or had a prescribed right of appeal.

The School and Governing Body aim to deal with all complaints openly, fairly, promptly and without prejudice.

## AIMS

1. To resolve issues through dialogue at the appropriate level
2. To guide all parties in a fair hearing of issues and processes to be followed

## PRINCIPLES

The staged approach is designed to ensure that every effort is made to deal with complaints informally at school level, in partnership with parents. The formal stages should only be triggered in exceptional circumstances:

- **Stage 1 - Informal**
  - Where a complaint is raised by a parent or pupil, the class teacher or other designated teacher will receive the complaint. In the case of a complaint from any other individual, the School Business Manager will receive the complaint. A decision will then be made as to which member of staff is best placed to deal with the complaint.
- **Stage 2 - Formal**
  - Led by the Headteacher when appropriate
- **Stage 3 - Advance**
  - Led by the Governing Body

This policy is designed to manage all complaints. Complaints vary in their nature and complexity.

Therefore, the school will need to consider at which stage a complaint should be dealt with when it is initially raised and which member of staff is best placed to deal with it.

If the complaint is about a member of staff this should be dealt with by the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is unable to resolve the matter, or the complaint is about the Headteacher the complaint will pass to the Governing Body.

Our procedures for dealing with complaints will:

- Be publicised in the College Prospectus and Website
- Be simple to understand and use
- Be focused on outcomes
- Have established time limits for action
- Keep people informed at all stages
- Where necessary, respect people's desire for confidentiality
- Be carefully monitored and evaluated

## OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS PROCESS

- **Stage One**
  - Discuss concerns informally with the relevant teacher or designated person as appropriate
- **Stage Two**
  - Discuss concerns formally with the Headteacher/ Senior Leadership Team

- **Stage Three**

- Make a formal complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors or a nominated Governor who will then convene a Complaints Panel

## **GUIDANCE ON EACH STAGE OF THE PROCEDURE**

Any person feeling aggrieved at the conclusion of each Stage should be advised of the next Stage of the procedure and their right to invoke it.

**Stage One:** Discuss concerns informally with the relevant teacher or other designated person.

Complainants are advised to speak to the teacher concerned if the matter is to do with a pupil or the curriculum and to the School Business Manager if it relates to any other matter so everyone has a clear picture of the situation from all points of view. Most problems can be resolved at this informal stage. The member of staff who is dealing with the complaint should ensure that the person is reassured that the matter will be investigated and is clear what action has been agreed. All staff should be aware of the need for confidentiality.

Written records of any actions should always be kept although it is not always necessary to provide the complainant with a written record at this stage. A member of the Senior Leadership Team should monitor these records. All records should be kept in the student/personnel file.

The outcome of Stage one should be communicated in writing to the complainant, and include a clear explanation as to actions taken/proposed and clear reasoning.

If either the complainant or staff member feels the matter needs to be taken further, a senior member of staff should be contacted.

**Stage Two:** Discuss concerns formally with the Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team.

More serious concerns which remain unresolved at the end of Stage 1, or complaints that have been initiated at Stage 2 because of their nature or complexity, should be referred to the Headteacher or a senior member of staff. He / she will then investigate the matter further. Any meetings that are held with the complainant in relation to the complaint should be arranged within 10 school days. More complex complaints may require an extension to this time limit and agreement should be sought from the complainant.

A log of all contacts relating to the complaint should be kept.

The Senior Leadership Team should communicate the outcome to the complainant in writing together with any agreed actions.

If, as a result of the investigation, issues arise relating to staff discipline or capability, details should remain confidential to the Headteacher/SLT. However, the complainant should be informed that the school has taken appropriate follow-up action.

**Stage Three:** Make a formal complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors (or nominated governor) who will then convene a Complaints Panel.

Governors should only proceed with Stage 3 of the Complaints procedure if they have received a complaint in writing addressed to the Chair of Governors, and all previous Stages have been exhausted (unless the nature of the complaint is such that it is appropriate to initiate the complaint at Stage 3).

Acknowledgement of the written complaint will be sent to the Complainant within 5 school days.

## **CONCLUSION**

If the complainant remains dissatisfied and both the complaint and complainant fall within the definitions stated in Chapter 2 of Part 10 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, the complainant can refer the complaint to the Local Ombudsman (with effect from September 2011) for consideration