



BRUTON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Complaints Procedure

Bruton School for Girls has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provides for its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this procedure.

A complaint from a pupil will, in the first instance, be dealt with by the member of staff to whom it is made. If the pupil is not satisfied with the outcome, she should refer the matter to the relevant Head of Department or to her Head of Hall/Sixth Form, who will keep a written record. Should the matter not be resolved at that stage, parents will be informed and, should they wish to pursue the complaint, it will be dealt with as outlined in the paragraphs below.

Any complaint involving Safeguarding of Children or bullying will be dealt with under the terms of the relevant policy documents.

The School will keep a record of any complaints that proceed to the formal stage (as defined below) and will report to parents on an annual basis the number of formal complaints received in the preceding academic year.

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 their child's Class Teacher, Tutor or Head of Hall/Sixth Form. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Tutor or Head of Hall/Sixth Form cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for the Deputy Head or Head of Prep to be consulted.

Complaints made directly to the Deputy Head or Head of Prep will usually be referred to the relevant Class Teacher, Tutor or Head of Hall/Sixth Form unless the Deputy Head or Head of Prep deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.

The Class Teacher, Tutor or Head of Hall/Sixth Form 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 5 working days or in the event that the Class Teacher, Tutor or Head of Hall/Sixth Form 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.

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 Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Headmaster will meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within five working 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 Headmaster to carry out further investigations.

The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Headmaster 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 Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

If the complaint is against the Headmaster, which cannot be resolved on an informal basis, the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Chairman of Governors.

The Chairman of Governors will request a report from the Headmaster, and for all relevant documents. In most cases the Chairman of Governors will speak to the parents to discuss the matter. Once the Chairman of Governors is satisfied, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing, with reasons. If the parents are still not satisfied, 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 Chairman of Governors.

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. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chairman of Governors. The Chairman of Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 working days.

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 five working days prior to the hearing.

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person whose identity should be clarified at least three days in advance of the meeting. 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 it considers relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within five working 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 Headmaster, the Governors, and where relevant, the person complained of. This will normally be sent within 28 working days of having received the complaint.

Confidentiality

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. As is required by the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003 (regulation 7(j)), a written record is kept of all complaints and whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing. Records of complaints are kept for at least three years. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except: in so far as is required of the School by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required by the Secretary of State (in practice, the Department for Education); in the course of the School's inspection under section 162A of the Education Act 2002; where a legitimate request is made by OfStEd or the Independent Schools Inspectorate; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Early Years Foundation Stage provision

All parents, including those whose children are within the EYFS provision, may make a complaint to OfStEd if they wish. The contact details are given in the next paragraph.

Boarding

Since the School has boarders, the Complaints Procedure is written to take account of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, Standard 5. This includes the right of boarders and their parents to raise concerns and the right of parents to take any complaint concerning the welfare in boarding of their daughter to the Office for Standards in Education (OfStEd):

Complaints Manager, OfStEd National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD Helpline: 0300 123 1231 Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/parents

Local Authority

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Somerset County Council can be contacted on: 01278 437274.

A copy of this document is available on request to parents of prospective and current pupils and to members of staff and boarding pupils.