



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE **(Senior and Junior Schools)**

(This policy is available on the website or on request)

This policy applies to current pupils. A current pupil is defined as a pupil on the school roll, not one who has left the school.

QE Bristol welcomes feedback from parents and seeks to establish good relations between home and school to enable boys to feel supported and to be successful. Occasionally, parents will feel the need to complain formally and, more often, parents will want to share concerns about their son's education.

For the sake of clarity, it is important to establish that there is a difference between a concern/serious concern and a formal complaint.

Concerns

Usually, concerns can be resolved to the satisfaction of all involved and many are of a minor nature. Even if satisfaction is not complete, parents usually feel they have had a fair hearing and their concerns have been properly considered. Sometimes a serious concern will need to be referred to the Deputy Headmaster or the Headmaster.

Formal complaint

However, if a parent (or pupil) feels that their concern has not been addressed appropriately, they can ask the Headmaster to refer the matter formally to a panel of Governors for a final hearing.

The School will keep a record of all serious concerns and formal complaints and their resolution including a note of whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a hearing, and will review formal complaints annually.

The school undertakes to keep all correspondence, statements and records relating to individual formal complaints confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them.

This policy is available to parents of current and prospective pupils. Parents are also entitled to receive details of the number of formal complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

PARENTS

How to raise a concern

Most concerns revolve around specific issues and these are best dealt with by the teacher most closely associated with your son or the specific subject or activity. So, for example, pastoral issues should be referred to the form tutor or Head of Year, academic concerns to the subject teacher or Head of Department and sporting

matters to the Director of Physical Education. In the Junior School the class teacher would usually be the first person to contact. Sometimes, if the matter is serious, you might feel you wish to speak to the Deputy Headmaster or Headmaster.

In all cases you could telephone, e-mail or write or fix an appointment to come into school to see someone.

Our response

In some matters we will be able to give you an instant reply. In most cases we will need time to look into the matter. Our response should normally be made within a few school days and offer an assessment of the situation and a suggested way forward, which will often involve parents in some way. If the school cannot respond within five school days you will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation.

What if parents are not satisfied with the response or the response does not work?

It might be appropriate to discuss the matter again with the member of staff involved or you might wish the Deputy Headmaster or Headmaster to be involved at this stage. The concern should be formally written down. It should be possible to arrange a follow-up meeting (if required) within two or three school days to discuss an unresolved matter.

What if parents are still not satisfied with the school's response?

This is the point at which we might have to 'agree to disagree' about the way forward but at least parents should feel that the matter has been fully considered. At this stage, after the Headmaster has been involved, parents have the right to request a formal review of their complaint by a panel of Governors, whose decision will be final. At this stage the complaint becomes formal. In that event, full details will be supplied of the review procedure and the ways in which parents will be involved.

For Junior School concerns, the matter will be referred to the Headmaster of QEH if it has not been possible to resolve the matter within the Junior School. If Headmaster of QEH cannot settle the matter, parents can request a formal review by Governors. At this stage the complaint becomes formal. In that event, full details will be supplied of the review procedure and the ways in which parents will be involved.

PUPILS

Pupils who feel the need to air concerns should speak to a member of staff they trust and can always approach the Headmaster directly. Concerns might be best 'talked through' or written down depending on the circumstances. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed but pupils will be assured that only those who need to know will be told. For senior pupils there is also a box outside the Peer Support Room into which messages can be put.

Usually, a resolution can be achieved but a pupil who feels that his concern is not being addressed should either contact the Headmaster (if he has not already done so) and/or involve his parents. If parents are involved then the procedure for parental concerns can be followed. Occasionally, a pupil might wish to pursue a concern without his parents' knowledge or support. In that case, the concern should go through the Headmaster (or Deputy Headmaster) and, if the matter is still unresolved, the pupil has the right to request a formal review by a panel of Governors.

A pupil might wish to contact someone outside school and the telephone numbers of Childline are clearly displayed around the school. There is also information for pupils about how to raise concerns in the homework diary.

STAFF

Staff concerns fall under contractual arrangements for 'grievances'. Staff should raise issues with their immediate manager or with the Headmaster (teaching staff) or Bursar (support staff). If the Headmaster or Bursar cannot resolve the matter, procedures for taking the matter further are detailed in the contractual handbooks. Staff with 'older' contracts will find that the grievance procedure in the new contract is in line with latest employment law and they can follow that procedure, if they wish. Copies of contacts and handbooks are available from the Bursar.

THE REVIEW PROCEDURE

These procedures are applicable to Parents and Pupils

Aims:

To review a formal parental complaint.

To ensure the review is conducted fairly.

Important Note: These procedures are non-contractual in nature. They have been prepared for the information and guidance of all who may become concerned in reviewing a formal complaint or a review hearing following expulsion or the required removal of a student.

Applying for a Review

1. Parents/guardians must apply for the review of a formal complaint using the Request for a Review Form (Appendix A). This form is available from the School Office and must be returned to the Bursar within five school days of receipt of the written notification of the decision in question.
2. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the review hearing will take place within ten school days of receipt of the request for review and may be sooner if convenient to all parties. In any event, the hearing will take place within 20 school days of receipt of the request for a review by governors.
3. Each member of the Review Panel will be supplied with a copy of any relevant documents, including copies of all correspondence relating to the case. The parents shall be entitled to copies of all those documents save any which, in the opinion of the Headmaster, should not be disclosed for the protection of the student or other students or members of staff and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

The Review Panel

This will consist of a three member sub-committee of the Board of Governors. The panel members will have no previous detailed knowledge of the case or of the student, parents or guardian, and will not normally include the Chairman of Governors. Selection of the Review Panel will be made by the Chairman of the Board of Governors. The Review Panel will be joined by an independent member, not a Governor, and having no connection with the school.

The Review Hearing

1. This will take place at the school premises.
2. Those present at the review hearing will normally be:-
 - Members of the Review Panel
 - The Headmaster
 - Parents of the student concerned or those with parental responsibility
 - The student
 - Clerk to the Governors or his deputy

The parents/student may be accompanied by a friend or relation and by a member of the school staff if desired. That person will attend as a friend, not as a representative.

3. The proceedings will be chaired by one member of the Review Panel and will be conducted in an informal manner and all statements made at the hearing will be unsworn. The proceedings will not be tape-recorded but the Clerk will be asked to keep a minute of the main points that arise. All present will be entitled, should they wish, to write their own notes. The hearing shall be directed at all times by the Chairman of the panel who will conduct the hearing in such a manner as to ensure that all those present have the opportunity of asking questions and making comments. The requirements of natural justice will apply.
4. All those attending the hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners. The Chairman may in his/her discretion adjourn or terminate the hearing. If the hearing is terminated the original decision will stand.
5. The Panel will consider each of the points raised by the parents/student so far as these are relevant to: whether the Headmaster's decision was appropriate and whether correct procedures were followed in handling the formal complaint.
6. If the Headmaster considers it necessary in the interests of the individual or of the school that the identity of any person should be withheld, the Chairman of the Panel may require that the name of that person and the reasons for withholding it be written down and shown to the Review Panel. The Chairman in his/her discretion may direct that the person be identified.
7. When the Chairman of the Panel decides that all issues have been sufficiently discussed, he/she will close the hearing and the four members of the Review Panel will meet in private to consider the case and to reach a decision.
8. The decision of the Review Panel will be final and a copy of any findings and recommendations will be notified to the parents and Headmaster, the Chairman of Governors and, where relevant, the person complained about, by the Chairman of the Review Panel by letter, e-mail or telephone within three school days of the hearing.
9. A copy of any findings will be made available for inspection on the school premises by the Chairman of Governors and the Headmaster and are kept for three years.



REQUEST FOR A REVIEW

To: Clerk to the Governors

Name of Student:

Names of those with Parental responsibility

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Address of Parents/Guardian:

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Telephone

numbers:.....(daytime).....(evening)

I, being a person with parental responsibility for the above named student request that a sub-committee of the Board of Governors carries out a review of a formal complaint.

We have received with this form a copy of the Policy Statement on Review Procedures and we agree to abide by its terms.

We also agree that the proceedings are and will remain confidential and that this review will be final subject to such (if any) legal rights as may exist.

The grounds upon which we ask for a review and the matters which we wish to discuss and to ask the sub-committee to take into account are set out in the attached letter.

We understand that we may be accompanied at the Review Hearing by a friend or relation or by any member of the School staff who knows and who is willing to speak on behalf of the student.

(Two signatures are required where practicable)

First signature.....

Second signature.....

Full Name.....

Full Name.....

Relationship to Student.....

Relationship to Student.....

Date.....

Date.....