



# **Birkenhead Sixth Form College**

## **Complaints Procedure**

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Review Period: 3yr  
Review Date: January 2025  
Person responsible for policy: Clerk of LGB

# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

## Introduction

The majority of issues raised by parents/guardians or students are concerns rather than complaints. A concern may be defined as *'an expression or worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*. A complaint may be defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.

Birkenhead Sixth Form College is committed to taking concerns seriously at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without recourse to formal procedures. The prime aim of the College's Procedure is to resolve the concern as fairly and as speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner.

## Principles

- The College will listen to all concerns, complaints and suggestions and where appropriate view them as opportunities to improve the quality of the service provided.
- Guidance on how to raise a complaint is covered in each stage
- Complaints brought by staff should be investigated using the Grievance Procedure and not this Complaints Procedure.
- This Procedure specifically excludes complaints relating to Admissions and reference should be made to the College Admissions Policy.
- Anonymous complaints will not be considered.
- Staff should be made aware of the procedure so that they will know what to do when they receive a complaint.
- The College will retain a written record of all formal complaints and whether they were resolved.
- All written records, statements and correspondence relating to an individual complaint will be treated confidentially. The College is required however to make these records available to the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under Section 162A of the 2002 Education Act.
- Written information sent out to a complainant may be either electronic or hard copy.
- At each stage of the Complaints Procedure, the member of staff responsible will consider the seriousness of the complaint and how the complaint may be resolved.
- The purpose of this procedure is to identify all of the facts that are pertinent to the complaint so that it can be resolved satisfactorily. However there may be occasions when despite all stages of the procedure being followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Principal or Chair of the Local Governing Body may inform the complainant in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is now closed.
- The Complaints Procedure sets out the time limits for each stage of the complaints process. However, where a complaint is of a particularly complex nature or further investigations are required to ascertain facts, new time limits may be set. The complainant will be sent details of any changes to the deadlines with an explanation for the delay.
- The College will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first College day after the holiday period.
- A copy of this Procedure can be found on the College website.

Birkenhead Sixth Form College complaints procedure has four main stages:

### **Stage 1 – Informal**

- Most concerns and complaints can be satisfactorily resolved at this stage. The College requests parents make their first contact with their son's/daughter/ward's designated Tutor or a member of staff. It is expected that most issues would be resolved within **5 working days**. Should this informal stage require more time, then the College will inform the complainant of this in writing as soon as this is known. Should initial discussions appear unlikely to resolve matters, either party may initiate a move to Stage 2.
- Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at stage 4 of the procedure.
- A copy of the College's Complaints Procedure will be forwarded to the complainant at this stage.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Written Complaint heard by a senior member of staff**

- Formal complaints should be put in writing to the Principal. (Emails can be sent to [Principal@bsfc.ac.uk](mailto:Principal@bsfc.ac.uk)). This will be designated to a senior member of staff to investigate. Details of the complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The College will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within **5 working days** and provide a target date for a response, normally within **15 working days**. A letter should be written if the target cannot be met, explaining the reason for the delay and provide a revised target date.
- Once all the facts have been established, the senior member of staff considering the complaint will issue a written response. If it is felt that the matter is too serious to be dealt with at this stage, then the matter will be immediately escalated to Stage 3.

### **Stage 3 – Formal Written Complaint heard by Principal**

- The Principal will delegate the task of collating information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken. The Principal will make the final decision. The same timings will apply as in Stage 2. Should the complainant not accept the findings, they can appeal and escalate the complaint to Stage 4.

### **Stage 4 – Formal Written Complaint heard by the Chair of the Local Governing Body (LGB)**

- If still dissatisfied, the complainant should write full details of the complaint to the Clerk of the LGB within **15 working days** of the receipt of the outcome at the previous stage and request that their complaint be referred to the Chair of the LGB. The Clerk should write to the complainant within **5 working days**, acknowledging receipt of the written request for the complaint to be heard.
- The Chair of the LGB will investigate the complaint and issue a written response within **15 working days**.
- The findings of the Chair of the Local Governing Body are final.

### **Complaints against the Principal**

- If the complaint is about the Principal, then the Chief Executive of BePART Educational Trust will hear the complaint. If the Chief Executive is the Principal, then the Chair of BePART Educational Trust will hear the complaint. In this instance complaints should be addressed to the Clerk of the BePART Educational Trust, Birkenhead Sixth Form College, Prenton, Wirral, CH43 8SQ
- The findings of the Chief Executive/Chair of BePART Educational Trust are final.

### **Complaints to/about the BePART Educational Trust (the Trust)**

- If the complaint is about the Trust full details should be sent in writing to the Clerk of the BePART Educational Trust, Birkenhead Sixth Form College, Prenton, Wirral, CH43 8SQ. This will be investigated by the CEO.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The Local Governing Body will review this procedure every three years and assess its implementation and effectiveness.