

Date of Issue	Complaints Procedure	Proc. Number
26/11/2014		
Review Date		Proc. Owner
Nov 2016		

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that any complaint against Bedford Free School will be dealt with in a fair, open and responsive way, as required by legislation in Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards)(England) Regulations 2010.
- 1.2 The aim of this is to achieve a speedy and satisfactory resolution to any complaints received.
- 1.3 The school recognises that a willingness to listen to questions and criticism and to respond positively, can lead to improvements in school practices and provision for pupils.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This procedure deals with specified day-to day concerns or complaints against the management and/or operation of the school.
- 2.2 A concern is any query concerning the operation of the school which reflects adversely upon it.
- 2.3 A complaint requires the attention of the Senior Leadership Team of the school. Complaints are defined as matters relating to breaches of the law, to non-compliance with DfE Regulations or any issue which would bring the reputation of the school into disrepute.

3. Procedure

3.1 Concerns

- 3.1.1 Concerns will be dealt with by the member of staff best placed to address the issue who will undertake an investigation of the situation.
- 3.1.2 When concerns are received by telephone it is the role of the receptionist to route the call to the member of staff most able to deal with it. In the event of uncertainty, the call will be directed to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

- 3.1.3 Any concerns expressed in writing will be passed to a member of the Senior Leadership Team who will direct them to the member of staff most able to deal with them.
- 3.1.4 In every case an initial response will be provided within 24 hours and a final resolution of issues arrived at as soon as possible.
- 3.1.5 Resolutions may include an apology, explanation, admission that the situation could have been dealt with more effectively, an assurance that the situation will not recur or an undertaking that the School will review the procedure in the light of the concern.

3.2 Complaints

- 3.2.1 Complaints are matters for the Senior Leadership Team or, exceptionally, for the School Governors to address.
- 3.2.2 Once the complaint has been received in writing, a record of the process of the resolution of the complaint will be kept on the Complaint Action Record (Appendix 1) which will be retained by the school.
- 3.2.3 In every case an initial response will be provided within 24 hours and a final resolution of issues arrived at as soon as possible.

3.2.4 **Stage 1**

- The complaint will be heard by a member of the Senior Leadership Team who is neither the Principal nor the subject of the complaint.
- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint it may be referred to stage 2.

3.2.5 **Stage 2**

- The complaint will be heard by the Principal and will not involve any individual who has been involved in the previous stage of the complaint.
- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint it may be referred to stage 3.

3.2.6 **Stage 3**

- The complainant must write to the Chair of Governors outlining the nature of the complaint.
- The Chair will convene a complaints panel of at least three people none of whom have been involved in any previous

stages of the complaint. One of the panel members must be independent to the management and running of the school.

- The complainant, and if relevant the subject of the complaint, may attend the meeting in order to present their case; either may be accompanied.
- The possible outcomes of the complaints appeal panel are:
 - Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.
 - Uphold the complaint in whole or in part.
 - Decide upon appropriate action 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 chair of the Governors' appeal panel will inform the complainant of the outcome of the complaints appeal hearing in writing either by electronic mail or otherwise.
- The Governors' appeal panel hearing is the final stage of the School's complaints process.

3.3 Records

3.3.1 Written records of all complaints will be kept.

3.3.2 This includes all documentation and a record of the stage of resolution of the complaint.

3.3.3 All such records will be classified and kept as 'confidential' except in so far as is required of the School by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Regulation (Independent Schools Standard)(England) Regulations 2011; where the disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

3.3.4 A record of the number of complaints received each academic year will be available upon request in writing to the school.

4. Related Documents

4.1 Complaint Action Record

5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

5.1 It is the responsibility of the Principal to monitor, evaluate and review this procedure.

5.2 The procedure will be reviewed at least every two years.

6. Appendices

6.1 Complaints Action Record