



# Bamford Academy

## Complaints Procedure Policy

	Date	Initialled
Policy Adopted	February 2014	
Reviewed	February 2015	
Reviewed	February 2016	
Reviewed	February 2019	
Reviewed		



## BAMFORD ACADEMY

### Complaints Procedure

Reviewed: February 2019

Next review: February 2021

#### **School Context**

Since 1 September 2003, Governing Bodies of all schools and nursery schools in England have been required, under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides. The law has also required the procedure to be publicised.

#### **Dealing With Complaints – Initial Concerns**

We recognise the need to be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage reduces the numbers that develop into formal complaints.

We aim to ensure that concerns are handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. Our formal complaints procedure is only necessary if efforts to resolve the concern informally are unsuccessful. In most cases a class teacher or an individual delivering the service, will receive the first approach. Our staff development process includes training to help staff resolve issues on the spot, including apologising where necessary.

#### **Dealing With Complaints – Formal Procedures**

Our formal procedures are invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

At our Academy the Principal has overall responsibility for the operation and management of the school complaints procedure. In practical terms the Principal will nominate a senior member of staff to deal with matters on a day-by-day basis.

#### **Framework of Principles**

To be effective our Complaints Procedure will:

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- be easily accessible and publicised;
- be simple to understand and use;
- be impartial;
- be non-adversarial;
- allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress;

- ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- respect people's desire for confidentiality;
- address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;
- provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved.

### **Investigating Complaints**

Whenever a formal complaint is received it will be investigated.

At each stage, the person investigating the complaint, will make sure that they:

- establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved;
- clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary);
- clarify what the complainant feels would put things right;
- interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keep notes of the interview.

### **Resolving Complaints**

At each stage in the procedure we will remain mindful of ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

We encourage complainants to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage. An admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence.

At all times we will seek to identify areas of agreement between the parties and clarify any misunderstandings that might have occurred as this can create a positive atmosphere in which to discuss any outstanding issues.

### **Vexatious Complaints**

If, despite following appropriate procedures the complainant remains dissatisfied, or tries to reopen the same issue, the chair of the Governing Body will inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

**Time-Limits**

Complaints are considered, and resolved, as quickly and efficiently as possible. We set realistic time limits and will try to have written reply within ten days. However, where further investigations are necessary, new time limits may be set and the complainant sent details of the new deadline and an explanation for the delay.

## **APPENDIX A: THE FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **The Stages of Complaints**

Our formal complaints procedure has well-defined stages. At each stage we clarify exactly who will be involved, what will happen, and how long it will take. There may, on occasion, be the need for some flexibility; for example, the possibility of further meetings between the complainant and the member of staff directly involved and further investigations may be required by the Principal after a meeting with the complainant.

#### **Our school-based stages are followed:**

- Stage one: complaint heard by staff member (though not the subject of the complaint);
- Stage two: complaint heard by Assistant or Deputy Head or nominee;
- Stage three: complaint heard by the Principal
- Stage four - complaint heard by the Chairman of the Board of Directors.

If a complaint concerns the conduct of the Principal or a Director or where the Principal or Director has been involved in the issue previously then the matter will be referred to a senior member of the governing body, not previously involved. In some circumstances the school reserves the right to refer the matter to an external body.

Once the complaint has completed stage four, this brings the process to an end.

### **Managing and Recording Complaints**

#### **Recording Complaints**

The progress of any complaint, and the final outcome, will be recorded by the school. A complaint should be made in writing on the appropriate form. At the end of a meeting the member of staff will ensure that the complainant and the school have the same understanding of what was discussed and agreed. A brief note of meetings will be kept and a copy of any written response added to the record.

#### **Governing Body Review**

The Governing Body will monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes on a termly basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary. Wherever possible, complaints information shared with the whole Governing Body will not name individuals.

We are committed to on-going improvement. Therefore as well as addressing an individual's complaints, the process of listening to, and resolving complaints will contribute to school improvement. When individual complaints are heard, we will identify any underlying issues that need to be addressed. The monitoring and review of complaints by the school and the Governing Body helps us in evaluating our performance.

#### **Publicising the Procedure**

Details of our Complaints Procedures may be included, as appropriate, in:

- the school prospectus;
- the information given to new parents when their children join the school;
- the information given to the children themselves;
- the home-school agreement;

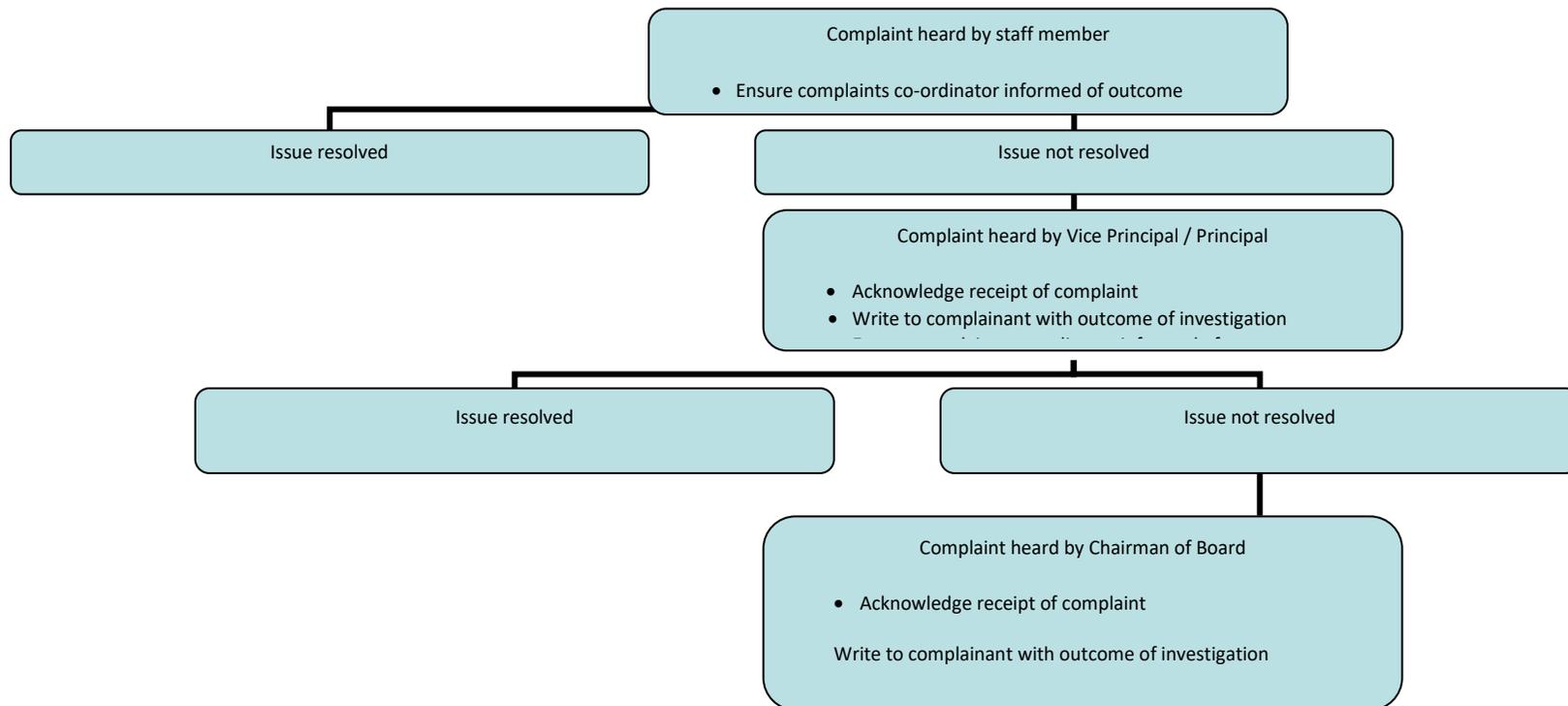
- home school bulletins or newsletters;
- documents supplied to community users including course information or letting agreements;
- the school website.

### **References**

- The Education Act 2002: Section 29
- The Academies Handbook

Flowchart

Summary of Dealing with Complaints



**COMPLAINT FORM**

Please complete and return to the Vice Principal who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Mobile telephone number:

Email address

Please give details of your complaint.

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.

(Who did you speak to and what was the response)?

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What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

