

The International
school & community college

Unlocking Potential

GENERAL SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Reviewed: May 2011
Date of Next Review: May 2012



Unlocking Potential – Raising Achievement

BSF Phase 1 - Our transformed school buildings will be completed by September 2011

GENERAL SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. This procedure sets out the way in which general school complaints from parents and others are managed.
2. The **general** school complaints procedure only applies to complaints which are the responsibility of the school and are not covered by other separate complaints procedures.
3. Complaints about some matters have separate established procedures e.g.
 - * the content of a statement of SEN
 - * pupil admissions
 - * pupil exclusions
 - * the National Curriculum and other related issues including religious education
 - * child protection matters
 - * the conduct of staff at the school
 - * matters which are the responsibility of the Local Education Authority.

Complaints about these issues should be directed to the appropriate body as outlined in Appendix 1.

4. All complaints will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible. The period of consideration will vary with the gravity and complexity of the complaint and the urgency with which it needs to be settled.
5. The Governing Body will ensure that if the complainant wishes, information whether verbal or written will be in the complainant's primary language.

Stage 1 - First Contact (Informal Stage)

6. Parents/Carers will be given the opportunity to discuss any concern with the appropriate member of staff who will attempt to clarify with the parent/carer the nature of the concern and assure them that the school wants to listen. The member of staff should ascertain at this point what outcome the parent is seeking.
7. If the member of staff first contacted cannot immediately deal with the matter they should note the details of the concern in writing and refer it to the appropriate person e.g. Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher or Head of Student Progress. On certain major issues e.g. behaviour of staff the Head Teacher may decide to deal with concerns directly at this stage.



Unlocking Potential – Raising Achievement

BSF Phase 1 - Our transformed school buildings will be completed by September 2011

8. The member of staff dealing with the concern will make sure that the parent/carer is clear what action has been agreed and the outcome confirmed in writing.
9. If the parent/carer is not satisfied with the outcome, the matter will be referred to the Head Teacher (if he/she has not already dealt with the issue). The Head Teacher will seek any necessary clarification of the concerns including interviewing the parents where this would be helpful. The Head Teacher will advise the parents of the outcome of their concern. At this point the complaint is still at the informal stage.
10. When the informal stage has been completed, the parents/carers will be made aware of the procedure for taking their concerns further should they be dissatisfied.

Stage 2 - Formal Consideration

11. Where a parent/carer (or other) has made an approach to the school through the informal stage and is not satisfied with the outcome, they should write to the Head Teacher giving details of their concerns and asking for the matter to be given further consideration.

Please see paragraphs 22 and 23 if the concerns relate to the Head Teacher.

12. All complaints reaching this stage will be logged using the complaints record form attached as Appendix 2, and immediately acknowledged by the school. A copy will be forwarded to the Clerk of the Governing Body for information.
13. The Head Teacher will seek any clarification necessary about the complaint, including interviewing the parent where necessary. The parent may be accompanied by a friend or representative.
14. The Head Teacher will also seek any necessary advice on the matter and investigate it carefully.
15. The parent/carer will be notified in writing of the outcome of the complaint, usually within 15 school days of receipt of the letter.
16. Where a parent/carer is not satisfied with the outcome of this first formal stage, they have 28 calendar days, from the date of the Head Teacher's letter to register the complaint with the Clerk of the Governing Body of the school.

Stage 3 (Formal) - Referral to the Governing Body

17. Where a parent/carer (or other) has made an approach to the school through the first formal stage and is not satisfied with the outcome, they should write to the Chair of



Unlocking Potential – Raising Achievement

BSF Phase 1 - Our transformed school buildings will be completed by September 2011

Governors, giving details of their concerns and asking for the matter to be given further consideration.

18. The Governing Body of the School will only consider complaints which have already progressed through stages 1 and 2 outlined in this procedure.

19. On receipt of a written complaint from a parent the Chair of the Governing Body will -
 - arrange for the complaint to be immediately logged and acknowledged using the form included as Appendix 2
 - check that the complaint has already completed stages 1 and 2
 - check that the 28 day period since Stage 2 has been complied with
 - seek any further clarification necessary about the nature of the complaint
 - arrange for the appropriate committee of the Governing Body to consider the complaint as soon as it is practical to do so, but usually within 15 school days
 - invite the parent/carer and any representative to the meeting.

20. A committee of the Governing Body will consider the complaint giving the parent or their representative an opportunity to address them. The Head Teacher will also be given an opportunity to address the Governors. A detailed procedure covering the conduct of this meeting is attached as Appendix 3 to this document.

21. The Governing Body will notify the outcome of the meeting, in writing, to the parent and Head Teacher within 7 calendar days. This concludes the process for considering a general complaint.

Complaints against the action of the Head Teacher

22. Given their prominent role in the management of the school, sometimes complaints which initially seem to be about the Head Teacher are in fact more general complaints and are covered by the procedure contained in this document.



Unlocking Potential – Raising Achievement

BSF Phase 1 - Our transformed school buildings will be completed by September 2011

23. Where there is a specific complaint about the conduct of a member of staff, including the Head Teacher, it may be more appropriate for it to be considered under the separate disciplinary process where the findings and outcomes are confidential. Where such matters refer to the conduct of the Head Teacher they should initially be referred to the Chair of the Governing Body.



Unlocking Potential – Raising Achievement

BSF Phase 1 - Our transformed school buildings will be completed by September 2011

THE 'WHERE' GUIDE TO COMPLAINTS

Types of Complaint	Appropriate Procedure	Contact
General School Complaints (not including areas list below)	Schools Complaints Procedure	Head Teacher of School *
Matters of responsibility of Local Education Authority only e.g. Home-to-School Transport	Education Service	Relevant Section of the Education Service
Complaints about the School Curriculum	National Curriculum and Religious Education Complaints Procedure	Governing Body in first instance.
Conduct of school staff	School Disciplinary Procedure	Head Teacher of School
Special Educational Needs Review of or content of statutory statement	Various - provided for by 1996 Education Act	Special Educational Needs Division, Casework Team, Education Service, Margaret Street, Birmingham
Admission of Pupils to Foundation Schools	[Appeal Panel [re: non-admission	Governing Body of School
Exclusion of Pupils of Foundation Schools	[Provision of 1998 Education Act and DFEE Circular 10/99	Governing Body of School
Child Abuse	Area Child Protection Committee, Child Protection Procedures	Education Welfare Service, Education Service, local office (see map)



Unlocking Potential – Raising Achievement

BSF Phase 1 - Our transformed school buildings will be completed by September 2011

--	--	--

- * See paragraphs 22 and 23 of the main document General School Complaints Procedure.

- ** Department for Education and Employment.



Unlocking Potential – Raising Achievement

BSF Phase 1 - Our transformed school buildings will be completed by September 2011

Stage 2 - First Formal Stage

Date received.....

Date acknowledged.....

Date of any meeting with parent.....

Date.....

Final written response to parent.....

Date.....

Resolve at this stage: Yes No

Response sent within time limit: Yes No

Other comments:

Stage 3 - Second Formal Stage

Date received.....

Date acknowledged.....

Date of G.B. meeting.....

Outcome:

Date of letter to parent confirming outcome.....

Response sent within time limit Yes No

Summary of finding:

Action to be taken:



SUGGESTED PROCEDURE FOR A GOVERNING BODY MEETING DEALING WITH A FORMAL PARENTAL COMPLAINT

1. The Chair opens the meeting explaining that the purpose of the meeting is to listen to the parental complaint. Both the Head Teacher and Parent and their representative are present until item 8 of this procedure.
2. The parent/carer (or other) presents his/her case stating the issues clearly.
3. Governors, parents/carer/other and any representative of the Chief Education Officer, have an opportunity to ask questions of the parent seeking clarification.
4. The Head Teacher responds to the complaint including providing information about how the concerns have been handled and of any action taken.
5. The parents/carer, Governors and any representative of the Chief Education Officer have an opportunity to ask questions of the Head Teacher.
6. The Head Teacher sums up.
7. The parent/carer sums up.
8. The Head Teacher and parent/carer leave to allow the Committee to consider the concerns, if appropriate.
9. The Clerk to the Governing Body will confirm to the Head Teacher and parent/carer, in writing, the Committee's decision (usually within 7 calendar days of the meetings).



Unlocking Potential – Raising Achievement

BSF Phase 1 - Our transformed school buildings will be completed by September 2011