



The John Bentley School

An Outstanding Centre for Learning

Parental Complaints Procedure



The School Vision

An Outstanding Centre for Learning

This vision will be realised through ensuring that:

- Teaching will inspire, motivate and challenge students to learn.
- Every student will achieve more than they ever thought possible.
- The Calne area and community will be proud of JBS.
- We will fully support every individual in our school community.
- We will have an inspirational learning environment.

Links to other documents:

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Home School Agreement
- Procedure on dealing with vexatious complaints
- Data Protection Policy

Version Control



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1. Who is this procedure for:

- 1.1 This procedure is for all parents and carers of students attending the John Bentley School who may have a concern or complaint about the John Bentley School or its staff.
- 1.2 The Procedure 'On Dealing With Vexatious Complaints' will be followed in respect of concerns or complaints made by any one else including members of the community and parents or carers of former John Bentley School students.

2. General principles

- 2.1 The John Bentley School is committed to addressing parental and carers concerns or complaints in an appropriate, timely and professional manner.
- 2.2 We recognise that effective handling of concerns at an early stage can prevent problems from escalating. We therefore encourage parents and carers to raise any concerns when they arise or as soon after as possible.
- 2.3 The John Bentley School will investigate and deal with any concerns or complaints made within one year of the incident or incidents occurring. If a complaint or concern is made about an incident that occurred longer than one year ago, it will not be investigated or dealt with.
- 2.4 Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting a statutory inspection of the School requests to access them.
- 2.5 On some occasions, a concern or complaint that has been raised may require investigation or discussion with a number of people. In such cases it may be that the concern or complaint takes longer to be resolved than the time scales that are given. However, the complainant will be kept informed as to relevant development and progress.
- 2.6 A written record is kept of all complaints and whether they are resolved at Stage 1 – 4 or proceed to Stage 5. The Principal reviews this record.

3. Complaints Procedure

- 3.1 The majority of issues raised by parents and carers are concerns rather than complaints and can be dealt with informally, we encourage parents, and carers to resolve their concerns informally following the Stage 1 procedure set out below wherever possible. However, depending on the nature of a concern the parent or carer may wish to raise a formal complaint in which case Stages 2 – 5 will apply.
- 3.2 In summary the Complaints Procedure has 5 stages:
 - Stage 1 A concern is raised informally with an appropriate member of staff
 - Stage 2 A formal complaint is raised with a member of the School Leadership Team
 - Stage 3 A formal complaint is raised with the Principal
 - Stage 4 A formal complaint is raised with the Chair of Governors

Stage 5 A formal complaint is raised with the Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel



4. Stage 1 Raising a concern informally with an appropriate member of staff

- 4.1 The vast majority of concerns can be satisfactorily resolved informally.
- 4.2 Where possible concerns should be raised initially on an informal basis ideally with the member of staff concerned or if this is not appropriate then with the student's Form Tutor or Head of Key Stage.
- 4.3 If the matter is not dealt with or resolved satisfactorily or, if the complainant considers it appropriate, the concern or complaint should be raised with a member of the School Leadership Team following the procedure set out in Stage 2.

5. Stage 2 Raising a formal complaint with a member of the School Leadership Team

- 5.1 If the complainant feels that following the Stage 1 procedure is not appropriate or they feel that their concern or complaint has not been resolved or dealt with satisfactorily in Stage 1 then they should write (by letter or email) to a member of the School Leadership Team setting out the nature of their concern or complaint and what (if anything) has been done to resolve it so far.
- 5.2 Contact details for the Senior Leadership Team are available on the school website.
- 5.3 The recipient of the written complaint will endeavour to contact the person making the complaint within five school working days of receipt, and will respond to the issues that have been raised and explain how they propose to proceed.
- 5.4 The complainant may be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the matter further. Any such meeting will normally take place within ten school working days of acknowledgment of the complaint, and the aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible. A date by which time the complainant will receive a response to their complaint will be given and discussed at the meeting. Where mutually agreed a verbal response will be given. However, if a detailed exploration of the issues is needed a written report will be sent to the complainant as quickly as possible. This will seek to respond to the complaint, explain the School's response and rationale. It will also outline any action taken or proposed. This written report will be provided within a maximum of five school working days of the meeting.
- 5.5 If following this stage of the procedure the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, the member of the School Leadership Team who has been dealing with the complaint will offer to refer the matter to the Principal.
- 5.6 Alternatively, rather than following Stage 2 parents or carers may wish to go straight to Stage 3 and write a formal letter (or email) of complaint to the Principal. Contact details for the Principal are available via the school website.

6. Stage 3 Raising a formal concern or complaint with the Principal

- 6.1 If following Stage 2 of the procedure the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, the member of the School Leadership Team who had been dealing with the complaint will offer to refer the matter to the Principal.
- 6.2 Alternatively, rather than following Stage 2 parents or carers may wish to go straight to Stage 3 and write a formal letter (or email) of complaint to the Principal. Contact details for the Principal are available via the school website.
- 6.3 The letter to the Principal should state the nature of the complaint and any relevant details including, where applicable, what actions have been taken by whom thus far to resolve the complaint.



6.4 The Principal will endeavour to acknowledge any such written complaints or referrals within five school working days. The Principal will examine matters thoroughly before either responding in writing or inviting the complainant to a meeting to discuss the complaint. The Principal would expect to complete this stage of the procedure within fourteen school working days of receiving the written complaint or referral.

6.5 If following this stage of the procedure the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, or if the complaint is about the Principal, the complaint will be referred to the Chair of Governors whose contact details are available via the school website.

7. Stage 4 Raising a formal concern or complaint with the Chair of Governors

7.1 On receipt of a written complaint about the Principal or, (where the complaint is not about the Principal) on receipt of a referral from the Principal, the Chair of Governors will request a full report from the Principal and or member of the Senior Leadership Team who has been dealing with the complaint and will examine matters thoroughly before either responding in writing or inviting the complainant to a meeting to discuss the complaint.

7.2 The Chair of Governors would expect to complete this stage of the process within fourteen school working days of receiving the referral.

7.3 If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, they will be offered the opportunity to have the issue referred to the Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel.

8. Stage 5 Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel

8.1 If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, they will be offered the opportunity to have the issue referred to the Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel.

8.2 The Appeal Panel consists of at least three people appointed by the Chair of Governors one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the John Bentley School. No member of the panel will have previously had any direct involvement in the matters detailed in the complaint.

8.3 The Appeal Panel will look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. The Clerk to the Governors will invite the complainant to an Appeal Panel meeting.

8.4 The complainant will be asked if there are any papers they would like to have circulated prior to the meeting and may choose to be accompanied by an appropriate supporting person.

8.5 The Appeal Panel is tasked with making findings and recommendations.

8.6 A copy of the Appeal Panel's findings and recommendations will be sent by e-mail or otherwise to complainant and, where relevant, to the person complained about.

8.7 A copy of the Appeal Panel's findings and recommendations will also be made available for inspection on the School premises by the Chair of Governors and Principal.

8.8 It is the intention of the School to resolve any complaint made within a maximum of twenty-eight school working days following the decision to refer the matter to the Appeal Panel.

8.9 The Governors Appeal Panel hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process. In the event that complainant considers that the matter is still not resolved, they can refer the matter to the Secretary of State for Education.