



BOA

General Complaints Policy For Parents & Carers

**Date of Issue: September 2020
Date of Review: September 2021**

(This policy can be made available in larger print or a more accessible format if required)

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This policy covers complaints of a general nature raised by parents/carers. Throughout this policy, a complaint is understood to be “an expression of dissatisfaction requiring a response”.

The policy applies to parents of students currently registered at the Academy. It does not apply to parents of prospective students. This policy applies to former parents *only* if the complaint was initially raised when the student was still registered at the Academy.

At BOA we are committed to trying to resolve concerns wherever possible without the need for a formal written complaint. This document sets out the procedure to follow if parents wish to make a complaint and what they can expect from the Academy by way of response.

The Procedure:

Stage 1 (informal)

In the first instance the complaint should be raised with the relevant tutor, teacher or Pathway/Department Director. It is anticipated that at this stage the complaint would be initiated verbally or through email. Most complaints will be successfully resolved at this stage. Depending on the nature of the complaint the member of staff spoken to may refer the complaint to an Assistant Principal or Vice Principal who will initiate appropriate action. In all cases it would be anticipated that the member of staff would inform their line manager of the complaint and the outcome.

Stage 2 (formal)

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint at Stage 1, they are requested to put their complaint, with details, in writing to the Principal under Stage 2 of this procedure. The Principal will acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as practicable and normally within 2 working days. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. The Principal may meet or speak with the parents concerned, normally within 7 working days of receiving the complaint during term time, to discuss the matter. It may also be necessary for the Principal (or a person appointed by the Principal) to carry out further investigation for all or part of the complaint. Once the Principal is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a

decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Principal will take all reasonable steps to try and resolve the complaint within 20 working days of receiving the complaint under Stage 2 of the procedure.

A central log will be maintained of complaints that reach the Principal under Stage 2. This will include the date, reason for and outcome of the complaint.

If the complaint concerns the Principal, the Chair of the Board of Directors will manage the complaint in accordance with Stage 2 above.

Stage 3 (panel hearing)

In the unlikely event that the Principal cannot resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the complainant then concerns should be raised, in writing, to the Chair of the Board of Directors at the Academy address. The Chair of the Board of Directors has been appointed by the Board of Directors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.

The Chair will acknowledge the complaint as soon as possible, usually within 2 working days during term time (or within 10 working days or as soon as reasonably practicable during Academy holidays). The Chair will schedule a hearing to take place normally within 10 working days during term time (or within 15 working days or as soon as reasonably practicable during Academy holidays). The complainant will be invited to attend the panel hearing. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the Academy. The remaining panel members may be selected from the Board of Directors.

The complainant can be accompanied at the panel hearing (such as by a friend or relative) but must inform the Chair prior to the panel hearing. Legal representation will not be appropriate.

After due consideration of all facts the Panel consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally within 7 working days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and sent to the Principal and the Chair and, where relevant, the person who has complained. A copy will also be made available for inspection on the Academy premises by the Board of Directors and Principal.

The Chair will take all reasonable steps to ensure the Panel will have considered the complaint and made their findings and recommendations within 20 working days of having received the request for a panel hearing under Stage 3 of this procedure.

NB: If all stages of the procedures have been followed and the complainant remains unsatisfied and attempts to reopen the same complaint, the Chair of the Board of Directors may write to the complainant to inform them that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is closed.

Recording complaints:

At all stages in the process a written log of how the complaint has been dealt with will be kept. This should include dates and times of when phone calls have been made as well as minutes from meetings and a copy of any correspondence sent.

The Academy will record:

- whether the complaint is resolved following an informal or formal procedure, or whether the complaint proceeded to a panel hearing;
- action taken as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld)

All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Time scale:

At all points in this process parents/carers will be kept informed of the progress of their complaint.

All references to 'working days' in this policy means Monday-Friday (excluding weekends). In the event of a complaint being received during a holiday period, it will be dealt with as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within the timescales set out throughout this policy. Where there are delays in collecting information (for example, staff absence) parents will be informed of the reasons why and a likely timeframe for a response.

As part of the Academy's investigations, it would be anticipated in most cases that a conversation will take place either via telephone or via an informal meeting with the complainant to ensure the Academy has clarity about their concern.