

Bowden House School

Complaints Policy Parents/Carers/Others

The conduct of Bowden House School is under the direction of the Governing Body with the Headteacher responsible for the internal organisation and management of the school.

The school provides high quality education and care for students with social, emotional and mental health difficulties and aims to establish and maintain positive relationships with parents/carers/social workers; representatives of other agencies as well as members of the local community and those responsible for placing students in this school. All staff work hard to improve the academic and social skills of the students in this school and make every effort to ensure that each student is happy and makes good progress.

It is the expectation of the school's Governing Body that the school is compliant with **Standard 18.1 of the Residential Special Schools, National Minimum Standards (April 2015)** which states that '**The school has and follows, an appropriate policy on responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant, regulatory requirements**'. The school also complies with **Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 which places a duty on Governing Bodies to 'establish procedures for dealing with complaints relating to the school or to the provision of facilities or services.....'** any concerns brought to the attention of any member of staff in respect of the students' education; care or their behaviour within the local or extended community, is addressed without the need for formal procedures and that matters are resolved immediately and satisfactorily.

However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in the event that complaints are made and aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint; attaching the necessary importance of each complaint and attempting to resolve any issues through effective communication and as promptly as possible. Within this policy, the school believes that in taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage, that the numbers of formal complaints will be reduced.

Bowden House School recognises that not all concerns are complaints that fall within this policy and will endeavour to resolve informally any concerns raised with them. If such informal efforts do not resolve the issue, then the matter(s) will be treated as a complaint and dealt with under this policy.

It is the policy of this school that any person(s) who challenges the policies or practices of the school; the conduct, actions or omissions of members of staff employed by the school; the standard of education and/or care provided for each pupil as well as any unacceptable or disruptive behaviour by the pupils, has their complaint dealt with in a professional, courteous manner and that there is an informal and formal route by which matters of concern can be addressed. Depending upon the

nature of the complaint, the Complaints Procedure should be completed within 28 days.

Complaints can be made either verbally or in writing and will be recorded in the 'Complaints by Parents/Carers/Others Book' kept in the Student & Family Co-ordinator's Office. A written response will be given to each complainant stating that the matter will be investigated. It is expected that most issues can be resolved by contacting designated members of staff who will endeavour to respond to a complaint to the satisfaction of all concerned. The school believes that this process will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed with an outcome that ensures an on-going, positive relationship between the school and all concerned with the welfare of its students.

The designated members of staff are as follows:

- Headteacher
- Deputy Headteacher
- Joint Heads of Care
- Student & Family Co-ordinator
- Chair of Governors

If the complaint is of a sufficiently serious nature, the following actions will take place:

- the complainant should contact the Headteacher who will investigate further
- the school's Governing Body may be called upon to consider, resolve or adjudicate if complaints are referred to them by the Headteacher or by a complainant who is not satisfied with the initial outcome of an investigation
- if the complaint is not resolved through the less formal route of mediation, etc., the complainant can make representation to the Local Authority (LBTH) where arrangements will be made to hold a meeting chaired by an independent person who will consider all the evidence and make a further judgment in an attempt to resolve the complaint
- if the complainant is still not content with the outcome of the complaint, s/he is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education (the Department for Education)
- the students in the school, their families/carers and all other interested parties, should be given details of how to contact Ofsted in the event a serious complaint is made
- if the complaint is a possible Child Protection issue, the school's Safeguarding and Protection of Children procedures should be followed immediately

Complaints made to the School

If a complaint is made to the Headteacher, one or more of the following actions could be taken:

- the Headteacher may decide to deal with the complaint or refer it to one of the other designated members of staff
- when a member of staff receives a complaint and responds to it, the Headteacher should be notified of the complaint and how it was resolved
- the Headteacher (or designate), should inform the complainant that their complaint has been investigated and dealt with correctly in line with the policies and procedures of the school
- where the complaint has been found by the Headteacher to be valid, s/he with the overall responsibility for the internal management of the school, will take the appropriate action
- the Headteacher or the complainant will refer the matter to the Governing Body for their consideration
- when all 'informal' channels have been exhausted and there is still dissatisfaction, the complainant should be made aware of how more formal procedures can be initiated

Complaints made to the Governing Body

If a complaint is made directly to the Governing Body, the following actions should be taken:

- the complainant should be advised to speak to the Headteacher so that an attempt can be made to resolve the issue less formally
- Governors must not prejudice themselves by discussing the complaint as this would prevent their participation in any meeting at a later stage
- if, at any point, it appears that there are issues regarding school staff that need to be dealt with under the disciplinary or other staffing procedures, advice should be sought from the Human Resources Department within the local authority (LBTH)
- if the Chair of the Governing Body is satisfied that the informal procedure has been exhausted, s/he may, in discussion with the Headteacher, decide to initiate the formal procedure
- if the complaint is about the Headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body will inform the Headteacher of the complaint and attempt, through an informal approach, to resolve the matter. However, the LA (LBTH) should always be informed of any complaint made against the Headteacher
- the complainant will be advised of the Chair's conclusion.

The role of the Governors is to ensure the following:

- that the aims and objectives of the school are supported by giving due consideration to the complaints of parents/carers/social workers and others
- that all complaints are considered fully, fairly, confidentially, promptly and thoroughly and, in the first instance, on an informal basis
- that there is an effective partnership between the school and all interested parties
- that in the absence of a resolution to the satisfaction of the complainant, to issue a clear decision that will enable the complainant, the Headteacher or the Governing Body to consider how, if at all, the matter should be taken further
- that all members of the school community have the opportunity to express their views, where appropriate.

The formal procedure:

- the complainant will be asked to make a written submission to the Chair of the Governing Body, giving details of their complaint. If there are difficulties due to literacy or language needs, the complaint can be made verbally and/or arrangements made for the use of an interpreter
- the Chair of the Governing Body, the Vice-Chair or the Clerk to the Governors, will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing
- the Governing Body will arrange for the complaint to be heard by a Panel of three Governors who have not been involved at an earlier stage. The Panel should be set up at a convened meeting of the full Governing Body and will, where possible, reflect a cross section of the Governors
- the complainant is kept informed of the progress of their complaint
- the Panel will be provided with copies of the complaint and all other relevant documentation
- at least five working days notice of the hearing by the Panel will be given to all concerned
- all parties involved in the dispute may be accompanied, if desired, by a friend, colleague, representative or an interpreter and may call witnesses
- the Headteacher (or the Chair of Governors, if the complaint is against the Headteacher) will explain what has already been done to attempt to resolve the complaint and the outcome of any investigation
- the complainant is provided with details of the outcome of their complaint in an accessible format and at the earliest opportunity.

October 2017

Bowden House School–Complaints from parents/carers/others

Please fill in every section on this page. Delete where appropriate. The Complaint's Procedure must be fully completed within 28 days

Complainant's name:Date

Address:.....

..... Contact Number:

Complaint No Verbal or written complaint

Complaint received by:

Reported to:

- Headteacher
- Deputy Headteacher
- Heads of Care
- Student & Family Co-ordinator
- School Office

Brief details of complaint

Signed by:

Date:

Date of written acknowledgement (must be within 72 hours)

Decision of action(s) to be taken:

Signed by:

Date:

Was the Complaint substantiated? Yes/No/In part

Consequences

Signed by:

Date:

Complaint and response in Complaints Book Yes/No

Signed by:

Date:

School: Bowden House

Policy: Complaints by Parents/Carers/Others

Agreed: Autumn Term 2013
Up-dated October 2017

Responsibility: Governors

Review Date: Autumn Term 2018

Signed by: _____
Chair of Governors

Date: _____