



Bishop Challoner

Catholic Secondary School

Introduction

Bishop Challoner Catholic Secondary School is committed to providing effective education in a secure environment for all our students in a spirit of care and efficiency. Good relationships with all our partners in education are important for the good progress and development of all our students.

From time to time, parents may raise legitimate concerns about their children's education. Most parents do not regard such inquiries as "complaints" in the formal sense. Many such issues may prove, on investigation, to be the result of human misunderstanding. Nevertheless, such concerns will be addressed with urgency and thoroughness.

General Principles

1. The first point of contact for any concern will normally be the Form Tutor.
2. If matters raised as concerns are not resolved, the formal complaints procedure can be invoked. This Complaints Policy is designed to provide a clear procedure so that all complaints, however serious, can be dealt with at the appropriate level.
3. Every complaint will be investigated. Whenever a complaint is upheld, every effort will be made to rectify the issue and, if necessary, action will be taken to try to prevent a reoccurrence of the problem. The school will not investigate anonymous complaints or allegations, but confidentiality will be respected and the identity of informants will be protected whenever necessary.
4. Complainants may be parents or carers, students, neighbours, visitors or others who use the school site.
5. Admissions, exclusions, special needs placements, employment matters, staff disciplinary issues and any criminal matters are subject to other formal procedures and are therefore not covered in this policy.

Timescales

Complaints to the school will normally be acknowledged within two working days of receipt and a response will usually be provided within five working days. When a matter requires fuller investigation than is possible within the normal timescale, the complainant will be informed and an indication given of when a final response can be expected.

Formal Complaints Procedure - Complaints from Students

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated in school are encouraged to speak to the appropriate teacher, usually the Form Tutor or Head of Year. The complaint will be investigated to resolve the matter. Where the complaint or subsequent investigation raises issues of a disciplinary significance, the matter should be referred immediately to the Headteacher, the Deputy Head or one of the Assistant Headteachers.

Formal Complaints Procedure - Complaints from Parents or Others

1. Telephone complaints should be directed to the Head's PA who will complete a complaint form (Formal Complaint Record) and refer the matter to the Headteacher.
2. Verbal complaints or allegations made by a visitor to the school will be referred to any available member of the Senior Management Team who will complete a complaint form.
3. Written complaints received by school staff should be copied immediately to the Head's PA who will complete a complaint form and attach the copy letter.



4. Where a formal complaint is received by a member of staff, they should acknowledge receipt without making any commitment or comment on the issue, except that it will be investigated and that a response will be provided directly to the complainant. The member of staff should then inform the Headteacher, Deputy Head or Assistant Headteacher.
5. In the case of a verbal complaint being received by a governor, the governor should advise the complainant to contact the school directly. If the complainant is reluctant to do so, the governor should ensure they understand the full facts as perceived by the complainant without making any commitment or comment on the issue, except that it will be investigated and that a response will be provided either directly to the complainant or via the governor. The governor should then discuss the matter with the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher.
6. In the case of a written complaint being received by a governor, it is the responsibility of the receiving governor to ensure that the complaint is acknowledged within two working days of receipt. The letter of complaint should be passed to the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors should be informed. The matter will be investigated in the usual way and a copy of the response sent to the receiving governor and to the Chair of Governors.
7. The Headteacher will investigate or cause investigation to be made of all complaints, except in cases relating to the Headteacher. If a parent feels that the Headteacher has acted unreasonably in the exercise of his duties and powers, they may appeal in writing to the Chair of Governors (see below).
8. No action will be taken without the subject(s) of the complaint having opportunity to comment on the complaint and to suggest independent witnesses who might be called upon to provide evidence to the investigating manager.
9. Most complaints are satisfactorily resolved by the appropriate manager reporting back, usually in writing, to the complainant. If the complainant is still not satisfied, they may appeal to the Headteacher, who has final authority in matters of the internal organisation, management and control of the school.
10. The outcome of the investigation and any action taken as a result will be entered in the record of complaints received and any implications arising.

The Role of the Governing Body

1. Complaints about the school's policies or procedure will be referred to the Chair of Governors for consideration by the relevant governors' committee.
2. Complaints about the Headteacher or any governor should be directed to the Chair of Governors. Allegations of misconduct will be dealt with according to the relevant county procedures.
3. Representations to the Chair of Governors concerning the treatment of a complaint may, at the discretion of the Chair, be referred to an Appeal Panel of three governors convened for that purpose.
4. Complaints regarding the Chair of Governors should be made to the Diocesan Director for Schools c/o Park Place Pastoral Centre.
5. In all cases, Governors should follow agreed school and/or statutory procedures.