



# THE BISHOPSWOOD SCHOOLS FEDERATION

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

### **School Statement**

This policy is intended to set out how the school will deal with general complaints. The policy follows the guidance as set out in the County Manual of Personnel Practice. Parents and Carers should be able to express their views in the knowledge that they will be dealt with fairly. The Bishopswood Schools Federation is committed to working with parents and Carers in the education of their child.

### **Our aim:**

- To provide an easily understood complaints procedure.
- To encourage parents to share their concerns as early as possible.
- To aid communication between home and school.

### **Guidelines:**

#### **Stage 1: Dealing with informal concerns and complaints.**

- The parent or carer should contact the class teacher to talk through their concern. If the teacher cannot deal with the matter immediately, he/she should make a note of date, name, contact number and the issue raised and get back to the parent as soon as possible. Informal complaints can be dealt with by senior members of staff, the Executive Headteacher or a Senior Leadership Team Governor depending on the nature of the complaint.
- The person dealing with the concern should make sure that the parent or carer knows what action (if any) or monitoring of the situation has been agreed, putting this in writing only if this seems the best way to make things clear.
- Where no satisfactory solution has been found parents or carers should be asked if they wish their concern to be considered further. If so, they should be given clear information, both orally and in writing, about how to make a formal complaint and about any independent advice available to them.

#### **Stage 2: Formal complaints to the Executive Headteacher**

- When a formal complaint is made it will be acknowledged within 3 working days.
- The acknowledgement will give a brief explanation of the complaints procedure and a target date for providing a response to the complaint. This will normally be within 10 working days.
- The Executive Headteacher should provide an opportunity for the complainant to meet with them to discuss the situation. They should be informed that they may bring a friend, relative or advocate with them and asked if they need any special requirements, such as wheelchair access.
- If necessary, the Executive Headteacher should conduct interviews; children should be interviewed with their parents or carers, unless they specifically request otherwise. If this is the case then another staff member should attend.

- The Executive Headteacher should keep written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentations.
- When all relevant facts have been established, the Executive Headteacher should inform the parents or carers. A written response should be given, that includes a full explanation of the decisions and the reasons for it. If the school is taking action, this should also be included. The complainant should also be advised that if he/she wishes to take the action further, then he/she should notify the Chair of Governors within a month of receiving the letter.
- If the complaint is about the Executive Headteacher, then the Governors Complaints Panel should carry out all Stage 2 procedures.

### **Stage 3: Formal Complaints to Governors**

- To make a formal written complaint to the Governing Body the complainant should hand in their letter to the School Office, who will then pass it on to the Chair of Governors.
- If a formal complaint is made to the Chair of Governors, the clerk should write to acknowledge receipt of the written complaint. The acknowledgement should state that three members of the school complaint's panel would hear the complaint within 20 working days. The letter should also explain that that the complainant has the right to submit any further documents before the panel meets.
- The clerk to the Governors should arrange to convene a Complaints panel elected from members of the Governing Body.
- The meeting should take place within 20 working days, with all members having all relevant correspondence as soon as the panel is confirmed.
- The Chair of Governors will inform all parties involved in the meeting, of the date of the meeting at least 5 days in advance, how it will be run and that the complainant has the right to bring a friend or advocate. The complainant also has the right to provide further evidence.
- The meeting will provide for:
  1. The complainant to explain their response and the Executive Headteacher to explain the school's response.
  2. Both parties to have the right to question each other.
  3. Panel members to have the right to ask questions.
  4. Any party to have the right to call witnesses.
  5. Final statements by both the Executive Headteacher and complainant to be made.
  6. The panel will then consider the complaint and respond within 15 working days.

The panel will consider all evidence and statements and a written statement outlining the viewpoint of the panel must be sent to the Executive Headteacher and complainant. The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

**Policy Reviewed:** May 2024

**Next Review:** May 2026