



Bridgewater
High School



SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

A Leaflet For Guidance



Why have a complaints procedure?

1. To show parents that the school cares about what they think.
2. To contribute towards School Improvement. Underlying issues may emerge from a complaint so monitoring and reviewing complaints can be a useful tool in evaluating school performance, leading to change and improvement.
3. To inform good practice for responding to parents' concerns: concerns are managed in a structured way, preventing concerns developing into complaints because they are handled badly.
4. To prevent bad feeling developing if a problem remains unresolved.
5. To prevent complaints becoming protracted where a complainant tries to reopen the same issue.
6. To protect **all sides** of a dispute by providing a fair hearing.

How you can complain?

At school we make many decisions every day. We try hard to do our best for all our pupils. Your views help us plan for the future. We like to know when things are going well. We also want parents to tell us about their worries, concerns or complaints as soon as possible. It is much easier for us to sort out a recent problem than something that happened some time ago.

If you are unhappy with the way your child is being treated, or any of our actions or lack of action, please feel able to tell us your concern. We know it can be difficult to question what a school is doing, but if you do not tell us what is worrying you, we cannot explain our actions or put things right. Our support and respect for you and your child will not lessen in any way.



Our promise to you

- 👍 We will deal with your concern or complaint honestly, politely and in confidence.
- 👍 It will be looked into thoroughly, fairly and as quickly as possible.
- 👍 We will keep you up to date with what we are doing.
- 👍 We will apologise if we have made a mistake.
- 👍 We will tell you what we are going to do to put things right.

What to do first

If you have a concern about anything we do you can tell us by telephone, in person or in writing. If any of these are difficult for you, a friend or adviser can speak to us on your behalf. Most concerns or complaints will be sorted out quickly either by putting things right or by explaining the school's actions to you.

Try to speak to the member of staff involved or your child's form tutor or Pastoral and Achievement Leader who will either deal with your issue or pass you on to someone who is more able to help.

Please remember the beginning or end of the school day can be a very busy time. If you talk to a teacher at these times, for practical reasons, it may not be possible to sort things out there and then. Be ready for the teacher to say she or he will see you or ring you as soon as possible. This is because we want to give your worries the attention they deserve. You should not be asked to wait more than a week and often she or he will discuss things with you much sooner. We hope this will be enough to put things right. Sometimes the teacher will send you a brief note after the phone call or meeting with details of what we are doing about your concern.



Making a complaint

If you have already told us about a concern but are not satisfied with how we have responded, you may wish to make a formal complaint.

We have a complaints procedure to make sure we respond to complaints in the best possible way. Our aim is to resolve complaints as quickly and as effectively as possible.

The procedure has four stages. We have time limits in our complaints procedure to make sure that complaints are dealt with as quickly as possible.

Stage 1 is the informal stage. We would like you to put your complaint first to the member of staff involved. If this is not possible, please ask to be referred to a more senior member of staff. S/he will either meet you or, if you prefer, discuss your complaint on the phone.

If your complaint involves the Principal, you should put your complaint to the Chair of Governors who may be contacted via the Clerk to the Governors at the School.

We hope very much that your complaint will be resolved at Stage 1. At the end of Stage 1 if you are still not satisfied, you can complain formally to the Principal moving to Stage 2 which is the Formal Procedure. Please try to do this not more than 5 school days after getting a note explaining the teacher's response to your complaint. If we have not heard from you by then, we will assume that you do not want to take things any further.

If the Principal has already been involved and you remain dissatisfied, you can complain formally to the Chair of Governors via the School. You will be provided with a copy of the full Complaints Policy at this point.



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At Stage 2, the Principal will fully investigate if necessary and arrange to discuss your complaint with you, and then send a letter with an explanation of the actions the school will take to put things right.

If you are not happy with the Principal's response to your complaint, please let us know not more than 5 school days after getting a letter from the Principal explaining the school's response to your complaint. If we have not heard from you by then, we will assume that you do not want to take things any further.

Generally complaints are sorted out at Stage 1 or Stage 2, but occasionally parents still feel dissatisfied and if so have a right to explain their case to a panel of three school governors.

At Stage 3, you will be invited to the governors' appeal hearing, which will be organised at a time which is suitable for you, the Principal and the governors.

We hope very much that our complaints procedure will resolve all complaints in the school but a parent who is not satisfied may take their complaint further and refer it to the EFA or to the School Complaints Unit. **(Stage 4)**.

We keep copies of all correspondence about concerns and complaints. These will be treated with the utmost confidence. You and your child have a legal right to have a copy of your child's school record.

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