



BCS Policy:

Procedure for Handling Complaints

Date: February 2016

Introduction

The Branch Christian School management have a responsibility to respond to complaints about the school or staff. The school takes seriously any matter of complaint and therefore will endeavour to speak with parents / carers about any concerns they may have.

Complaints can be regarded as a positive means of promoting student / parent satisfaction, and also as a way of identifying opportunities where the school can aim to do better.

Any complaint raised, for whatever reason, will be dealt with promptly. Wherever possible, complaints will be addressed at the informal stage without the need to progress to a formal procedure, for example, it would be helpful if the staff receiving the first approach were able to resolve the issue directly, including apologising, where necessary. Formal procedures need only to be started when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

Who can complain, and what about?

Parents, carers, students, and other members of the public can make a complaint, on areas such as:

- Attitude / behaviour of staff.
- Teaching and learning.
- Bullying.
- Health and Safety issues of premises.
- Provision of extra-curricular activities.
- Behaviour of pupils during break-times.
- Disturbance to neighbours during school hours.
- Other.

Note: Whilst the school is not directly responsible for the actions or behaviour of students outside of school hours, we recognise the responsibility of the school for the behaviour of students when they are travelling to / from school.

In matters of complaints concerning PACE work, other lessons, homework, learning centre procedures, parents / carers should make an appointment with the School Administrator to see the Supervisor/s dealing with the student.

On all other matters concerning the school, an appointment can be made with the School Principal by contacting the School Administrator.

Approach to Dealing with Complaints

The school takes seriously any matter of complaint and therefore will endeavour to speak with parents / carers about any concerns. We will:

- Listen to students and parents (or other members of the public) with their complaint(s).
- Seek to resolve complaints swiftly.
- Reply with an acknowledgement letter or e-mail within 3 working days.
- Keep complainants informed about progress.
- Maintain confidentiality as required.
- Arrange for the School Principal to carry out an internal investigation, seeking to establish the facts and clarify the complaint.
- Provide redress where a complaint is found to be justified.
- If necessary meet with the complainant to discuss the matter. If so, a meeting will be arranged between them and the School Principal and School Administrator.
- Maintain a record (in a Complaints Record Book) of all related meetings, discussions and investigations.

Upon completion of the investigation, the School Principal will issue a formal response, in writing, to the complainant. This could simply be an explanation and apology, or:

- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
- An assurance that the event complained of will not reoccur.
- An explanation of the steps taken to make sure it will not happen again.
- An undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

If the school however feels it has done nothing wrong, and does not see that an apology is required, then this will be stated in the formal response.

This formal response to the complaint will be provided no later than 10 working days after the first acknowledgement.

Hopefully, through a quick and professional response, the matter will be successfully resolved. If however the complainant feels that the matter is not resolved, then they will be requested to write a formal letter of complaint to the school giving full details of their grievance. This will then be directed to the Dewsbury Gospel Church Board of Trustees. Once the escalated complaint is received, the School Administrator will pass on the complaint (and the investigation file) to the Secretary of the DGC Board.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, an emergency meeting of the Board may be required. If so, this will be arranged by the Secretary. Should a meeting not be a necessity, then use of email will be the preferred mode of communication between the Board Members.

The Board Secretary will deal with the matter swiftly, and aim to respond to the complainant within 15 working days after receipt of the details from the School Administrator. It may be necessary in this time to arrange to meet with the complainant on a formal basis to discuss the matter.

What if the matter isn't resolved?

If for any reason the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, the complainant may request that three people not directly involved in the management or running of the school might form a panel to hear the complaint.

Also in attendance will be the School Principal, the Board Secretary, and the staff involved with the complaint, along with the parents / carers and one other person of their choosing if they so wish.

The Panel, having listened to all parties concerned, will be requested to put in writing their findings and recommendations. Due to the seriousness of the matter, a formal response in writing from the panel will be provided within 10 working days. A copy of this report will then be issued to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. In addition, the report, along with the entire record of the complaint, will be filed confidently in the school office. This will be made available to Ofsted, upon request should it be required, as part of an inspection.

Conclusion

Every effort will be made to reach a successful conclusion to the matter, and all avenues to arrive at a satisfactory position will be explored. However, should the matter still go unresolved, the complainant will be able to take the matter further should they wish to.

One option may be to contact Christian Education Europe in Swindon, Wiltshire. Or alternatively they may wish to directly approach Ofsted regarding the matter. Should either route of escalation be preferred, then the School Administrator will provide the complainant with the necessary contact names, addresses, and contact numbers. The School Administrator will also advise the School Principal and DGC Board of Trustees that the complaint has not been resolved, and that the issue is set to be escalated to CEE and / or Ofsted.