



BARNARD CASTLE SCHOOL

## Complaints Policy

This is a whole school policy and is published to current parents of pupils.

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<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Date</b>
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Approved	Chairman of Governors	November 2018
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# Complaints Policy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Barnard Castle School operates a complaints procedure to allow those who have concerns or complaints to raise them both informally and formally with those who have responsibility for the management and governance of the School. Whenever a complaint is made, the interests and welfare of the pupil are our primary concern and responsibility. Barnard Castle School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, and takes seriously concerns or complaints that they may wish to raise. We aim to respond courteously and efficiently and to take action where appropriate to ensure that we work in partnership with parents to promote the best interests of the young people in our care. Complaints made by parents will never adversely affect School staff's care or concern for their children.
- 1.2 The policy complies with ISSR Part 7 (updated January 2015) and Standard 18 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (revised April 2015). In addition, the policy includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception). The policy is reviewed annually and its effectiveness is considered by the School's Governors.
- 1.3 The policy is available on request from the School's General Office. Advice to parents of new pupils is given in the frequently asked questions in parental handbook.
- 1.4 The process of resolving complaints involves up to three stages: informal, formal and panel hearing.

## 2. Stage 1: Informal Resolution (Concern)

- 2.1 Many concerns and complaints can be resolved quickly and informally by talking to those people within Barnard Castle School with particular knowledge or interest in the area of concern, or with the person responsible for a pupil's welfare and to this end the Housemaster/Housemistress should be the first point of contact with the aim of a timely and informal resolution. It is regarded as essential and consistent with the school's ethos to keep channels of communication open and deal with concerns as amicably and collegially as possible and at an early stage.
- 2.2 An informal complaint will be acknowledged within two days and, once the staff concerned have fully investigated the matter, they will either meet with or telephone the complainant within 10 days from the receipt of the complaint in an effort to resolve the matter.

## 3. Stage 2: Formal Resolution (Complaint)

- 3.1 Should a complainant's concerns not have been resolved satisfactorily by the informal process, they should be addressed to the Headmaster in writing.
- 3.2 The Headmaster will acknowledge the complaint within two days and, having investigated the matter, aim to meet with or otherwise respond to the complainant within 10 working days from the receipt of the complaint to explain his findings and subsequent recommendations.

#### **4. Stage 3: Panel Hearing**

- 4.1 Should the complainant remain dissatisfied, he or she may write to the Bursar at the school within 7 working days of the date of the Headmaster's response. This letter should be sent or delivered to the General Office at the school and addressed to the Bursar, marked private and confidential. The Bursar will acknowledge receipt of the letter within 3 days and invite the complainant to a hearing with a Complaints Panel; this will be within 10 working days of receipt of the complainant's letter by the Bursar and the date of the Panel Hearing will be mutually agreed.
- 4.2 The Panel will consist of at least two Governors or Senior Managers who have not been party to any of the foregoing process, and one other person of standing who is independent of the management and governance of the School.
- 4.3 The Panel will hear the complaint and the complainant will be given the opportunity to make appropriate representations. The complainant may be accompanied at the Panel Hearing by a friend or supporter, but legal representation is inappropriate.
- 4.4 The complainant, and, where relevant, the person who had been complained about, will be informed in writing of the Panel's findings and recommendations. A copy of those findings and recommendations will also be made available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Headmaster. Notification of this decision will take place within 28 working days of having received the complaint and will be a final one from the School's point of view.

#### **5. Record of Complaints**

- 5.1 Written records of informal and formal written complaints and concerns will be kept in school. These will contain all relevant correspondence, statements, findings, recommendations, noting whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing, and actions taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).
- 5.2 Although these will be confidential, they will be available to the Secretary of State and school inspectors inspecting under sections 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act.

#### **6. For complaints relating to the EYFS:**

This policy also covers the Early Years Foundation Stage and records of complaints are kept for at least three years.

- Parents may contact OFSTED and/or the Independent Schools Inspectorate if they believe the school is not meeting the EYFS requirements.
- OFSTED can be contacted at: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD or via their Helpline: 0300 123 4666 or website: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools/for-parents-andcarers/how-complain>.
- ISI can be contacted at: Independent Schools Inspectorate, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA or by telephone: 020 7600 0100 or via their website: [www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net).
- The record of complaints in relation to EYFS must be made available to OFSTED and ISI on request.

- The Headmaster will investigate and notify the complainant of the outcome of the investigation in fulfilment of EYFS requirements, within 28 days of receipt of a complaint.