

**Ealing Independent College**

# Complaints Procedure

This procedure applies to all pupils in the college

BELLEVUE | EDUCATION

Reviewed October 2021

by

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# Ealing Independent College. Complaints Procedure

## Guidance

The complaints procedure at Ealing Independent College has three stages, to be covered in a period of 28 days excluding college holidays and weekends between the complaint being made and the final resolution. The DfE does not distinguish between a 'concern' and a 'complaint'. Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the college is considered as a complaint and will be addressed in accordance with this policy. In this respect, it is anticipated that the large majority of complaints will be resolved at the informal stage.

The college will keep records of complaints which are resolved at the informal stage for management purposes, for example to enable patterns or trends to be monitored. A formal written and/or electronic record is kept of complaints made to the college which reach the formal stage. Details will be recorded of;

- whether the complaint was resolved following the formal stage or proceeded to a panel hearing;
- action taken by the college as a result of the complaint, (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld).

Records are kept for at least three years. The college will provide ISI and Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

## Stage 1 - Informal complaint (Resolution normally within 5 working days)

All complaints may be made on an informal basis initially; verbally or in writing. Sections A-F deal with any informal complaints. In many instances issues will be dealt with straight away. Where further information is required every effort will be made to make an initial response within 24 hours of the issue being raised.

### A Complaints by parents about a member of staff

- i. Direct discussion with parents and Principal / Vice Principal
- ii. Direct discussion with member of staff followed by conversation between member of staff and parents and aggrieved parties
- iii. Action on points raised agreed
- iv. Review situation

### B Complaints by parents about another child.

- i. Class teacher will be involved immediately.
- ii. All teachers are informed at staff meetings for classroom awareness.
- iii. "Complaining" parents telephoned; procedures explained; offered the opportunity to talk further and asked to telephone immediately with any further/future concerns.
- iv. Conflict noted on student's profiles and SMT ensure where possible that class teacher/tutor mitigates conflicts.
- v. In instances of bullying the procedure is outlined in our anti-bullying policy
- vi. Where necessary steps will be taken in accordance in the college Behaviour and Exclusions policy

### C Complaints by a child about a child.

- i. All parties are separately seen by staff, as a fact collecting exercise.
- ii. Staff are informed in staff meetings.
- iii. Parents are informed
- iv. In instances of bullying the procedure is outlined in our anti-bullying policy
- v. Where necessary, steps will be taken in accordance with the college Behaviour and Exclusions policies.

#### **D Complaint by a member of staff about a colleague.**

This is usually made to the Principal either informally or in appraisal.

- i. Informally: The Principal discusses matter with member of staff and offers to intervene tactfully. Usually the member of staff chooses to speak to the other staff member him/herself. SMT ensure that situations likely to cause friction/ aggravation between staff concerned are avoided.
- ii. In appraisal; Procedures as above, though the complaint is noted. In order to maintain a happy community, all staff are asked by the Principal in appraisal, if they have any concerns
- iii. If the complaint is about the Principal the complaint should be made to the Education Committee at Bellevue Education.

#### **E Complaints by residents**

- i. Whoever takes the call, listens sympathetically and collects as much information as possible. ii. Subsequent action varies according to information.

#### **F Complaints by former pupils**

This policy does not apply to complaints made by former pupils unless the complaint was first raised whilst the pupil was still registered at the college.

### **Stage 2 - Formal Complaint (Resolution normally within 10 working days)**

Where the complainant(s) are not satisfied with the response of the college, through the procedures outlined above they may register a formal complaint. This should be done in writing to the Principal, including,

- The nature of the complaint
- The reasons for their dissatisfaction with the college's response

The date of the receipt of the letter will be taken as the start of this stage of the process.

The Principal will meet with the complainant as soon as is practical, to discuss the matter and, if possible, to reach a resolution at this stage. Where a complaint is received during a college holiday, it will be deemed to have reached the college on the first full college day following its arrival. It may be necessary to carry out further investigations. The Principal will keep written records of all complaints, and of meetings held in relation to them.

Once the Principal is satisfied that all the relevant facts have been established, a response to the complaint will be made and the complainant will be informed in writing, within ten college days: the nature of the response will depend on the nature of the complaint but it will always give a judgement whether and to what extent, if at all, the complaint is justified, and reasons; the response may include actions which the college intends to take or a decision. A complainant who is not satisfied should proceed to the next stage.

In the event the complaint is against the Principal the formal stage will be dealt with by governance. The complaint can be submitted to the Principal for forwarding, or addressed directly to Bellevue Head Office at the address provided on the college's website.

### **Stage 3 - Independent Resolution - Panel Hearing (Resolution normally within 13 working days)**

If Stage 2 has not resolved a complaint satisfactorily, the complainant should write within five college days to the Principal, requesting a hearing before the complaints panel, who will acknowledge the letter of complaint. The date of the receipt of the letter will be taken as the start of this stage of the process.

At this point the college will liaise with Bellevue Head Office to

- a) Convene a panel of one of the governance team representing the proprietors, a member of the SMT not involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and either one or two panel members who are independent of the management and running of the college; (these may be people who have experience of scrutinising evidence and putting forward balanced arguments, such as serving or retired business people or heads or senior members of staff at other colleges). It is possible that there may be a delay in recruiting a panel and agreeing a mutually convenient date for the hearing. In this case, the timescale may need to be extended. If the college has made a reasonable attempt to find a date for a hearing and parents have been unable to agree, or do not co-operate, ISI advises that the panel hearing should go ahead anyway.
- b) Send a letter to the parents, providing contact details of the Chair of the panel, inviting the complainant to attend the panel hearing, along with someone to accompany them if they wish
- c) Provide that the panel is able to make findings and recommendations; and ensure that minutes and recommended actions of the panel are kept for three years.
- d) Ensure that a copy of the panel's findings and recommendations is –
  - (i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
  - (ii) available for inspection on the college premises by the proprietor and the Principal;
- e) Ensure all correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential – unless the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them
- f) Show how the findings and recommendations of the panel have been responded to
- g) Seek to complete this stage of the procedure within 13 working days.
- h) Provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub paragraph (e) and
  - (i) Whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing and:
  - (ii) Action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are Upheld)

## **Appendix 1: Number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the year 2018-2019**

Colleges are required to publish the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding college year.

The number of complaints dealt with at this stage in 2019-2020 was 7.

## **Appendix 2: Contact details**

### **ISI**

#### **Independent Colleges Inspectorate**

CAP House

9 - 12 Long Lane

London

EC1A 9HA

Telephone 020 7600 0100

Fax 020 7776 8849

info@isi.net

### **OFSTED**

#### **By email**

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

#### **By telephone**

The following helplines are open from 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday:

general helpline **0300 123 1231**

#### **By post**

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Links to other policies - Anti-Bullying, Behaviour, Appraisal, Safeguarding