



# Bow Street School

## Complaints Procedure

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| This policy must be read in conjunction with:  |              |                |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safeguarding Policy</li><li>• Behaviour Policy</li><li>• Admissions Policy</li></ul> |              |                |  |



# Bow Street Complaints Procedure

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## Introduction

Bow Street School is committed to ensuring that all students receive the best possible education in a safe, comfortable and enjoyable environment. We are keen to respond quickly to any problems and to remedy any issues as soon as possible. This policy and procedure applies in respect of all complaints made against the school, except in respect of child protection allegations where the safeguarding policy and procedures apply.

Parents/carers can be assured that all complaints and expressions of concern, whether raised informally or formally, will be treated seriously and confidentially.

An effective complaints policy and procedure can diffuse problems and can also provide the school with helpful information. Complaints treated as constructive suggestions can be used to improve standards and may prevent cause for further complaints

## Aims and objectives

- To promote a culture that is open and welcoming.
- To demonstrate to parents/carers and students that their opinions are valued.
- To encourage parents/carers and students to raise any concerns that they might have.
- To enable parents/carers to feel comfortable in communicating with the school.
- To enable members of staff to feel comfortable when dealing with complaints.
- To establish a means of dealing with complaints.

# The Complaints Procedure

A senior leader will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. These records will be kept for one year after the student has left the school.

## Stage One - Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

If parents/carers or students have a complaint they should normally contact the Behaviour Manager. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the students' or parents' satisfaction. If the Behaviour Manager cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult other staff, the Headteacher or a Proprietor.

Complaints made directly to the Headteacher or Proprietors will usually be referred back to the Behaviour Manager initially to resolve informally at Stage 1.

Bow Street School will make every effort to resolve any informal complaints within ten working days of them being raised, except where they are raised in school holidays or within two working days of their commencement where Bow Street will use its reasonable endeavours to resolve them as soon as possible after commencement of the new school term ( usually within ten working days).

Should the matter not be resolved as referred to above, or in the event that the Behaviour Manager and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents/carers or students will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage Two of this Procedure.

## Stage Two - Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis as set out above, then parents/carers should put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher of Bow Street Independent Special School. The complaint should be expressed clearly and courteously. The Headteacher will investigate the complaint and will decide the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases, the Headteacher will meet or speak with the parents/carers and or student concerned to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

The Headteacher will use reasonable endeavours to speak to or meet parents within ten working days of the formal complaint being received, except where the complaint is received in school holidays or within two working days of their commencement where the Headteacher will use his/her reasonable endeavours to speak to or meet with parents/carers as soon as possible after the commencement of the new school term (usually within ten working days).

The Headteacher will keep a written record of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Headteacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, they will draw conclusions and provide feedback. Parents/carers will receive feedback in writing no later than ten working days after speaking or meeting with parents/carers and or student to discuss the matter. The Headteacher may also arrange to meet with parent/carer and or student to explain the feedback.

Where parents/carers are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Headteacher's response to their formal complaint, they have the opportunity to appeal to the Proprietor of Bow Street Independent Special School.

## Stage Three – Appeal to the Proprietor

If the complaint cannot be resolved at Stage Two, as set out above, then parents/carers can appeal to the Proprietor of Bow Street School. The parents/carers should put their appeal in writing.

The Bow Street School Proprietor will consider the appeal and will decide the appropriate course of action to take. In cases that require urgent consideration the Proprietor of Bow Street may deal with the matter exclusively and without delay but usually an independent hearing will be convened to hear the complaint. An independent hearing should be convened as soon as possible giving due regard to parents/carers availability ( usually within ten working days ).

## An independent hearing and complaints panel

The complaints panel will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of these will be independent of the management and running of the school.

At the hearing the parent / carer will be given the opportunity to have a friend or representative, and / or a translator present if required.

The outcomes from a hearing will be one of the following;

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part, or
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part, or
- Where appropriate decide on action to be taken, or
- Recommend changes to procedures to seek to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

Following the investigation the parent /guardian will receive written feedback from the hearing including any decisions, recommendations and the reasons for them and, if appropriate, the next steps. This should be issued within ten working days after the investigation has concluded.

If, despite all stages of the procedure having been followed, the parent / guardian is dissatisfied then the complaint may be taken to the

Department for Education (DfE), who have a remit to review due process - there is no onus on them to re-open an investigation if they are satisfied that Bow Street has dealt with the complaint appropriately.

## Complaints procedure records

Bow Street will keep a written record of all formal complaints, including records of meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint, and its decision.

Bow Street will keep a written record of all appeals, decisions, feedback and recommendations of the complaints panel.

All such records will be kept for one year after the relevant students have left the school.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The Proprietors review and implement the complaints procedures. These procedures will be reviewed on a regular cycle to ensure that the procedures are accessible and meet statutory requirements.