

BROCKWOOD PARK SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS

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1. Introduction

Brockwood Park School regards relationships with parents as very important, and aims for open and easy communication between home and school. We encourage parents to quickly communicate questions and concerns with the relevant members of staff so they can be addressed quickly and informally. If, however, parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this procedure.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole or about an individual member of staff. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do something that it should have done, or acted unfairly.

In accordance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (Schedule 1, paragraph 32(3)(f)), Brockwood Park School makes available to parents of students and of prospective students, and provides on request to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State, or the ISI, details of this complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

2. Scope and application

This policy applies to complaints from parents of current students or parents of former students if the complaint was initially raised when the student was registered at the school.

Where a complaint raises a safeguarding concern or an allegation against a member of staff, it is handled under the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy rather than this procedure. Students wishing to raise their own concerns should refer to the Concerns Procedure for Students. Complaints about how the school has handled personal data are handled under the Data Protection Policy.

3. Recording Complaints

All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the school's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records. Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing and action taken by the school as result of those complaints (regardless of whether they were upheld). The school's written record of formal complaints also identifies those complaints relating to boarding provision. At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept for formal complaints which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of student

- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

The records created in accordance with this policy may contain personal data. The school has a number of privacy notices which explain how it will use personal data about students and parents. The privacy notices are published on the school's website. School staff will ensure that they follow the school's data protection policies and procedures when handling personal data created in connection with this policy.

Complaints which do not have safeguarding implications will be retained for a minimum of seven years. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where access is requested by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required in the course of an inspection or under other legal authority or court order.

4. Complaints Procedure for Parents

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within five working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 28 term time days if the complaint is lodged during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 28 term time days, if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Whenever possible, a complaint should be raised within three months of the incident, or where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. The school will however consider complaints made within up to 12 months if exceptional circumstances apply. A complaint raised after three months should therefore include details of the issues which led to the delay.

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

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

- If parents have a complaint or concern they should normally contact the appropriate member of staff – student adviser (SA), subject teacher or floor staff. Complaints or concerns made directly to a Co-Chair of the School Management Committee will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff. In many cases, the matter will be

resolved straightaway by this means. If the member of staff cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Co-Chairs.

- If the complaint is about a Co-Chair, the complaint should be put informally to them. If not resolved then the complaint will be put to Stage 2.

Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Co-Chairs.

- The Co-Chairs will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to be taken.
- In most cases, the Co-Chairs will speak to the parents concerned to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- If it is necessary for the Co-Chairs to carry out further investigations, a written record will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Co-Chairs are satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Co-Chairs will give reasons for their decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.
- If the complaint is about a Co-Chair and it is not resolved informally, then it should be sent to the *Head of Centre and Foundation* at kft@kfoundation.org to be forwarded to the Chair of the Trustees. The Chair of the Trustees will call for a full report from the other members of the School Management Committee and may call a meeting with relevant staff. Once the Chair is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chair will give reasons for their decision. If not resolved then the parent can request that the complaint be referred to Stage 3.

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 they will be referred to the *Head of Centre and Foundation* who has been appointed by the Trustees to call hearings of the Complaints Panel and can be contacted at kft@kfoundation.org

- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint: a Trustee; an external mediator, who is independent of the management and running of the school; and a third member. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of Trustees.

- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than two days prior to the hearing.
- Where possible, the parents should attend the hearing in person and may be accompanied by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. If the parents are not able to attend they can nominate someone to attend on their behalf. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it would be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within seven working days of the Hearing.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Co-Chairs or the Trustees and where relevant, the person complained of.

The school makes available to parents of students and parents of prospective students, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the last school year (2025/26) was 0.

Parents may also wish to find out more about their child's rights by visiting www.rights4me.com or contacting: Dame Rachel de Souza (Children Commissioner England) on 020 7783 8330.

ISI can be contacted at concerns@isi.net or on 020 7600 0100.