



Bishop Douglass Catholic School

In Pursuit of Excellence

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

This procedure deals with complaints from persons other than Governors and pupils and is therefore designed for use by parents/carers and the general public. Some complaints relate to particular areas of school provision and may be subject to additional statutory procedures/guidelines eg (admissions, curriculum, relationship and sex education, exclusions, special educational needs, staff grievances). Links to information about some of these areas are to be found on page 2, near the foot of the page. If parents or the general public wish to formally complain, we encourage you to use the form attached below in the first instance. Please note that we will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. If a complaint is considered to be vexatious and/or malicious or if there is a history of complaints, then the Headteacher and Chair of Governors might agree together not to consider the complaint or to consider only part of it. You would be advised in writing within five school days.

If the object of complaint is the Headteacher or a member of the governing body, or the entire governing body, then the complaints procedure will start at the Appeals Stage **Stage 3 - Appeals Stage (i)** (see below). If your complaint is about the operation of the Trust, or about the overarching Trust Board and/or individual directors) it should be directed to the Chair of the Trust, Mr John Meadows at the Trust registered office, c/o St George's Catholic School, Maida Vale, London, W9 1RB.

Each day this school makes many decisions and tries hard to do the best for all the children in its care. Your comments – either positive or negative – are helpful for future planning. You may want to talk to us about a particular aspect of this school, though not actually make a complaint – you just want to get something “off of your chest”. Whatever it is, contact us and feel free to use the form attached to let us know your views.

If you are dissatisfied about the way your child is being treated, or any actions or lack of action by us, please feel able to complain.

Complainants are advised that any complaint about staff conduct may be considered under this procedure (or under staff disciplinary procedures if the Headteacher or Chair of Governors think the latter is appropriate) but outcomes will not normally be shared with the complainant.

Our promise to you:

- Your complaint will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence.
- Your complaint will be looked into thoroughly and fairly.
- If your complaint is urgent we will do our best to deal with it more quickly.
- We will acknowledge your complaint within two school days, keep you up to date with progress at each stage and inform you in writing of your options at the end of each stage.
- You will get an apology if we have made a mistake.
- You will be told what we are going to do to put things right.

- You will get a full and clear written reply to formal complaints within 15 school days at each stage, but we will do our best to process things as quickly as we are able to.
- We will keep proper records of your complaint. A written record will be kept of all complaints, as to whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing, along with what actions have been taken, regardless of the decision.
- All correspondence statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

The School expects complainants to behave calmly and in good faith. Those who are not able to respond in an appropriate way may compromise any investigation. It is not permitted to record conversations and the school or panel will not accept recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded. Meetings with complainants will be held in private and electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not permitted.

As investigations into complaints proceed any new complaints at this stage must be dealt with as such and the complaint procedure started anew.

If we get a large number of complaints, we reserve the right to send a template response to all complainants and/or publish a response on the school's website.

Time scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of clearly associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

There are four stages:

Stage 1 - An Informal Stage

A discussion between the complainant and a member of staff. We aim to respond to contact within two school days and settle issues within five school days without the need for any unnecessary formality.

Stage 2 - Formal Stage

If the complainant is not satisfied, he or she can put the complaint in writing to the Headteacher, preferably using the attached form. If the complaint is about the Headteacher, it will be passed to a representative of the Governing Body ie **Stage 3 - Appeals Stage (i)** applies.

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint in writing within two school days. If necessary, we will arrange a full and fair investigation that respects confidentiality. *The head teacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior team but not the decision to be taken.* You will be advised of the conclusion and reasons for any decisions in writing within the 15 school day time scale and how to proceed to the next stage.

Stage 3 - Appeals Stage (i)

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, he or she can appeal to a representative of the Governing Body. We will acknowledge in writing this stage of the procedure within two school days of the appeal being received. A governor or suitably skilled governor from within the Trust group will

investigate your complaint and you will be advised in writing of the conclusion and decision within the 15 school day timescale. You will be informed how to proceed to the next stage if you remain dissatisfied.

Stage 4 – Appeals Stage (ii)

If this does not resolve matters then the complainant may ask for a hearing in front of a three-person panel, which will comprise two governors (who have not been previously involved in dealing with the complaint) and an independent person*.

** The Independent person will not be employed at the School and be independent of the management and running of the School. He or she will not have any connection with the School which may reasonably cast doubt upon their ability to be impartial.*

We will endeavour to ensure a hearing as soon as possible within a 15 school days from date of receipt of the request to convene a panel. The panel will not be called until all appropriate stages in the formal stage have been gone through.

The role of the panel will be to resolve impartially the complaint and the panel will invite the complainant (and an accompanying friend if desired) to discuss the complaint. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend. Other interested parties may be called to meet the panel (this will be at the discretion of the Chair of the panel). The complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about will be notified of the decision of the panel in writing within five school days. Furthermore, decisions will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the headteacher. Minutes of the meeting will be copied to the complainant (subject to any necessary redactions under the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR). The governors' complaints panel will be the last school-based stage of the complaints procedure.

Complainants should be aware that once the School procedures have been exhausted, if it is felt that the School has not handled a complaint properly, then there is recourse to the Department for Education: [https://www.form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact the Department for Education](https://www.form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact_the_Department_for_Education)

Admissions: <https://www.gov.uk/schools-admissions/complain-about-the-appeals-process>

Special educational needs (SEN): <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school/sen>

Safeguarding matters: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-safeguarding-policy>

Exclusion: <https://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/challenging-exclusion>

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date of last review: Spring Term 2022

Date of next review: Spring Term 2023

BISHOP DOUGLASS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

FORMAL COMPLAINTS POLICY

Name	
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Address	

Telephone	
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Child's Name	
Year / Form	

Please tick:

Would you like to make a comment

or

Would you like to make a complaint

What is the nature of your comment / complaint?

What can we do to put things right?

Signed

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Date

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Please return this form to the Headteacher's PA. It will be passed to the Headteacher/Chair of Governors. You will receive an acknowledgement within two school days.