



## BRYMORE ACADEMY

### STUDENT COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

<b>Created by:</b> Robert Watts	
<b>Date:</b> October 2024	
<b>Approved by Local Advisory Board:</b>	
<b>Review date:</b> October 2025	
<b>Signature of Chair of Governors</b> 	<b>Signature of Headteacher</b> 
<b>Date shared with staff:</b>	

## **Student Complaints Policy**

The Governing Body is required by the Education Act 2002 to have a policy for dealing with student complaints.

### **AIMS**

The school's Student Complaints Policy aims to ensure that students' complaints are dealt with efficiently and sensitively, at the appropriate level and as far as possible in confidence.

Complaints can cover a wide variety of matters concerning the school and it is important that students feel confident that they will be:

- listened to carefully and patiently
- taken seriously and treated with respect
- dealt with fairly, consistently and speedily
- given reassurance and advocacy support, if required.

The policy aims to ensure that clear procedures for making complaints are available to students, whether they are involved in a complaint as:

- the complainant
- a witness
- the subject of a complaint or
- a friend involved in supporting the student making a complaint.

The student should expect a response, even if not the final response, within one school day of having made the complaint.

A student should be informed of the procedures for making complaints and appealing against decisions.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

**The Governing Body** is responsible for approving the policy, procedures and guidelines, hearing and deciding on appeals, receiving reports and advising the Headteacher. It is also responsible for publishing the policy and procedures and for their general oversight.

**The Headteacher** is responsible for the efficient running of the policy and procedures, for training staff on how to deal appropriately with complaints, for hearing student appeals from decisions taken by other staff, for presenting the school's case where the student appeals to the governing body.

**The Deputy Headteacher with responsibility** is responsible for deputising for the Headteacher if required.

**Head of Boarding and Assistant Headteacher** are responsible for explaining the Complaints Procedure to students and offering support.

**All Staff** are responsible for hearing any complaints brought to them by students and reassuring them that their complaints will be dealt with according to the Student Complaints Procedure and the following guidelines.

## **PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES**

All staff should listen carefully and patiently to a student's complaint, treating the student with respect and recognising that it is a matter of grave concern for the student.

The member of staff receiving the complaint (referred to as 'First Contact' hereafter) should:

- devote sufficient time for the student to feel able to communicate their worries in full, or arrange a time when this can be done
- treat students calmly and with patience and without expressing an opinion in words or attitude
- ask single questions to clarify the issues and to check that the issue has been understood correctly
- assure the student that the matter will be taken seriously but avoid predicting outcomes
  
- explain the boundaries of confidentiality
- record the complaint on the school's 'Student Complaints Form', checking with the student that it is accurate. The student should sign the form and be given a copy. The form should then be passed to the HOB and or AHT who will investigate the complaint.

The action to be taken by the First Contact depends on the subject of the complaint. In many cases he/she will be able to resolve the matter swiftly him/herself but in specific cases may need to report the matter to others. In such cases, specific policies apply and the complaint will be passed on to other members of staff as specified in those policies:

- If the complaint concerns a child protection issue, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Assistant Safeguarding Lead should be informed immediately and the 'Student Complaints Form' should be passed on to them.
- If the complaint concerns a safeguarding allegation by a member of the school staff, the Headteacher must be informed immediately.
- If the complaint concerns allegations of bullying, the school's Anti Bullying Policy applies.
- If the complaint is against the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors must be informed.

If the matter does not relate to any of the above and lies beyond the responsibility of the First Contact to resolve quickly, the HOB and or AHT should be informed. Before doing so, the agreement of the student must be obtained and recorded on the Student Complaints Form. The HOB / AHT will decide whether to investigate the allegations him/herself or to pass the complaint on to the Headteacher.

**In all cases of doubt, members of staff should seek the advice of the Headteacher, who has the responsibility for mentoring colleagues.**

Finally, if the Headteacher is unable to resolve the issue it is open to the student to make representation to the Governing Body.

## **REPORTING, RECORDING AND REVIEWING**

In all cases it is essential for staff to use the school's 'Student Complaints Form' so that records of the complaint and the action taken can be recorded and tracked. The outcome must also be recorded on the form and a letter sent to the student within 10 days of receipt of the complaint. Notes taken of oral accounts from a student should be checked for accuracy with the student or the student should be asked to put their complaint in writing. Supporting documents should be attached to the 'Student Complaints Form'.

The Headteacher will review the handling of complaints, and will discuss issues with staff as necessary.

The Headteacher will report to governors annually on the number and type of student complaints received.

## **APPEALS TO THE GOVERNING BODY**

Students who are not satisfied with the Headteacher's decision regarding the complaint can make representations to the Governing Body. They should be advised by the Headteacher to write to the Clerk in the first instance stating their complaint, and providing any supporting documents. The Clerk will set up a meeting with a panel of the Governing Body at a mutually convenient time within 10 school days from receipt of the student's request. The hearing will be as informal as possible. The student may be accompanied by a parent, friend, relative or someone else of the student's choosing. Where there may be language difficulties, a translator will be in attendance.

### **Constitution of the panel**

The panel will consist of three members to include the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors.

The decision of the panel will be binding on the school.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the working of the complaints procedures and for refining the application of them in the light of experience.

The Headteacher will review the system annually, and can propose policy changes to the Governing Body following consultation with staff, governors and the School Council.

The Governing Body will review the policy and procedures according to the schedule for reviewing school policies, or as necessary. The Governing Body is responsible for making changes to the policy and procedures and for publishing the revised documents.

As a student you can make a complaint about any matter concerning your school. This page aims to explain how to do this.

We recognise that by making a complaint you will hope to make a positive difference to Brymore Academy.

### **1. Things for you to consider before making a formal complaint:**

- Could you solve the problem in any other way by talking to your House parent, subject teacher, Form Tutor, Head of Year or someone else in school?
- Is your complaint about something which affects the whole school or a group of students? Could you ask the School Council to consider it?

If you decide to ask the School Council or an individual member of staff to take up the matter but you are not satisfied with the results, you can still use the school's complaints procedure.

### **2. Some things you could complain about are:**

- an event - such as a school trip
- anything about your school life - such as homework, school uniform
- school services - such as school meals or the school bus service
- the behaviour of an individual(s) - for example another student or member of staff
- something that affects you as a student - such as bullying
- something that has happened outside school but which is connected to the school - such as the behaviour of students on a school bus

These are only some examples. There may be other issues you want to complain about.

### 3. **Privacy**

All complaints will be kept private. If the person you talk to first is not in a position to resolve your problem, he/she will explain to you who else needs to be informed. Normally your complaint will not be discussed with anyone without your consent. However, there are some circumstances where a complaint must be shared with other people, especially if it means you or another child is in danger of being harmed. If this is the case this will be explained to you.

### 4. **When you make a complaint:**

- everything you say will be listened to
- you will be asked questions to make things clear
- you will be dealt with fairly
- your parents/guardian/carers will not be told you have made a complaint without your agreement
- you will be allowed to have someone with you to help you if you wish - a parent, friend, relative or someone else of your choosing
- you will be told how your complaint is progressing
- you will be told the outcome of your complaint and any actions that have been taken will be explained to you.
- You will be given the opportunity to provide feedback

### 5. **How to make a complaint**

If you want to make a complaint, ask the School reception or a member of staff for a copy of the school's 'Student Complaints Procedure' and 'complaints form' which explains how to do this. (These are also kept at Reception, on the school website and within the boarding house offices). You can also ask, your House Parent, Form Tutor or Head of Year to find someone to help you make your complaint and guide you through the process.