BUCKINGHAM PREPARATORY SCHOOL

'Together we nurture, we inspire, we achieve'

Complaints Policy

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Headteacher	19th October 2015
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Reviewed by Head + Chair of Governors	September 2027

Revised: September 2025 (to be reviewed in September 2026)
To be ratified by governors Autumn 2026

This policy applies to EYFS, Infants and Juniors.

Buckingham Preparatory School

This policy should be read and adhered to in conjunction with the following Buckingham Preparatory School policies:

- Accessibility Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- SEND and Provision for Learning Policy
- Admissions Policy
- All policies created and adopted by Buckingham Preparatory School

Introduction

Buckingham Preparatory School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this procedure. The priority will always be to respond to any concerns at an early stage and to resolve complaints speedily.

In accordance with paragraph 32(3)(f) of Schedule 1 (Part 6 Provision of Information) to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, Buckingham Preparatory School will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils details of this complaint procedure on request to school and also on the school website.

Additionally, Buckingham Preparatory School will make available to parents of pupils, and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or the ISI for the purposes of Section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the number of complaints registered and conducted under the formal (Stage 2) procedure during the preceding year. For this purpose a record of all formal complaints and their resolution is maintained and overseen by the Board of Governors. Additionally, a record is maintained of all representations which fall outside the formal complaints process. This also includes complaints about the school or outcomes for pupils.

What constitutes a complaint?

A complaint is any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff. A complaint may 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.

Timescales

Please be aware the timescales identified in this procedure refer to calendar days and are relevant to term time only and are subject to change in the school holiday periods. Notwithstanding this point it will be the aim to always resolve issues as quickly as possible taking into account the need to obtain all relevant information.

Recording

The school maintains a written record of all complaints made and processed in accordance in with Stages 2 and 3 of the Complaints Policy. The written record will indicate the action taken by the school as a result of and in the complaint, regardless of the outcome of the complaint.

If a complaint is not informally or fully resolved in Stage 1, a written record is kept and the matter will then be considered formally at stage 2 of this policy (the formal stage)

The school's record of a complaint that is addressed in accordance with Stage 2 will contain the following information:

Date when complaint was raised
Name of parent
Name of pupil
Description of the issue
Records of all the investigations at stage 1 (informal) (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)
Outcome of the complaint (for stage 2 and 3)

At all stages within this policy complaints information will be marked 'confidential' and all parties are expected to adhere to this expectation.

Confidential files on all complaints that are at Stage 2 will be maintained by the school, kept together and cross-referenced with other files as necessary. The files will contain simple but clear notes and records of conversations with parents about any source of dissatisfaction. This applies to any conversations on the complaint, to minimise the risk of misunderstandings arising. All concerns expressed by the complainant will be fully and carefully set out in order to ensure that all matters are thoroughly investigated. The notes and records will be agreed with parents at each stage to ensure accuracy and to focus attention on any resolved or unresolved issues.

Stage 1 Informal Resolution

- It will be a priority to do everything that is reasonably possible to resolve any concerns informally and quickly.

- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their childs's Form Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved immediately by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the

Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, they will consult a member of the management team or the Head Teacher.

- Complaints made directly to the Head will usually be referred, in the first instance, to the relevant Form Teacher or member of SMT unless the Head deems it more appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

- The Form Teacher or Designated member of staff will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within **fourteen days** or in the event that the Form Teacher and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be given advice on how to have their complaint formally investigated at stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis at stage 1 of this policy, then the parents will be asked to put their complaint in writing to the Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, whether the matter can be resolved at that stage through intervention or whether further investigation is required to ascertain further facts. It is important to note that complainants have the right to pursue a formal investigation if they so wish, regardless of any other form of intervention at this stage.

- In most cases the Head will arrange to meet the parents, normally within **five working days** of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. This will be confirmed in writing within **10 working days** following the meeting.

- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.

- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

- Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the Head will set out in writing the findings and conclusions reached and clear reasons behind the decisions. This will be done within 10 working days of the meeting. The communication will include the right of the complainant to seek further consideration of the complaint at stage 3 of this policy.

- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they will be advised and helped to have their concerns examined at Stage 3 of this policy.

Stage 3 Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Chair of Governors, who will call a hearing of a formal Complaints Panel.

- The Panel will always consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom will be **independent of the management and running of the school.** The Chair of Governors will appoint each of the Panel members. The

Chair of Governors will also acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and **normally within 21 days.**

- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint, or any related matters, 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.

- The parents may be accompanied to the Hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be necessary or appropriate.

- The Panel will seek to resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation and to reach a conclusion on the issues raised and any actions required.

- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out and set a clear timescale for the collation of relevant information.

- After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a **final** decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within **fourteen days** of the Hearing. The Panel will then write to the parents informing them of its decision within a 28 day period 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 Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person about whom a complaint has been made. The School will keep a record of complaints for at least **three years**. A copy of these findings and recommendations are available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and the Head Teacher.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. BPS will ensure that all information provided that correspondence, statements and records relating to **individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section t 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.** (Para 33 (K))

If parents of children in the EYFS have complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, these will be investigated and the complainant notified of the investigation within **28 days**. The record of complaints will be made available to Ofsted on request.

If parents do not feel that their complaint has been considered fairly, they may wish to refer their complaint to ISI (Independent School Inspectorate), Ofsted in the case of the EYFS or the DfE. Contact details are contained below:

ISI: Complaints 1st Floor – Cap House 9-12 long Lane LONDON EC1A 9HA
ISI Tel: 020 7600 0100
E-mail: info@isi.net

Ofsted: Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD
Ofsted Tel: 0300 123 1231
E-mail: **enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk**

*There have been 4 formal complaints in the school year 2025-2026