



Complaints Procedure

Approved by:	Board	Date: December 2025
Last reviewed on:	November 2025	
Next review due by:	November 2026	
Related Documents		
Guidance		
Author	Mel Saville (Executive Principal)	

COMPLAINTS POLICY (SCOPE)

Bradford Academy's complaints policy only applies to complaints from parents/carers of pupils at Bradford Academy and is strictly for matters regarding their child.

Some complaints fall outside of this policy and are covered by other procedures. For example:

- Staff grievances
- Disciplinary procedures
- Admissions
- Matters likely to require a child protection investigation
- Exclusions/Suspensions
- Whistleblowing
- Withdrawal from the curriculum

If you wish to make a complaint and are not sure which procedure is relevant, please contact us for clarification and guidance.

Should you wish to complain about a third-party supplier using our facilities please refer to the third-party's guidance or contact the John Craig Centre manager for more information.

Parents and carers can make a complaint about a staff member, but they will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member because of the complaint. Parents and carers will be notified that the matter is being addressed and can still progress through the complaints procedure.

HOW TO RAISE A COMPLAINT

A concern or complaint can be made in writing, by post or email. This may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant if they have consent to do so.

Complaints against school staff (except the Executive Principal) should be made in the first instance to the Executive Principal of Bradford Academy via the school office or email. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Executive Principal should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, via the school office or email. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual Governors, or the whole Governing Body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body, via the school office or email. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about a trustee of the Trust should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees, via the trust office or email. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

The email address for all complaints is info@bradfordacademy.co.uk

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE:

Stage One: Informal complaints

- 1.1** The majority of concerns and complaints can be resolved informally. There are many occasions where concerns can be resolved directly through communication with the member of staff in question. This may be the class teacher, a member of the administrative staff, the Principal, or the Chair of Governors depending on the nature of the complaint.
- 1.2** If the first point of contact cannot deal with the matter immediately it will be clearly and accurately recorded. The date and nature of the complaint will be taken, along with the name and contact details of the person making the complaint.
- 1.3** The Principal may decide to deal with concerns directly at this stage, depending on the nature of the complaint.
- 1.4** The person dealing with the complaint must clearly communicate to the parents or carers what action and/or monitoring will take place as a result of their complaint. It will be put in writing if it is the best way to make this communication clear to parents and carers.
- 1.5** Where no satisfactory solution has been found the parents will be advised on how to raise a formal complaint.

Stage Two: Formal complaint to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- 2.1** When a formal complaint is made, it will be acknowledged, in writing or verbally, within 3 working days. It will also be logged on the academy's complaints monitoring service. Parents/carers will be asked at this stage what they think might resolve the issue.
- 2.2** At this stage, the Principal/Executive Principal may assign an investigating officer or named SLT member to consider and manage the written complaint, acknowledging its receipt within 3 working days. The acknowledgement will give a brief explanation of the academy's complaints procedure and a target day for providing a response to the complaint. This should normally be within 10 working days. If this proves impossible, a letter will be sent explaining the reason for the delay, giving a revised target date.

The named investigating officer will report their findings back to the Principal and be entrusted to manage the complaint, working with parents/carers and children to find a satisfactory outcome.

- 2.3** The named SLT member or investigating officer will provide an opportunity for the complainant to meet with them. This will allow the complainant to provide any additional or background information they feel is relevant. It will be clearly communicated to the complainant that they are able to be accompanied to any meeting by a friend, relative representative, or advocate who can speak on their behalf. They will also be asked if there are any special requirements the academy needs to be aware of, for example, wheelchair access or interpreter support.
- 2.4** If necessary, the named SLT member should proceed with an initial fact-finding activity. If the complaint centres on a pupil, the pupil may also be part of the initial fact-finding. In some cases, it may be necessary for parents/carers to be present. In some situations, circumstances may

prevent this. For example, where this would seriously delay the investigation of a serious/urgent complaint or in a situation where a pupil has specifically requested that parents or guardians are not involved. In this situation, a student can ask a member of staff they feel comfortable with to attend. If a complaint is made against a member of staff, then the needs of that individual should be considered.

- 2.5** The named SLT member/investigating officer will keep records of any meetings and telephone conversations. These records and any other relevant documentation will be supported by entries into CPOMS/SIMS.
- 2.6** Once all the facts have been established, there will be a meeting between the parents/carers and the named member of SLT. If the matter is unable to be resolved and parents/carers are dissatisfied with the outcome of the meeting, then the complaint will be moved to stage 3 of the procedure.
- 2.7** If the complaint is being investigated by an investigating officer, they would most likely share their investigation with the Principal so that they are able to meet with parents/carers to discuss the investigation findings. This would then move to stage three of the procedure.

Stage Three: Formal complaint to the Principal/Executive Principal

- 3.1** When a formal complaint is made, it will be acknowledged, in writing or verbally, within 3 working days. It will also be logged on the academy's complaints monitoring service.
- 3.2** At this stage, the Principal/Executive Principal will arrange to meet (in person or over the phone) with the complainant. This should normally be within 10 working days. If this proves impossible, a letter will be sent explaining the reason for the delay, giving a revised target date.
- 3.3** The Principal/Executive Principal will seek to understand why the complainant was not satisfied at stage 2 and may ask for a further submission to clarify this. However, should the complaint have been referred to them by an investigating officer this would not be the case.
- 3.4** If appropriate, the Principal may decide to appoint an external, independent person to investigate the academy's practice, producing a report to be actioned.
- 3.5** Following any further investigations and subsequent meeting(s) there will be a written response to the complaint. This will fully and clearly explain the decisions and actions taken by the academy in order to resolve the complaint.
- 3.6** Should the complainant be unhappy with the outcome, they should notify the Chair of Governors within 5 weeks of receiving the outcome letter.

Stage Four: Formal complaint to Governors

- 4.1** Upon receipt of a written request by the complainant for the complaint to proceed to stage 4, the procedures outlined below will be followed.
- 4.2** The Clerk to the Governing Body should write to the complainant to acknowledge receipt of the written request. The acknowledgement should inform the complainant that the complaint is to be heard by three members of the academy's Governing Body within 20 working days of receiving

the complaint. The letter should also explain that the complainant has the right to submit any further documents relevant to the complaint. These must be received in time for the documents to be distributed to the members of the Governing Body.

- 4.3** The Clerk to the Governors should arrange to convene a Complaints Panel elected from the members of the Governing Body and at least one member independent of the management and running of the school.
- 4.4** Governors may ask for further investigations to take place or evidence to be gathered, including by an external investigating officer or expert should they see fit.
- 4.5** The Clerk to the Governors will ensure that the Panel hears the complaint within 20 working days of receiving the letter in 4.2. All relevant correspondence regarding the complaint will be given to the members of the Governors Complaints Panel. If the correspondence is extensive, the Chair of the Panel may prepare a thorough summary to send to the panel members.
- 4.6** The Clerk to the Governors will write and inform the complainant, Principal, any relevant witnesses, and members of the Panel at least 5 working days in advance, of the date, time, and location of the meeting. The notification to the complainant should also inform them of the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend/advocate/interpreter. This letter will also explain how the meeting will be conducted and the complainant's right to submit further written evidence to the Panel.
- 4.7** If either party wishes to introduce previously undisclosed evidence or witnesses, it is in the interests of natural justice to adjourn the meeting so that the other side has time to consider and respond to the new evidence.
- 4.8** The aim of the meeting will be reconciliation and to put things right where they may have gone wrong.
- 4.9** The meeting will allow for:
 - The complainant to explain their complaint and the Principal to explain the academy's response
 - The Principal to question the complainant about the complaint, and the complainant, the Principal and/or other members of staff about the academy's response
 - Panel members to have the opportunity to question both the complainant and the Principal
 - Any party to have the right to call witnesses (subject to the approval of the Chair) and all parties having the right to question all witnesses
 - Final statements by both the complainant and the Principal
- 4.10** The Chair of the Panel will explain to the complainant and the Principal that the panel will now consider its decision. A written conclusion and reasons for decisions, as well as minutes from the meeting, will be sent to both parties within 15 working days. The complainant, Principal, other members of staff, and witnesses will then leave.
- 4.11** The panel will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and (a) reach a unanimous, or at least majority decision on the complaint and (b) decide upon the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint and (c) where appropriate, suggest recommended changes to the academy's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again.

NOTIFICATION OF THE PANEL'S DECISION:

- 4.12** A written statement outlining the decision of the Panel, reasons for the decision, and any further rights to appeal must be sent to the complainant and Principal within 15 working days.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THE ROLE OF THE CLERK:

The group of governors considering complaints will be clerked. The Clerk will be the contact point for the complainant and be required to:

- Set the date, time, and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- Collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing
- Meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing
- Record the proceedings
- Notify all parties of the Panel's decision

THE ROLE OF THE CHAIR OF THE GOVERNING BODY OR THE NOMINATED GOVERNOR:

The nominated Governor role is to:

- Check that the correct procedure has been followed
- Notify the clerk to arrange the panel if a hearing is appropriate

THE ROLE OF THE CHAIR OF THE PANEL:

The Chair of the Panel has a key role, in ensuring that:

- The remit of the Panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity to put their case forward without undue interruption
- The issues are addressed
- Key findings of facts are made
- Parents and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease
- The hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy
- The panel is open-minded and acts independently
- No member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- Each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions
- Written material is seen by all parties. If a new issue arises it would be useful to give all parties the opportunity to consider and comment on it.

CHECKLIST FOR A PANEL HEARING:

The panel needs to take the following points into account:

- The hearing is as informal as possible.
- Witnesses are only required to attend the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.
- After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint and be followed by their witnesses.
- The Principal may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The Principal is then invited to explain the academy's actions and be followed by the academy's witnesses.
- The complainant may question both the Principal and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The Panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The Principal is then invited to sum up the academy's actions and response to the complaint.
- Both parties leave together while the Panel decides on the issues.
- The Chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set time scale.

RECORD KEEPING FOR COMPLAINTS:

- The academy will keep a written record of all complaints made.
- Complaints made under sections 1 and 2 will be logged on the academy's complaints system.
- Complaints made under sections 4 and 5 will be logged both on the system and by the PA to the Executive Principal, and a copy of correspondence, statements, and records linked to the complaint will be kept. These will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or body conducting an inspection under Section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.
- These records will be kept for a minimum of 6 years and will be reviewed at this time in case of contentious issues.
- A complaint would not be deleted before a child had left the academy.

GOOD PRACTICE:

Recording meetings:

We do not routinely record meetings. Meetings may be recorded in order to support where there may be communication difficulties. This would be at the academy's discretion if significant evidence that this was a necessary reasonable adjustment was received. All meetings at stage 2 can be minuted at the complainant's request. At stages 3 and 4 this would be common practice.

HANDLING COMPLAINTS FAIRLY:

Complainants will be offered the opportunity to state their case at each stage of the procedure. We will make all reasonable endeavours to find mutually convenient times to meet with complainants. Where all reasonable endeavours have been exhausted or a complainant refuses to attend a meeting we may:

- Convene a meeting in their absence
- Reach a conclusion in the interest of drawing the complaint to a close

BIAS IN THE PROCEEDINGS:

Should a complainant have evidence there is bias in the proceedings, they can request an independent panel. The academy will only convene a panel where clear evidence of bias is presented.

- Governors will not be on a hearing panel should there be any conflict of interest.
- Governors with no prior exposure to the complaint are considered impartial by the academy.

MANAGING SERIAL AND PERSISTENT COMPLAINTS:

Bradford Academy will always do its best to be helpful to those who contact us with:

- A complaint or concern
- A request for information

Once all stages of the complaint have been followed the matter will be closed. Should a complainant continue to contact the academy about a complaint that has followed all stages of the procedure, this will be viewed as 'serial' or 'persistent' and the academy will no longer respond.

The academy will not consider complaints we consider vexatious. The characteristics of a vexatious complaint are:

- Complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious
- Insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason
- Insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner
- Complaints that are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
- Demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value

Bradford Academy will not respond to vexatious complaints, other than to make the complainant aware that their complaint has been categorised in this nature.

Bradford Academy aims to have good communication with all stakeholders. We would only stop responding to a complainant if:

- We have taken all reasonable steps to address the complainant's concerns
- We have given the complainant a clear statement of our position and their options
- The complainant makes repeated contact, substantially making the same points each time

We would consider stopping responding or implementing a communication strategy if:

- Communication from the complainant is often or always abusive or aggressive
- The complainant makes insulting personal comments about, or threats towards, staff
- Bradford Academy has reason to believe the individual is contacting the academy with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience

If an individual's behaviour is causing disruption, regardless of whether they have made a complaint we may:

- Restrict the individual to a single point of contact via an email address
- Limit the number of times they can make contact, such as a fixed number of contacts per term

We would always provide parents and carers with the information they are entitled to under The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005, within the statutory time frame.

BARRING FROM SCHOOL PREMISES

Bradford Academy is a private place. The public has no automatic right of entry. The academy acts to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff, and other members of the community.

If an individual's behaviour is a cause for concern, staff can ask them to leave the school premises. In some cases, individuals can be barred from entering the school premises. An individual who is barred can make representations in writing to Governors. This will be reviewed by either:

- The Chair of Governors
- A committee of governors

They will consider representations and decide whether to lift the bar. If the decision is confirmed, the individual should be notified in writing, explaining:

- How long the bar will be in place
- When the decision will be reviewed

Once the school's appeal process has been completed, individuals may be able to apply to the Courts. Individuals wishing to exercise this option should seek independent legal advice.

NEXT STEPS:

Bradford Academy is committed to resolving complaints in a timely manner. Should a complainant have moved through all stages of the procedure and still have a concern about a school they can contact either Ofsted or the ESFA to log their concern.