

Bethany School Complaints Policy

September 2019

Good, positive relationships between children, parents, staff and Bethany School are vital if we are to achieve our school aims. If disputes occur they will be taken seriously, dealt with promptly, and resolved in a biblical manner.

The following principles will guide our policy and practice:

- ◆ **We will make every effort to resolve complaints and disputes to the satisfaction of all sides.**

“Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble.” (Hebrews 12: 14-15)

- ◆ **We will always try to resolve complaints and disputes within the school community.**

“If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgement instead of before the saints?” (1 Corinthians 6: 1)

- ◆ **We will not consider that the School is always right and we hope parents will have the same attitude towards their own views.**

“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourselves with sober judgement, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.” (Romans 12: 3)

- ◆ **We expect that forgiveness will be a part of the resolution of any complaint whatever the outcome for the parties involved.**

“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” (Colossians 3: 13)

- ◆ **We all make mistakes.**

“Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man,....” (James 3: 1-2)

- ◆ **If a matter concerns a breach of the Law people are free to contact the appropriate authorities. (See also Safeguarding Policy).**

“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.” (Romans 13: 1)

- ◆ **Established procedures should be followed so that disputes can be settled quickly and fairly.**

“Let all things be done decently and in order.” (1 Corinthians 14: 40)

Resolution of Complaints and Disputes

Any person who has a complaint or is in dispute should firstly determine the appropriate procedure to be followed. Normally the complainant should first approach the person they have a complaint against to attempt a resolution. It is always better to try and resolve a

situation informally before proceeding with a formal complaint. Please note, a parent should not directly approach a pupil about a complaint.

Such meetings should be informal and private and used to discover the facts.

*“Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down.”
Proverbs 26:20*

When problems first occur, our personality and temperament can be affected by anger. It would be appropriate to take time to *“put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, ...”* and *“put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another ... (Colossians 3: 1-17) before this first meeting.*

If the matter is not resolved or either party is unhappy with the outcome a formal meeting should be arranged.

◆ **Complaint by a parent about a child**

Parent to make an appointment with the teacher of the child.

◆ **Complaint by a parent about a teacher**

Parent to make an appointment to see the teacher

◆ **Complaint by a teacher about a parent**

Teacher to make a appointment to see the parent

◆ **Complaint about a parent by a parent**

The parent feeling wronged should try to arrange a suitable time to discuss the matter between themselves.

◆ **Disputes between teachers**

The teacher feeling wronged should make an arrangement to meet with the other teacher.

Parties may wish to make a written record of these meetings.

If after these meetings a resolution is not reached either party should make an appointment with the Head Teacher.

The Head Teacher will meet with both parties as a mediator or to establish the facts, make sure that both parties understand them, suggest a way forward or make a decision as to what each party should do. If an investigation is required into the facts of the dispute the Head Teacher will keep both parties informed as to progress during consideration of the complaint. **A confidential record of complaints reaching this level and beyond will be kept by the Head Teacher.** The record will state whether the complaint was resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing.

If either party is unhappy with the Head Teacher’s decision they should write to the Chair of Governors outlining their complaint. The Chair, at his/her discretion, may intervene and attempt to resolve the complaint before it is brought before a full Governors’ meeting.

◆ **Complaint by a parent or teacher about the Head Teacher**

Parent or teacher to make an appointment with the Head Teacher

If after this meeting a resolution is not reached either party should make an appointment with the Chair of Governors. The Chair, assisted by a second Governor, will meet with both parties as a mediator or to establish the facts, make sure that both parties understand them, suggest a way forward or make a decision as to what each party should do. If an investigation is required into the facts of the dispute the Chairman of Governors will keep both parties informed as to progress during consideration of the complaint. **A confidential record of complaints reaching this level and beyond will be kept by the Chair of Governors.** The record will state whether the complaint was resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing.

If either party is unhappy with the Chair's decision they should write formally to the Governors outlining their complaint. The Chair will bring the dispute before a full Governors' meeting.

In any dispute, a decision by the Bethany School Governing Council will be the schools final decision.

The Governors have a reciprocal arrangement with Barnsley Christian School to provide an independent panel of three members who will attend a hearing of the complaint. If the complainant is unhappy with the final decision of the Governing Council a request for a hearing should be made, in writing, to the Chair of Governors within one week of being informed of the Governors final decision. All parties may be accompanied at the hearing and will receive from the panel a written report of its findings and recommendations.

If, after the panel hearing, any party is not satisfied with the final outcome they may wish to seek help from an outside agency.

The School will make available the numbers of complaints brought to the Governors under the formal procedure during the preceding year.

Complaints Time Frame

Informal discussions about complaints should take place as soon as possible after a wrong has been perceived.

If there is no resolution and a formal meeting is required appointments should be made as soon as possible but within one week.

If an appointment with the Head Teacher is required then a meeting will be arranged as soon as possible but within one week. If an appointment with the Chair of Governors is required then a meeting will be arranged as soon as possible.

A dispute to be brought before a full Governors' Meeting will be discussed at the first meeting after the letter is received. However, if a letter to the Governors is received in the seven days prior to their meeting the matter may be deferred to the following meeting. The Governing Council may reject the complaint, uphold the complaint or investigate the claim further.

Both parties will be informed of the Governors' final decision and any course of action to be taken as soon as possible after the meeting.

A panel meeting will be arranged as soon as possible but ideally before the next meeting of the Governing Council

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Annual Head Teacher's Report to the Governing Body

To be completed annually and reported to the first Governors meeting of the new school year, before being published on the Bethany School Website.

Numbers of complaints brought to the Governors under the formal complaints procedure during the year:

September 2019 – August 2020 =

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: September 2021