

BURGESS HILL SCHOOL

— *for girls* —

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

Burgess Hill School for Girls and its Nursery have an excellent reputation, both for the quality of the teaching and the pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents or guardians do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

Stage 1 — Informal Resolution

1. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
2. If parents or guardians have a complaint they should normally contact the pupil's Form teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' or guardians' satisfaction. If the Form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him or her to consult the Head of Section.
3. Complaints made directly to a senior member of staff will usually be referred to the relevant Form teacher, unless the person who has received the complaint deems it appropriate for him or her to deal with the matter personally.
4. Whichever member of staff receives and deals with the complaint 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 28 days or in the event that the Form teacher or the senior member of staff fails to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with **Stage 2** of this Procedure.

Stage 2 — Formal Resolution

1. If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents or guardians should put their complaint in writing to the Head or to the Head of the Junior School. They will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

2. In most cases, the Head or the Head of the Junior School, will speak to the parents or guardians concerned, normally within 5 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
3. It may be necessary for the Head or the Head of the Junior School, to carry out further investigations.
4. The Head or the Head of the Junior School, will make written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint
5. Once the Head or the Head of the Junior School, is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, she will make a decision and parents or guardians will be informed of this decision in writing, together with the reasons for it.
6. In the case of the Junior School, if the complaint is still unresolved after writing to the Head of the Junior School, the parent or guardian should write to the Head.
7. If parents or guardians are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to **Stage 3** of this Procedure.

Stage 3 — Panel Hearing

1. If, following a failure to reach an earlier resolution, parents or guardians seek to invoke Stage 3 they will be referred to the Bursar, who has been appointed by the Board of Governors to call hearings of a Complaints Panel.
2. The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration.
3. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One member of the Panel shall be independent of the management and running of the school and the other two shall be selected from the Board of Governors. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Board of Governors, who shall also nominate a Chairman of the Panel. The Bursar, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint in writing within 10 days and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 28 days of the Bursar's written acknowledgement.
4. If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 5 days prior to the hearing. Similarly, where the parents or guardians wish the Panel to consider any further written material, then this should be supplied within the same time period.
5. The parents or guardians may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. The parents or guardians must inform the Bursar, at least 2 days in advance, if they intend to be accompanied, by whom and in what role.
6. If the parents or guardians are to be accompanied, then any staff member involved may also be accompanied by a relative, teacher or friend.

7. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' or guardians' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
8. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 28 days of the Hearing. The Panel can:
 - Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
 - Uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
 - Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
 - Recommend changes to the School's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.
9. The Panel will write to the parents or guardians informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings will be sent in writing to the Headmistress, the Board of Governors and, where relevant, the person concerning whom the complaint had been made.
10. Recommendations, if any, will be discussed with the Head and Board of Governors.
11. All written records, statements and correspondence will be held in a 'Complaints Register' by the Head.
12. Records will be kept for at least 3 years and with reference to EYFS complaints, complainants will be notified of the outcome within 28 days of having received the complaint.
13. The findings and recommendations will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about and that a copy of the findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Governors and Head.
14. Parents and guardians can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them.

Number of complaints registered under the formal procedure in 2010-2011	0
---	---

Duty to provide numbers of registered complaints in preceding school year.