

# Comments and Complaints Policy



***“Everyone who works with children should do what is in the best interests of the child.”***

*Article 3 United Nations Rights of the Child*

At Bel Royal School we believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and that our staff work hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, we are obliged to have procedures in place if you have a compliment, complaint or just a general comment about Bel Royal School.

## **Aims and objectives**

We are interested to hear the views of our children, parents, relatives or carers as it helps us:

1. continue to improve successful aspects of our school
2. to find out more about what you need
3. to identify possible problem areas before you feel you need to make a complaint
4. investigate areas that you have found unsatisfactory and to take action to stop the same thing happening again

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child’s class teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school and is making good progress; class teachers always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can act before the issue seriously affects the child’s progress and well-being.

Our school procedure has been written following guidance from the Children, Young People, Education and Skills (CYPES) Department. It ensures that we, as a Government of Jersey school follow and are in line with the Government of Jersey Customer Feedback Policy. The various steps of our school’s complaints procedure outline the actions we will undertake to respond to concerns and complaints in line with Stage 1 of this government policy.

## **Who can make a complaint?**

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Bel Royal School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints

are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of our school complaints procedure. Bel Royal School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

### **The difference between a concern and a complaint**

<b>Concerns</b>	<b>Complaints</b>
<p>A concern may be defined as '<i>an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought</i>'.</p> <p>These are normally dealt with by class teachers or support staff.</p> <p>We don't keep formal records of concerns.</p>	<p>A complaint may be defined as '<i>an expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or a lack of action</i>'.</p> <p>These are normally dealt with by school leaders.</p> <p>We keep records of all complaints.</p>

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the Headteacher, will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Headteacher will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Bel Royal School will initially attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the steps outlined within this complaint's procedure.

### **How to raise a concern or make a complaint**

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of the complainant, if they have the complainant's consent to do so.

Concerns should normally be raised with the class teacher or member of staff concerned. However sometimes you may feel it more appropriate to contact, the SENCO/ phase lead

or the Headteacher. Please contact the school to arrange a suitable time to meet them or give them a call. Our staff are often busy, but we will always seek to respond to any concerns received within 2–3 working days wherever we can.

If the issue remains unresolved after you have tried this approach, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

Complaints against school staff (except the Headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to Claire Hammond, the Headteacher. Please mark them as Private and Confidential. You may wish also to refer to the [CYPES Allegations Policy](#) when doing this.

As a government provided primary school, we do not have a board of governors. Therefore, if your complaint is about, or involves, the Headteacher, please contact the CYPES Department via [education@gov.je](mailto:education@gov.je) or 01534 445504 who will forward your complaint to the Senior Advisor linked to the school.

In accordance with the discrimination (Jersey) Law 2013, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

## **Anonymous complaints**

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

## **Time scales**

It is important that a complaint is made as soon as possible but generally a complaint should be made:

- within 12 months of the date when the service was provided, or the event being complained about occurred
- OR
- within 12 months of becoming aware of the event / subject matter

However, we will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if your complaint involves a disclosure of a safeguarding nature.

## **Complaints received outside of term time**

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

## **Scope of this Complaints Procedure**

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision or services by Bel Royal School other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Admissions to schools</li> </ul>	<p>If you've made a request for a school admission and had that request denied, you have the right to appeal. You can request an appeal by emailing <a href="mailto:education@gov.je">education@gov.je</a> or by writing to CYPES. For further details please see the admissions information on the <a href="#">Government website</a></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessments of Special Educational Needs</li> </ul>	<p>Concerns or complaints about provision for your child should be addressed using our school complaints policy.</p> <p>However, if your child has a Record of Need and you wish to appeal the content of the assessment or the educational arrangements offered, you have 15 days in which to make a written appeal to the Education Minister. Please see the <a href="#">Government website</a> for details.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School re-organisation proposals</li> </ul>	<p>Please contact the CYPES by emailing <a href="mailto:education@gov.je">education@gov.je</a> or in writing.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dani Perrier, Designated Safeguarding Officer for CYPES (who has responsibility for safeguarding across Jersey schools) on 07797 924274</li> <li>or the <a href="#">Children and Families Hub</a> on 01534 519000</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exclusion of children from school*</li> </ul>	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusions can be found on the <a href="#">School exclusion</a> pages of the Government website.</p> <p><i>* If your complaint is about the application of the school's behaviour policy you can do this through our school complaints procedure</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whistleblowing</li> </ul>	<p>Please see the government of Jersey's <a href="#">Whistleblowing Policy</a></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff grievances</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's and government's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff conduct</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the Government of Jersey's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member because of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities</li> </ul>	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them directly.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jersey Curriculum - content</li> </ul>	<p>Please contact the CYPES Department on <a href="mailto:education@gov.je">education@gov.je</a></p>

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, Jersey's safeguarding teams or tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against Bel Royal School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

## Resolving Complaints

As indicated in our flow chart above, at each step in the procedure, Bel Royal School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made

- an undertaking to review school policies considering the complaint
- an apology.

## **Withdrawal of a Complaint**

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

## **Persistent complaints**

### **Unreasonably persistent complaints**

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore we will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:

- has made the same complaint before, and it's already been resolved by following the school's complaints procedure
- makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory or repetitive
- insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complaint's procedure, beyond all reason
- pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner, e.g. refuses to articulate the complaint, refuses to co-operate with this complaint's procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the timeframes it sets out
- makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on school time
- seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value.

## **Steps we will take**

We will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns and give them a clear statement of our position and their options. We will maintain our role as an objective arbiter throughout the process, including when we meet with individuals. We will follow our complaints procedure as normal (as outlined above) wherever possible.

If the complainant continues to contact the school in a disruptive way, we may put communications strategies in place.

We may:

- Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term

- Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf
- Put any other strategy in place as necessary.

## **Stopping responding**

In rare occasions we may stop responding to the complainant when all the following factors are met:

- we, in agreement with senior officers from CYPES, believe that the school and CYPES have taken all reasonable steps (as in this procedure and the Government of Jersey Customer Feedback Policy) to help address their concerns
- we have provided a clear statement of our position and their options
- the complainant contacts us repeatedly, and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience

When we stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so. We will also explain that we will still consider any new complaints they make.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from our school site.

## **Duplicate complaints**

If we have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that we hadn't previously considered, or any new information we need to consider.

If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will:

- tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and that the local process is complete
- direct them to the DfE if they are dissatisfied with our original handling of the complaint

If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again.

## **Complaint campaigns**

Should the school receive a large volume of complaints about the same topic or subject, especially if these come from complainants unconnected with the school, we will follow CYPES guidance.

This means that the school may respond to these complaints by:

- Publishing a single response on the school website
- Sending a template response to all the complainants

If complainants are not satisfied with the school's response, or wish to pursue the complaint further, the normal procedures will apply.

## **General comments**

Suggestions, ideas, reflections and other neutral comments are most welcome. You can email, speak in person or write to the staff or the Headteacher.

## **Compliments**

If you are pleased with what we do, and you think we have made a difference we would like to hear from you. You can make comments or compliments either by speaking or writing to the staff with whom you have direct contact, the Headteacher or the school's Senior Advisor– Ms Rachel Baxter

## **Monitoring and review**

The Leadership Team monitors the comments, compliments and complaints procedure, to ensure that all issues are handled properly. The Headteacher logs all formal complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. This information is included in the school's Self-evaluation document.