

Belfast Boys' Model School

Complaints Policy



Policy Details

Summary of Policy	To outline the BBMS complaints procedures.
Purpose	To ensure clarity for all stakeholders about the complaints procedures in BBMS.
Operational Date	November 2025
Review Date	November 2027
Date last reviewed & approved by Board of Governors.	

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Foreword

Belfast Boys' Model School is committed to providing high quality education for all pupils within a culture of good relationships and close partnerships between home, school and the community.

The school has three core values: Respect, Integrity and Commitment. Respect for pupils, parents and staff is a central aspect of our interaction with each other.

We welcome any comments which help us to improve the service we provide, and we appreciate the need to have a clear complaints procedure in place so that any expression of dissatisfaction can be investigated and responded to promptly. We undertake to deal with any complaint effectively and act with the utmost integrity in so doing.

Many issues can be addressed simply by talking to the relevant staff in school who will be happy to help. Open communication and regular engagement between the school staff and the wide range of users is vital to the effective management of the school.

We welcome open communication with our staff, you can contact staff by:

Telephone: 028 9039 1156

Email: info@bbms.belfast.ni.sch.uk

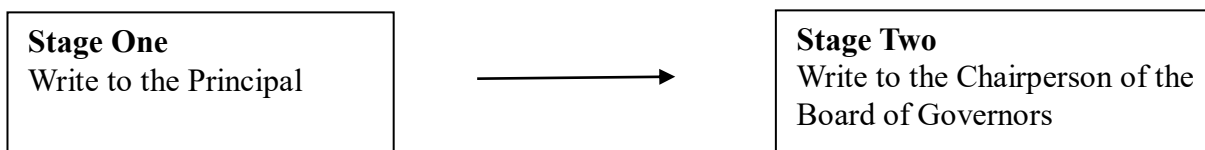
If you have any issues, please talk to the Teacher and/or the Year Counsellor/Head of Year as soon as possible. Concerns about matters other than in the classroom should be raised, in the first instance, with the Head of Year. We take all concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve matters as quickly as possible.

Aims

When dealing with complaints the school will;

- encourage resolution of all complaints as quickly as possible
- provide timely responses to complaints
- keep you informed of progress
- ensure a full and fair investigation of your complaint where appropriate
- have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved
- respect confidentiality
- fully address complaints and provide an effective response
- take appropriate action to rectify the issue and prevent it happening again where appropriate
- be responsible to learning from outcomes which will inform and improve practice within the school

Complaints Procedure – At a glance



Time Limit

Please contact the school as soon as possible, unless there are exceptional circumstances, ***complaints will normally only be considered within 6 months of origin of the complaint to the school.***

Stage One

When making a complaint, contact the school Principal who will arrange for the complaint to be investigated. If the complaint is about the Principal, proceed to Stage Two. The school requires complaints to be made in writing, where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support you with this process.

Please provide as much information as possible including;

- name and contact details
- what the complaint is about
- what has already been done to try to resolve it and
- what you would like the school to do to resolve the complaint.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 10 school working days and a response normally made within 20 school working days of receipt of the complaint. This response will be issued in writing by the Principal and will indicate with reason whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.

If you remain unhappy with the outcome at Stage One, the complaint may be progressed to Stage Two which is overseen by the Board of Governors.

Stage Two

If the complaint is unresolved after Stage One, write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors (care of the school and marked 'private and confidential'). Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process. The Chairperson will convene a committee to review the complaint. Please provide as much detail as possible as indicated above.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 10 school working days and a final response normally made within 20 school working days from date of receipt of the complaint. The response will be issued in writing by the Chairperson of the committee.

These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)

If following Stage Two you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you can refer the matter to the Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO).

The Ombudsman provides a free, independent and impartial service for handling complaints about schools in Northern Ireland. You have the right to complain to the Ombudsman if you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have received a poor service from a school and your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction.

A complaint should normally be referred to NIPSO within six months of the final response from the school. The school must advise in its concluding letter that the complaint may be referred to the NIPSO if you remain dissatisfied.

Contact details for NIPSO are:

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman
Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6HN

Freepost: FREEPOST NIPSO

Telephone: 02890 233821
Freephone: 0800 34 34 24

Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk
Web: www.nipso.org.uk

Scope of Complaints Procedure

The Complaints Procedure sets out how any expression of dissatisfaction relating to the school will be managed. By taking concerns raised seriously at the earliest possible stage, it is hoped that issues can be resolved quickly and effectively.

Some examples of complaints dealt with;

- not following school policy
- communication delays/lack of communication
- difficulties in staff/pupil relationships

Complaints with separate established procedures

Some examples of statutory procedures and appeal mechanisms are listed below. The list is not exhaustive. The Principal/Chair of Governors will advise on the appropriate procedure to pursue when the complaint is raised.

Matters may still be referred to NIPSO, if it is felt that maladministration has occurred.

Exceptions	Contact
• Admissions/Expulsions/Exclusion of children from school	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Operations and Estates Donna Allen
• Statutory assessment of Special Educational Needs (SEN)	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Children and Young People's Services Dale Hanna
• School Development Proposals	Contact www.eani.org.uk Acting Director of Education Cynthia Currie
• Child Protection/Safeguarding	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Children and Young People's Services Dale Hanna

The school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. The decision of whether to deal with such complaints will be at the discretion of the Board of Governors.

What to expect under this Procedure

Your rights as a person making a complaint

In dealing with complaint, we will ensure:

- fair treatment
- courtesy
- a timely response
- accurate advice
- respect for privacy – complaints will be treated as confidentially as possible allowing for the possibility of consultation with other appropriate parties about the complaint and
- clear reasons for decision

Your responsibilities as a person making a complaint

In making a complaint it is important to;

- raise issues in a timely manner
- treat our staff with respect and courtesy
- provide accurate and concise information in relation to the issues raised
- use these procedures fully and engage with them at the appropriate levels

Rights of parties involved during the investigation

Where a meeting is arranged parties may be accompanied but not represented by another person.

Complainant: - should be informed that they may be accompanied but not represented by another person during the process e.g. spouse, friend, family member or interpreter, provided this person is not offering legal representation or acting in an official capacity. If the complainant feels unable to speak on their own behalf, they may avail of support from outside agencies as agreed with the school. (*Local MLAs / Councillors / Citizens' Advice Bureau / Parenting NI / Children's commissioner*)

Staff Members: - should be informed that they may be accompanied or represented by another person during the process e.g. union representative, colleague.

Pupils: permission should be sought from parents / guardians and parent, guardian or other nominated adult should accompany pupils.

It may be appropriate to seek a written statement if a person is unable to meet for any reason.

This procedure does not take away from the statutory rights of any of the participants.

Timeframes

Where concerns are raised with the relevant Teacher or Principal, a response will normally be provided during the meeting or within an agreed timeframe.

Stage One – Normally acknowledge within 10 school working days, response normally within 20 school working days

Stage Two – Normally acknowledge within 10 school working days, response normally within 20 school working days

If, for any reason, the review of a complaint takes longer to complete, you will be informed of revised time limits and kept updated on progress.

These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.

Making a Complaint

Equality

The school requires complaints to be made in writing. Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process.

Unreasonable Complaints

The school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. There will be occasions when, despite all stages of the complaints procedure having been completed and the complaint has been reviewed by the Ombudsman, the complainant remains dissatisfied. The school must balance the rights of an individual to make a complaint and have it fairly investigated with the rights of staff not to be subjected to unacceptable actions or behaviour.

Any decision to treat a complainant as unreasonable must take into account the need to ensure that the complaints procedure is being fairly applied and every attempt has been made to communicate and address concerns about behaviour/conduct with the complainant. In the event that such a decision has been taken, the complainant will be advised accordingly.

Appendix 1 : Useful Contact Details – 2026-2027

Belfast Boys' Model School

Ballysillan Road
BELFAST
BT14 6RB

Telephone 028 9039 1156

Fax 028 9071 3048

E-mail info@bbms.belfast.ni.sch.uk

Heads of Year and Counsellors:	Year 8	Mr Mathers and Ms Black
	Year 9	Mr Smith and Mr McCausland
	Year 10	Mr O'Loan and Ms Blair
	Year 11	Mr Dickey and Ms McLaughlin
	Year 12	Mr Carlisle and Mr E Shearer
	Years 13 and 14 (Senior school)	Ms McGibbon and Mr Wilson

Assistant Principal: Pastoral	Mr McBride
Vice Principal: Curriculum	Miss Farquhar
Vice Principal: Pastoral	Mrs McCracken
Vice Principal: Pastoral	Mr McClelland
Principal:	Mrs Montgomery
Chair of Board of Governors:	Mr Sweetlove

Education Authority, Belfast Region

40 Academy Street
BELFAST
BT1 2NQ

Telephone 02890 56 4000

Fax 02890 33 1714

www.eani.gov.uk

Should you wish to have the services of an interpreter to assist you in understanding this policy, please contact the School Office on 028 9039 1156.