

## BNA Complaints Policy

**BNA treats all concerns and complaints very seriously and will not penalise a student for making a complaint in good faith.**

**BNA aims to solve concerns and complaints as quickly and effectively as possible. Anyone with parental responsibility for a student can also complain if they are not satisfied with the service they receive.**

**Everyone is entitled to have his or her complaint heard as detailed below in the summary of the stages in the complaints procedure.**

What you should do	What will happen
<p><b>Informal:</b> Discuss the problem with the subject teacher, form tutor, HOD HOY. The aim at this stage is to resolve the complaint at source. All staff will hope to be able to resolve issues straight away or, if that is not possible, through mediation. This should include advice, information and discussion and explanation.</p>	<p>The member of staff concerned will help to ensure you have all relevant details. The complaint and action taken in response will be recorded.</p> <p>If initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further, then formal procedures will need to be invoked.</p>
<p>▼</p>	
<p><b>Formal Procedures</b></p>	
<p>If your complaint is about the VP Administration/ Academic go to Stage 2.</p>	
<p>▼</p>	
<p><b>Stage 1:</b> Write to the VP Academic/ Administration stating that you are making a formal complaint. State your complaint; give all relevant details, your name and how you may be contacted.</p>	<p>You should receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ an acknowledgement within 5 school working days</li> <li>○ the findings of VP academic/Administration 15 college working days.</li> </ul>
<p>▼</p>	
<p>If you are not satisfied with the findings of the VP academic/ Administration</p>	
<p>▼</p>	
<p><b>Stage 2:</b> Write to the Principal of the school. State your complaint; give all relevant details including why you do not accept the findings of VP Academic/ Administration, your name and how you may be contacted.</p>	<p>You should receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ an acknowledgement within 10 school working days</li> <li>○ the findings of the Principal within 20 college working days.</li> </ul>
<p>▼</p>	
<p>If you are not satisfied with the findings of the Principal</p>	
<p>▼</p>	
<p><b>Stage 3:</b> Write to the Principal within 10 days stating why you are not satisfied with their findings. Request that a Complaints Panel is set up to investigate the matter.</p>	<p>The Principal will set up a panel to meet within 15 days. You must receive copies of any written materials to be used at least 5 school days before the Panel meets. The Panel will advise you of its findings within 5 college days.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>THIS DECISION IS FINAL</b></p>
<p>▼</p>	
<p>If you believe that the School's complaints procedure was not followed appropriately</p>	
<p>▼</p>	
<p><b>Stage 4:</b> Write to Director of Quality Assurance stating your case and explaining the breach of procedure you require to be investigated.</p>	<p>.</p>

**BNA aims to solve concerns and complaints as quickly and effectively as possible.**

**Anyone with parental responsibility for a student can complain if they are not satisfied with the service they receive.**

**Everyone is entitled to have his or her complaint heard as detailed below.**

(Please remember that it is normal and expected that each stage will be followed in sequence. It is also expected that there will be good reason to move on to the next stage in the procedures)

### **Dealing with complaints – Initial informal concerns / complaints**

BNA will take all informal concerns and complaints seriously at the earliest stage to try to reduce the number that develop into formal complaints.

The underlying principle at BNA is that concerns ought to be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures.

In the first instance a student or parent / guardian wishing to make a complaint of any nature should explain the circumstances to the student's subject teacher, personal tutor or any other member of the full-time academic staff. The aim at this stage is to resolve the complaint at source. It is likely that a problem will become more difficult to solve as more people become involved. All staff will hope to be able to resolve issues on the spot or if that is not possible through mediation, which should include advice, information, discussion and explanation.

If concerns are taken straight to the Principal you may be asked if you have talked to the relevant teacher, and may want to arrange a meeting to do that. The main priority is to resolve the matter quickly and calmly, involving just the people needed to help solve the problem.

The complaint will be recorded, in writing, and the action taken in response will also be recorded.

However, **formal** procedures will need to be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

### **Formal complaints.**

- At this level it is important that everyone involved is clear about the procedures and the nature of the complaint, so you should make important points in writing.
- There are four possible stages to the formal complaints process, with a view to solving problems at the earliest possible stage.
- With the exception of a complaint against the VP Academic/Administration (when you should start at Stage 2), you should complete one stage before moving to the next.

### **Stage 3**

If Stage 2 did not give a satisfactory result a Complaints Panel can investigate your complaint. The decision of this Panel is binding on all parties.

To start Stage 3 you must write to the Director within 10 days of receiving the letter telling you about the result of Stage 2. Your letter must explain why you do not agree with the Principal's findings and ask that a Complaints Panel is set up to consider your case.

The Panel will be made up of three members including one person who is independent of the management and running of the school who should have no detailed knowledge of the matter. This means that the Panel cannot include the Principal or any other person who may have advised you.

The Director will arrange for the Panel to meet no later than 15 school days after this request. During this 15-day period the following should happen:

- The school will give you and the panel copies of all papers about the complaint. You can provide extra written material if you wish by sending a copy to the Chair of the Complaints Panel, c/o the school, with a copy to the Principal. All papers for the Panel must be with you, the Panel and the Principal at least 5 college days before the Complaints Panel meets.
- The Panel will question everyone involved until they are satisfied that they have all the information they need. You and/or the Principal may choose to be there. And you can take along a relative, friend or another adult if you wish. If you do this you must explain who the person is to the Panel.
- Normally, children cannot attend. If the Panel thinks a child has to be interviewed, they need to get the permission of the parents and must be sensitive to the needs of the child by letting a known and trusted adult go along with the child.
- Only Panel members are allowed to question people.
- The Panel must be fair and can take any action they wish to ensure fairness.
- Advisers or officers called to the Panel to answer factual questions are not allowed to take part in the decision and the Panel must tell you who they are and why they are there.
- Sometimes the Panel may realise that they need further information that is not available straight away. They can then agree to halt the meeting and meet again at another time. This time must be convenient to you, the Panel and any other people involved. Everybody must try to deal with the complaint as quickly as possible.
- The Panel will reach its decision privately and will either support the earlier decision of the Director (Stage 2) or decide something different.
- The complainant, proprietors, directors and, where relevant, the person complained about, will be given a copy of any findings and recommendations

The decision of the Panel is final, unless there is evidence of inappropriate procedure.

### **General Issues**

**Anonymous complaints:** Anonymous complaints cannot be dealt with by the formal procedure detailed in this booklet.

**Confidentiality:** All complaints are dealt with in confidence, with information only being given to those people who need to know.

**Lobbying:** No one should lobby or put pressure on a person responsible for investigating a complaint. The investigating officer and/or panel may count this against you.

**Special circumstances:** At times it may be necessary to change the way a complaint is dealt with. This could be because of the nature of the original complaint or because additional information comes to light. Other ways of dealing with a complaint include:

- staff disciplinary action
- criminal investigation
- Safeguarding investigation

If this is the case, when it is

- a complaint to colleges: the director must let you know in writing with the minimum of delay.

You will be told what the procedure will be and what the outcomes might be.

### **Withdrawal of complaints**

You may withdraw your complaint at any time. If possible, you should write to the person who was last dealing with the matter. You will then be sent a written acknowledgement of the withdrawal of the complaint.

## How to listen to complaints

**As soon as you realise that you are listening to a complaint, remember these points**

<b>Say who you are</b>	If you are unknown to the person, introduce yourself.
<b>Ask for their name and use it</b>	Anonymous complaints are acceptable only where there are special circumstances.
<b>Don't pass the buck</b>	Try not transferring an angry person from one place to another. Make sure you know the contact person for anything you can deal with yourself.
<b>Don't be flippant</b>	First impressions count. The College may be judged on your immediate reaction.
<b>Treat all complaints seriously</b>	However small or trivial it may seem to you, the complaint will be an important problem for anyone who takes the trouble to complain.
<b>Treat every complaint individually</b>	Even if you have already received similar complaints on the same day, it is probably the person's first chance to have their say.
<b>Be courteous and patient</b>	Be sympathetic and helpful, but do not blame other colleagues.
<b>Take time to find out exactly what the problem is</b>	It is easy for someone to forget to tell you an important detail, particularly if they are annoyed or upset.
<b>Don't take the complaint personally</b>	To an angry or upset person, YOU are the college and the only one they can put their feelings to right now.
<b>Stay cool and calm</b>	Do not argue with the person – be polite and try to find out what the person thinks is going wrong, or has gone wrong.
<b>Check that you are being understood</b>	Make sure the person understands what you are saying. Don't use jargon – it can cause confusion.
<b>Don't rush</b>	Take your time. Let people have their say and let off steam if they need to. Listen carefully and sympathetically to their problems before replying and attempting to find a solution or offer a next step.

**RECORD OF CONCERN/COMPLAINT**

**Name**.....

**Address**.....

**Telephone No.**.....

**Email**.....

**Nature of Complaint** (please include the date or period of time to which the complaint relates and confirm whether concerns have already expressed informally, and to whom and when.)

(Please attach copies of any more information to back up the complaint, such as letters or reports)

**Actions taken**

**Signature**

**Date**