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Availability: School website and, on request, from the School Office

Purpose and scope

Byron College aims to resolve concerns and complaints fairly, promptly and, wherever possible, at the earliest stage. This procedure explains how a parent or person with parental responsibility for a current pupil may raise a concern or complaint about the School and how the School will respond.

The procedure has three stages: informal resolution, a formal written complaint and, if the parent remains dissatisfied, a panel hearing.

Parents are normally expected to use Stage 1 before making a formal complaint. A parent may proceed directly to Stage 2 where there is a reasonable reason why informal resolution would be inappropriate.

This procedure does not replace statutory, safeguarding, disciplinary, capability, grievance, whistleblowing or other specialist procedures. Where another procedure is more appropriate, the School will explain this and will ensure that the complaint is referred or handled appropriately.

Guiding principles

- Complaints will be considered impartially and without adverse treatment of a pupil or parent because a complaint has been raised in good faith.
- The School will make reasonable efforts to establish the relevant facts and will give those directly involved a fair opportunity to provide information.
- The School will keep the complainant informed about the progress of the complaint, particularly where a revised timescale is needed.
- Information will be shared only with those who need it for the fair handling of the complaint or to meet safeguarding, legal, regulatory or inspection obligations.

Timescales

The School aims to meet the timescales below. If a complaint is unusually complex, requires specialist advice, overlaps with another investigation, or cannot be completed within the stated period for another reasonable cause, the School will explain the delay and provide a revised timescale.

Any adjustment to a timescale will not remove the parent's right to progress through this procedure.

Stage	Action	Normal timescale
Stage 1	Acknowledge an informal concern	Within 2 working days
Stage 1	Respond or agree next steps	Within 10 working days
Stage 2	Acknowledge a formal complaint	Within 2 working days
Stage 2	Issue the formal written outcome	Within 15 working days
Stage 3	Parent requests a panel hearing	Within 10 working days of the Stage 2 outcome
Stage 3	Arrange the panel hearing	Normally within 20 working days of the request
Stage 3	Issue findings and recommendations	Within 5 working days of the hearing

Stage 1: Informal resolution

A parent should normally raise a concern first with the member of staff best placed to address it, such as the subject teacher, form teacher, Head of Department or Key Stage Lead. The concern may be raised by email, telephone or at a meeting arranged through the School.

The member of staff will inform an appropriate senior leader so that the concern and the action taken can be recorded.

The School will acknowledge the concern within 2 school days and will normally provide a response, or explain the next steps, within 10 school days.

If the concern is not resolved, the parent may ask for the Headteacher or an appropriate senior leader to assist. Mediation may be offered where all parties agree. A parent is not required to accept mediation and may move to Stage 2.

A reasonable reason for proceeding directly to Stage 2 may include that:

- The concern involves the person who would normally consider it.
- The matter is serious or sensitive.
- The concern raises a safeguarding issue.
- Previous attempts at informal resolution have been unsuccessful.

The School may ask why Stage 1 has not been followed, but will not refuse to consider a formal complaint solely for that reason.

Complaints concerning the Headteacher

A concern about the Headteacher may be raised directly with the Chair of the Governing Board, marked "Private and Confidential" and submitted through the School Office.

The parent may choose to discuss the concern with the Headteacher but is not required to do so. The Headteacher will not investigate or decide a complaint about their own conduct.

The Chair, or a governor nominated by the Chair who has had no prior involvement, will manage the informal stage and any subsequent formal stage.

Complaints concerning members of the Governing Board

A complaint concerning the Chair or another member of the Governing Board will be managed by a Board member who has had no prior involvement or by a suitably independent external person.

Where the complaint concerns several Board members or the Governing Board as a whole, an independent external person will conduct the formal stage.

The Board may take the administrative steps necessary to appoint an external person, but any Board member who is the subject of the complaint will take no part in investigating or determining the complaint.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the formal stage, any subsequent panel hearing will be conducted in accordance with Stage 3.

The panel will comprise at least three people who have had no prior involvement in the matters complained about and may consist entirely of external members.

A Board member who is the subject of the complaint may respond to the allegations and provide relevant information but will take no part in investigating, hearing or determining the complaint.

Stage 2: Formal written complaint

If the parent is dissatisfied with the response at Stage 1, or has a reasonable reason why informal resolution would be inappropriate, the complaint should be made in writing.

- A complaint about a member of staff or the School should be addressed to the Headteacher.
- A complaint about the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of the Governing Board.
- A complaint about the Chair, several Board members or the Governing Board as a whole should be addressed in accordance with the arrangements published by the School following confirmation of the appropriate recipient and appointment authority.

Complaints may be delivered to the School Office in a sealed envelope marked "Private and Confidential" or sent using the contact details published by the School.

The written complaint should, so far as possible:

- State the concern and the outcome sought.
- Identify the relevant events, dates and people.
- Include any documents or other information the parent wishes the School to consider.
- Explain what steps, if any, have already been taken to resolve the concern.

Where a disability, language need or other accessibility need makes it difficult for a parent to submit the complaint in writing, the School will provide reasonable assistance to record it in writing and confirm it with the parent.

The person responsible for Stage 2 will acknowledge the complaint within 2 school days. They may meet the complainant, speak to relevant people and consider relevant records.

A written response will normally be issued within 15 school days. It will:

- Summarise the issues considered.
- Set out the findings and outcome.
- Explain how the parent may request a panel hearing.

The complaint may be upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. Where the available information does not permit a conclusion to be reached, the response will say so.

Complaints that concern a member of staff

This procedure addresses the parent's complaint and the School's response to it.

If the same facts may require a safeguarding, disciplinary, capability, grievance or other employment process, that process will be handled separately under the relevant School procedure and applicable Greek law. The complaints process may be coordinated with, adapted around or, where necessary, paused for that separate process so that neither process is prejudiced. The complainant will be told of any delay and given a revised timescale.

The complainant will be told the outcome of the complaint and, where appropriate, that the matter has been addressed. The School will not normally disclose confidential information about any disciplinary, capability, safeguarding or employment action concerning an individual employee.

Safeguarding matters

Any complaint that indicates that a child may be at risk of harm, or that contains an allegation against a member of staff, will be referred immediately under the School's safeguarding and allegations procedures. Safeguarding action takes priority. The complaints procedure may continue, be adapted or be paused to avoid compromising a safeguarding, police, regulatory or other formal investigation. The School will provide information to the complainant only to the extent that it is lawful and consistent with the protection of children and the rights of others.

Stage 3: Panel hearing

If the parent remains dissatisfied after Stage 2, they may request a panel hearing in writing within 10 school days of receiving the formal response.

The request should identify:

- The aspects of the complaint that remain unresolved.
- The outcome the parent is seeking.

The request should be addressed to the Chair of the Governing Board through the School Office.

Where the Chair dealt with Stage 2, another governor who has had no prior involvement will arrange the panel on behalf of the Governing Board.

Where the complaint concerns the Chair, several Board members or the Governing Board as a whole, the panel will be arranged by an uninvolved person authorised for that purpose and may consist entirely of external members.

Panel membership and independence

The panel will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.

At least one panel member will be independent of the management and running of the School.

The person arranging the panel will consider any actual or perceived conflict of interest before confirming its membership and will appoint a panel chair.

Arranging the hearing

The School will normally arrange the hearing within 20 school days of receiving the request.

The parent will receive reasonable written notice of the date, time and arrangements.

The parent may attend and may be accompanied by a friend, relative or representative. The parent should provide the name and role of any companion in advance.

The School will consider reasonable requests relating to accessibility, language or participation.

The panel chair will set a fair procedure for the hearing and may request written evidence in advance.

Relevant material will be circulated in sufficient time for participants to prepare, subject to appropriate redaction and confidentiality.

The panel may meet participants together or separately where this is necessary for fairness, safeguarding, welfare or confidentiality.

The hearing is not a court or an employment tribunal. The panel chair may prevent direct questioning that is inappropriate, repetitive or likely to compromise another process.

The School will make reasonable efforts to agree a hearing date. If the parent chooses not to attend, or does not attend after reasonable arrangements and notice have been offered, the panel may proceed and decide the complaint on the written information available.

Panel remit

The panel may:

- Consider the complaint, the Stage 2 response and the relevant information available.
- Consider whether the complaint was addressed fairly and appropriately.
- Consider whether the conclusions reached are supported by the information available.
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part or decide that it is not upheld.
- Make recommendations to the School about resolving the complaint, remedying any identified failing or improving policy and practice.

The panel has no authority to impose or determine disciplinary sanctions, dismissal, capability action or any other employment action in relation to a member of staff.

It will not act as an employment or disciplinary tribunal.

If its findings indicate that a separate internal process may be required, it may recommend that the School consider the matter under the appropriate procedure.

Any decision arising from that separate process rests with the person or body authorised under the relevant School procedure and applicable Greek law.

Panel outcome

The panel will produce written findings and recommendations.

Copies will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, to the person complained about, normally within 5 school days of the hearing.

Copies may be redacted or adapted where necessary to protect:

- Personal data.
- Confidential employment information.
- Safeguarding information.
- Information about pupils.
- The rights of other third parties.

Any redaction will be limited to what is necessary and will not remove the substance of the panel's findings and recommendations.

The findings and recommendations will also be made available for inspection on the School premises by the Governing Board and the Headteacher.

Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher, access to the record does not give the Headteacher any role in deciding the complaint.

Where the complaint concerns one or more members of the Governing Board, access to the record does not give those individuals any role in investigating, hearing or determining the complaint.

Final stage

The panel hearing is the final stage of the School's internal complaints procedure. There is no further internal right of appeal.

This does not affect a complainant's right to refer a matter to the competent Greek authority or to pursue any remedy available under Greek law.

Records

The School will keep a written record of every formal complaint made at Stage 2.

The record will show:

- The substance of the complaint and the date received.
- Whether it was resolved following the formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing.
- The outcome, including whether it was upheld in whole or in part or was not upheld.
- The action taken by the School as a result, regardless of whether the complaint was upheld.
- The date on which the complainant was informed of the outcome.

The School will retain complaint records securely in accordance with its records-retention and data-protection arrangements and applicable law.

The School will also make available the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, as required by the British Schools Overseas standards.

Anonymous information

Anonymous complaints will not normally be considered under this procedure because the School cannot clarify the complaint, test the information fully or communicate an outcome to the complainant.

However, anonymous information suggesting that a child may be at risk of harm, that a criminal offence may have occurred, or that there may be serious misconduct will be referred under the appropriate safeguarding or internal procedure.

Confidentiality and data protection

All correspondence, statements and records relating to an individual complaint will be kept confidential and handled in accordance with applicable data-protection requirements.

Access will be limited to those who need the information to:

- Consider the complaint.
- Implement any action arising from it.
- Meet the School's safeguarding, legal, inspection or regulatory obligations.

Information may be disclosed where required or permitted by host-country law.

Documents supplied to the complainant, a person complained about or another participant may be appropriately redacted to protect employees, pupils and other third parties.

Nothing in this section removes any right of access or other right under applicable data-protection law. Any such request will be considered separately under that law.

Availability of this procedure

This procedure is available to parents on the School's website.

A paper or electronic copy is available on request from the School Office.