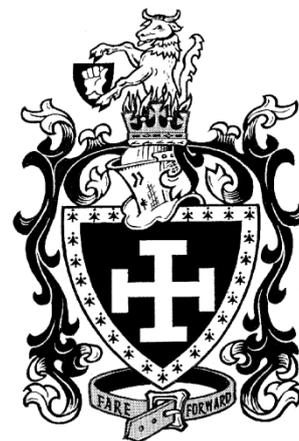


# **Buckler's Mead Academy**



## **Policy Document**

# **COMMUNICATIONS, COMPLAINTS & CONCERNS POLICY**

Policy Title:	Communications, Complaints & Concerns Policy
Responsible Person:	Business Manager / Matt Wood
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<b><i>Please note: The version of this document contained within the 'Policy Documents' Folder on BMStaff (T:\Admin\Policies and Procedures) is the only version that is maintained.</i></b>	

## **Home and Academy Communications, Complaints and Concerns Policy**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Buckler's Mead Academy is committed to forging a genuine home-Academy partnership. We believe that effective communication between the Academy and home is a major factor in ensuring academic success, personal development and well-being. We welcome the views of all pupils, students and parents/carers, including areas of concern. We believe that maintaining frequent and effective communication between the Academy and home is the most effective way of preventing concerns arising. All people who have concerns or complaints should feel that these can be voiced and that they will be considered seriously. All complainants have the right to be accompanied when making the complaint and students may be accompanied by a parent or another adult.

### **2. COMMUNICATING HOME**

We will communicate regularly with parents/carers in order to keep them informed of all aspects of Academy life. This will be achieved through a variety of methods including:

- Prospectus
- Letters to parents
- Parents' Evenings
- Parent and teacher meetings
- Newsletters & Bulletins
- Email
- Website
- School/Subject and curriculum information to parents

In sending out communications to parents/carers we will inform parents/carers, as soon as possible, about any issues of concern that the Academy has in order to work together to resolve them.

## **PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERATION OF COMPLAINTS**

### **1. STAGE 1 – INFORMAL CONSIDERATION**

- 1.1 Many complaints can be resolved quickly in informal discussion between the complainant and the Headteacher, or other staff of the Academy. Unless there are very exceptional circumstances and, despite full discussion with the Headteacher of the academy, the matter remains unresolved, complaints should not move to the formal stages. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the consideration of their concerns by the Headteacher, they should be informed that they have the right to put their complaint in writing and have it considered by Directors at Stage 2.

### **2. STAGE 2 – FORMAL CONSIDERATION BY DIRECTORS (Preliminary Stage)**

At this stage the complaint should be considered by Directors of the Academy. The following procedure should be followed.

- 2.1 Written complaint to Directors via Clerk to the Board of Directors, c/o the Academy office.
- 2.2 The Clerk to the Board of Directors will make arrangements as quickly as possible for the complaint to be heard and considered at a meeting convened for this purpose.
- 2.3 The Headteacher (who, ultimately, is responsible for investigating complaints at Stage 1) should attend the meeting.
- 2.4 The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting to explain the complaint in more detail and will be allowed to be accompanied by a friend.
- 2.5 After the meeting, the Clerk will notify the complainant of the Directors' decision in writing within 7 days. The letter will include reference to any further steps (such as an appeal to the Board of Directors – see Stage 3 below) that are open to the complainant.

### **3. STAGE 3 – FORMAL CONSIDERATION BY A PANEL OF DIRECTORS**

At this stage the complaint should be considered by three members of the Board of Directors. The following procedures will apply.

- 3.1 The Clerk to the Board of Directors will make arrangements as quickly as possible for the complaint to be heard and considered at a meeting of three of the Board of Directors.
- 3.2 The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting to explain, and answer any questions about, their complaints and will be allowed to be accompanied by a friend.
- 3.3 After the meeting, the Clerk to the Board of Directors will notify the complainant of the Directors' decision in writing, within 7 days.

### **PROCEDURE FOR STAGE 3 REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

1. **Upon receipt of a written request for a complaint to be reviewed by the Directors the procedure outlined should be followed.**
2. The Clerk to the Directors should write to the complainant within 5 school days to acknowledge receipt of the written request. If the exact nature of the complaint, and/or the complainant's desired outcome(s) are not clear from their letter, clarification should be requested (a pro forma drafted for use in this connection is at Appendix 1). The acknowledgement should inform the complainant that the complaint will be considered by a panel comprising three members of the Board of Directors, within 15 school days of receiving the complaint, and should provide details of the panel members. The complainant should be told what papers will be supplied to the panel (usually just the letter of complaint and/or the completed complaint pro forma) and should be afforded an opportunity to provide any further relevant papers for the panel's consideration if they so wish. The complainant should be given copies

of any papers provided for the panel at this stage, if they have not already received them.

3. The Clerk to the Directors should arrange to convene the panel of 3 including 2 members of the Board of Directors. The panel members should be 2 directors who have had no prior knowledge of the complaint and a person independent of the day to day management of the academy. The Headteacher should not be on the panel and it would usually also be inappropriate for the Chair of Directors to be a panel member. The advantages of having a director who is a parent on the panel should be borne in mind, as should the need to be sensitive to issues of gender, race and religious affiliation, if appropriate.
4. The advisability of including a teacher or staff director on the panel, and whether such a director would be compromised where the complaint is against a fellow member of staff at the academy, should be carefully considered.
5. The complaint should be considered by the panel, preferably at a venue other than the academy, within the period of 15 academy days referred to in paragraph 2 above. Details of the date, time and location of the hearing should be agreed in consultation with, and confirmed in writing to, the complainant and panel members, at least 5 academy days prior to the meeting. The letter should also outline in general terms how the hearing will be conducted (see paragraph 6 below) and confirm the complainant's right to be accompanied by a friend.
6. The meeting must be properly minuted, either by the Clerk to the Directors or an independent clerk (not another director) appointed for the purpose. **At the meeting, the following procedure should be followed by the Chair of the panel:**
  - 6.1 Welcome all in attendance and introduce panel members, giving their status.
  - 6.2 If the complainant is accompanied, check/clarify – if necessary – the name and status of the friend/representative.
  - 6.3 Explain purpose of meeting, i.e.
    - to provide the complainant with the opportunity to expand on their written complaint and to enable the panel to identify/clarify any issues for investigation;  
and
    - to ascertain from the complainant what would, in their view, constitute a satisfactory resolution of the complaint.
  - 6.4 Invite complainant to expand upon written complaint, seeking clarification as necessary.
  - 6.5 Agree with complainant the issues to be investigated and/or considered by the panel.
  - 6.6 Explain that the panel will undertake any necessary investigations and make a written response to the complainant (copied to the Academy) within 15 school days.

- 6.7 Thank the complainant for attending and seek confirmation that they feel they have had a full and fair hearing.
7. After the complainant has left the meeting, the panel should:
  - 7.1 Produce a letter to go to the complainant confirming the agreed issues for investigation/consideration (see paragraph 6.5).
  - 7.2 Agree the nature/scope and a timetable for any necessary investigations.
  - 7.3 If appropriate/necessary, agree a date to meet again, to consider the results of investigations and to draft/agree a written response to the complainant.
8. The Clerk to the Directors, or other person appointed to act as clerk to the complaints panel, should assist the panel in the production of their written response, once the complaint has been investigated. This response should confirm:
  - 8.1 The date and venue of the hearing attended by the complainant.
  - 8.2 Membership of the Directors' panel.
  - 8.3 The issues mutually agreed to be the subject of the panel's investigations and/or deliberations.
  - 8.4 The methodology followed by the panel for their investigation; (e.g. interviews, written statements obtained, etc).
  - 8.5 The conclusions reached by the panel.
9. The nature of the complaint and the outcome of the panel's investigation should be reported, in general terms, to the next full meeting of the Board of Directors, together with any implications for Academy policies or procedures which require further consideration/action.

**Board of Directors Review Form      STAGE 3**



**A request to the Directors to review my complaint:**

When you have filled in this form, please return it to the Clerk of the Directors at Buckler's Mead Academy.

Your name: .....

Your address and postcode: .....

Your daytime telephone number: .....

Your child's name: .....

Your complaint about the Academy: .....

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When did you raise this with the Headteacher?     

When did you receive the Headteacher's response?     

Your reasons for requesting a review are? .....

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(Please use a continuation sheet if necessary)

## Board of Directors Review form (continued)

What do you want the Academy Directors to do?

- Give an acknowledgement and/or apology?
- Give an explanation?
- Give an undertaking to recommend revision of school policies or practices
- Give a commitment to recommend steps designed to prevent a recurrence
- Other action (please specify)

Your signature: ..... Date: .....

What happens next?

- You will receive an acknowledgement that this form has been received.
- You will be invited to discuss your complaint with a Panel of Directors.
- Within 15 days of meeting the Directors' Panel you will receive a full reply telling you the Panel's conclusions/decisions, explaining their reasons and informing you of any action that has been taken/recommended.

## Equal Opportunities (Strictly confidential)

By answering the following questions, you will help us make sure we give a good and fair service to all the people in the community. (Please tick the relevant boxes).

Are you: Male?  Female?

Do you have a disability? Yes  No

Are you: White?  White European?  White Other?  Please specify .....

Black Caribbean?  Black African?  Black Other?  Please specify .....

Indian?  Pakistani?  Bangladeshi?

Chinese?  Other

This information will not affect the way your complaint is handled.

*When you have completed this form, please return it to Clerk to the Directors at Buckler's Mead Academy.*