



Complaints and Appeals Procedure

1. Purpose

boomsatsuma is committed to providing a high-quality learning experience and supporting all learners effectively. This procedure sets out a clear, fair and timely process for raising, managing and resolving complaints or appeals.

This policy applies to complaints made by learners or parents/carers. It does not apply to complaints relating to student admissions, which are covered by separate policies.

Anonymous complaints will not be investigated.

If an allegation concerns potential harm or risk of harm to a child, boomsatsuma may make an immediate safeguarding referral to the relevant authorities. Any investigation led by those authorities will take precedence over this procedure.

2. When a Concern First Arises (Informal Resolution)

Concerns should normally be raised with the learner's tutor, either in person or in writing.

Where the concern relates to a member of staff, it should be raised with the Head of College. Where the concern relates to a member of the Executive team, it should be raised with the Strategic advisory group.

You may be invited to an informal meeting. A short written record of the discussion and agreed actions will be made.

Most issues should be resolved informally within 21 days. If you remain dissatisfied, you may proceed to Stage 1 (Formal Complaint).

3. Stage 1: Formal Complaint to the Executive Team

A formal complaint must be submitted in writing to the Executive Team, setting out:

- The concern
- What has happened to date
- The resolution sought

A member of the Executive team will:

1. Acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days
2. Investigate the matter, including meeting relevant parties where required
3. Keep a confidential record of the investigation
4. Provide a written response within 15 school days of the acknowledgement

The response will outline:

- The decision
- Reasons for the decision
- Any actions taken
- The right to escalate to Stage 2

Where the complaint concerns a member of staff, they will be informed and may be interviewed. Allegations of abuse may trigger internal disciplinary procedures and/or external safeguarding investigations.

4. Stage 2: Complaint to the Strategic advisory group

If dissatisfied with the Stage 1 outcome, you may write to the Chair of the Board.

The complaint must outline:

- The original issue
- Steps taken to resolve it
- Why you remain dissatisfied

Where the complaint is against a member of staff, they may provide a written response within 10 working days.

The Chair will provide a written response within 10 working days, outlining:

- Findings and decision
- Actions to be taken, if any
- The right of appeal and how to initiate it

5. Stage 3: Appeals Panel

If dissatisfied with the Stage 2 outcome, you may request an appeal.

This must be done within 14 working days of receiving the Stage 2 response. Failure to do so will result in the complaint being closed.

The Secretary to the Board will:

- Acknowledge the appeal
- Arrange a panel hearing normally within 21 working days
- Circulate documents to all parties

Both parties must submit any supporting documents at least 5 working days before the hearing. You may be accompanied at the hearing and must notify the secretary in advance.

Composition of the Appeals Panel

- Three individuals appointed by the Board
- At least one independent of the organisation's management
- No prior involvement or conflict of interest

6. Appeals Hearing Procedure

The panel will determine an appropriate process. It will normally include:

1. Introduction by the Chair
2. Complainant explains the complaint
3. Questions from the panel and Executive Team
4. Executive Director explains the organisation's actions
5. Questions from the panel and complainant
6. Summing up by both parties
7. Panel deliberation in private

The Secretary will notify the decision within 7 working days, including:

- The panel's decision
- Reasons
- Any recommended actions

Possible outcomes:

- Dismiss all/part of the complaint
- Uphold all/part of the complaint
- Recommend actions to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to policy or procedure

The panel's decision is final.

7. Vexatious Complaints

Where a complainant repeatedly raises the same issue after the procedure has been exhausted, the Chair will notify them that the matter is closed. Further correspondence on the same matter may be treated as vexatious and may not receive a response.

8. Monitoring and Review

All complaints will be reviewed to identify possible improvements to policy or practice. The Board will review this procedure every two years.

9. Staff Complaints

Complaints or grievances made by staff are covered by the Staff Discipline, Conduct and Grievance Policy.

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Approved by;: Beth Griffiths

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