



Complaints Procedure

Independent School Standards (ISS):
Paragraphs 32 (3), 33 and 34

Summary of the number of complaints registered and resolved under our formal complaints procedure during the preceding school year (ISS 32(3)(f))

	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
2024-25	0	0	0	0

Update:	June 2025
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Reviewed:	Annually
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Introduction

PhoenixPlace regards the implementation of its complaints procedure as a means to improving the services for our students, their families and external partners. We understand that we may not always get everything right; however, we welcome the opportunity to address any worries or concerns you have at an early stage by contacting us to talk about your concerns.

Our Complaints Procedure provides:

- A route for students, staff, family members and others involved with the children outside the home to make both minor and major complaints
- An opportunity to resolve the complaint informally at an early stage
- A time scaled formal procedure to follow if complaints are not resolved at the informal stage
- Written records at each stage of the process
- Instructions to follow in the event of a complaint

To assist you or your child in making any concern or complaint known to us, we suggest you use the following procedure. However, please be assured that you may speak with whoever you feel most comfortable.

A child is entitled to have an advocate at any stage of the complaints procedure. This can be a parent or family member acting on behalf of the child, the child's Social Worker or someone from an independent advocacy agency or any other person who is suitably skilled.

The procedure is devised with the intention that it will:

- usually be possible to resolve problems by informal means (before or at stage one of the procedure)
- be simple to use and understand & treat complaints confidentially
- allow problems to be handled swiftly
- address all points causing concern
- inform future practice so that the problem is unlikely to recur
- reaffirm the partnership between families and staff as they work together for the good of the students in the schools
- ensure that the schools' attitude to a student would never be affected by a complaint
- discourage anonymous complaints & ensure that all staff have opportunities to discuss and understand the schools' response to concerns and complaints made by families or other persons
- ensure that any person complained against has equal rights with the person making the complaint.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A **concern** may be defined as '*an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought*'.

A **complaint** may be defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action*'.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. PhoenixPlace takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

Complaints Procedure

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views and ask you to raise a concern via email to complaint@phoenixplace.co.uk.

Stage 1: (INFORMAL) Problem Solving/Informal Complaint

- Complaints and concerns can often be due to misunderstandings. Please tell someone at the school what the problem is and how you think it can be resolved. We will try to find a solution to the problem in a way that is acceptable to all the people involved.
- An Informal Complaint does not mean it is any less a complaint; however we believe that the vast majority of complaints can be addressed and resolved at this stage. Our aim is to treat your complaint with respect, in a prompt manner and to look for a positive and successful outcome. An informal complaint can be through discussion or in writing.
- If you are not satisfied with the response or if you prefer, perhaps because of the nature of the concern, you are able to make direct contact with the Head Teacher to discuss your concerns.
- If your concern has not been resolved to your satisfaction or your complaint is about a senior member of staff, we would ask that you contact the Proprietor who will arrange for an appropriate person to contact you directly.
- We will try to address and resolve your complaint through informal means such as discussion, negotiation and mediation. We will keep a written record of your complaint, the agreed action and the outcome and we will keep you updated and informed of the progress of the complaint.
- Should we fail to resolve your concern, we reserve the right to implement the Formal Complaints procedure at any time, as no further investigation following a previous successful outcome, will be identified. It is hoped that most concerns and complaints can be resolved at this stage.

Stage 2: (FORMAL) Formal Complaint to Complaints Lead

- If you feel your complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved, or your complaint is very serious in nature and you do not wish to use Stage 1, you should consider making a formal complaint to our designated Complaints Lead.
- If you wish to do so, it is helpful if you can give a brief outline of your concern when you make the appointment. It may be useful to complete the complaints form (at the end of this document) at this point. After your discussion with the Complaints lead, you may have to wait a short time while investigations are carried out.
- Every effort will be made to resolve the situation as quickly as possible; the assistant principal will keep you updated and will send you a written response **within seven school days**.
- All formal complaints need to be expressed in writing (a form is attached to this policy) and addressed to:

Kailash Kumari (Complaints)
PhoenixPlace
Redcar Street (% Brandon Baptist Centre)
Camberwell SE5 0NA

This form can be emailed to complaints@phoenixplace.co.uk

Stage 3: (FORMAL) Formal Complaint to the Head Teacher

If you STILL feel your complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1 or 2, or your complaint is very serious in nature, you should consider making a formal complaint to the Head Teacher.

All formal complaints need to be expressed in writing (a form is attached to this policy) and addressed to:

Head Teacher (Complaints)
PhoenixPlace
Redcar Street (% Brandon Baptist Centre)
Camberwell
SE5 0NA

This form can be emailed to snelson@phoenixplace.co.uk

Receipt of your formal complaint will be acknowledged **within seven working days**, either in writing or through direct contact.

If required, an independent representative may accompany any individual throughout this process. You will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint. The outcome of the investigation into your complaint will be put in writing and sent directly to you.

Stage 4: (FORMAL) Formal Complaint to the Chair of Strategic Advisory Panel

Only if the complaint is still unresolved should a formal complaint be made to the Chair of Strategic Advisory Panel, Linda Carmody. This complaint should be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how it has been handled so far at stages 1, 2 & 3.

You should send this written complaint via email for the Chairs attention to complaints@phoenixplace.co.uk

The Chair may offer a meeting if this is likely to be useful and helpful.

Every effort will be made to resolve the situation as quickly as possible; you will be kept updated and will be sent a written response **within ten school days**.

Stage 5: (FORMAL) Making a Complaint to the Complaints Panel

If the complaint has regrettably still not been resolved at stages 1, 2, 3 and 4, you may ask for your complaint to be heard by our complaints panel, which will include three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and at least one of the three will be completely independent of PhoenixPlace.

The complaints panel will consider all written complaints within **twenty school days** of receipt. The panel will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and will invite you to attend the meeting, so that the complaint can be explained in more detail.

The complainant is welcome to be accompanied by a family member or friend to the meeting. The schools will always give the complainant at least **five days' notice of the meeting**.

After hearing all the evidence, the complaints panel will consider their decision and inform the complainant, and where relevant the person complained about, about their key findings and recommendations. These will be provided in writing within **five school days**.

The complaints panel will do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction. Their overall decision, findings and recommendations will be final.

A copy of the decision, findings and recommendations will be made available for inspection by the proprietor and School leaders.

Timescales

- We aim to resolve all complaints within **42 working days** of receipt.

Complaints received outside of term time

- We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

- If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Anonymous complaints

- We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the headteacher or Chair of Strategic Advisory Panel, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Summary of Timescales

Stage	Description	Response
1	INFORMAL: SHARING YOUR CONCERN A discussion with a relevant member of staff, e.g. teacher or trusted (key) adult	As soon as possible, within 2 school days.
2	(FORMAL) Formal Complaint to Complaints Lead A meeting and/or written complaint to the schools complaints lead to complaints@phoenixplace.co.uk	Acknowledged on the day of receipt, responded to within a maximum of 7 school days.
3	Stage 3: (FORMAL) Formal Complaint to the Head Teacher A meeting and/or written complaint snelson@phoenixplace.co.uk	Acknowledged on the day of receipt, responded to within a maximum of 7 school days.
4	Stage 4: (FORMAL) Formal Complaint to the Chair of Strategic Advisory Panel A meeting and/or written complaint complaints@phoenixplace.co.uk	Acknowledged on the day of receipt, responded to within a maximum of 10 school days
5	Stage 4: (FORMAL) Making a Complaint to the Complaints Panel Attendance at a complaints panel hearing	Hearing arranged within 20 school days, providing the complainant with 5 school days' notice. Findings and recommendations sent within 5 school days of the hearing.

Records of Complaints

- All complaints are recorded on the schools' complaints log.
- The detail of the complaint is recorded, including informal complaints (stage 1), as is whether the complaint is resolved at stage 1, or at any stage of the formal complaints procedure.
- Any actions taken by the school as a result of a complaint (regardless of whether the complaint has been upheld or not) are also recorded on this log.
- All information (correspondence, statements, records) relating to all individual complaints is kept confidential, accessed only by proprietors, senior leaders and inspectors.

PHOENIXPLACE – Complaints Form

Please email this completed form to complaints@phoenixplace.co.uk.
When we receive a complaint, we aim to acknowledge its receipt on the same day.

Complainants Details	
Your name:	
Student's name:	
Your relationship to the student:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Day time telephone number:	
Evening telephone number:	
Email:	
Please give details of your complaint.	

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?	
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.	
Signature:	
Print Name:	
Date:	
Official use	
Date acknowledgement sent (by whom):	
Complaint referred to: Date:	

Strategy for managing serial and unreasonable complaints

Note: This policy is to manage unreasonable or persistent contact not directly associated with, or resulting from, formal complaints

PhoenixPlace is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

PhoenixPlace defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the headteacher or Chair of Strategic Advisory Panel will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an '*unreasonable*' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact PhoenixPlace causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from PhoenixPlace.

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions to schools Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs School reorganisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school reorganisation proposals should be raised with your local authority
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions . <i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure..</i>
Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters directly with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus . Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain directly to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them directly.
National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus