



Complaints Policy

for students, parents/guardians

Version: 2.0

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- Date of last review: March 2025
- Policy review date: June 2026

Related policies:

- Admissions policy

Purpose

The British College of Gava aims to provide a rewarding, enjoyable and equitable experience for all students. We want to hear if students or parents/guardians are dissatisfied in order that we can quickly address issues and identify areas where changes or improvements may be needed.

Students or parents/guardians who wish to make a complaint to BCG with regard to its actions, provisions or practices should do so in accordance with this policy. (Please see Appendices 1 and 2)

Scope

This policy and procedures apply to the submission and management of all complaints that a student or parent/guardian wishes to make in relation to School actions, provisions or practices *after* the student confirms acceptance of their place at BCG and during the student's registration with the School.

It should be noted that:

- Complaints about matters not within the school's control, for example appeals against academic grades awarded by external bodies, are not managed under this policy.
- Pre-arrival complaints and appeals relating to student application and admission processes are not managed under this policy and should be directed in writing to the Principal

In the event that you have concerns relating to the welfare of a student, then please refer to the *Safeguarding Policy* for next steps.

All concerns and complaints will be treated seriously. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where disclosure is required by law or school policy. The School may decide not to pursue anonymous complaints. Disciplinary action against staff as a result of a complaint will be handled confidentially by the school.

Policy Aim

The aim of this policy is to set out a clear, consistent and effective means for addressing areas of student or parent/guardian complaints.

Making a complaint

Students or parent/guardian wishing to make a complaint are requested to do so as soon as possible after the incident or experience that led to them feeling dissatisfied. This complaint can be verbal or written; to either academic or admin staff however all complaints will be managed as per the following process.

Stage 1: Informal Complaint

A Stage 1 or informal complaint can be made to any member of staff regardless of role or position within the College

Every effort will be made to resolve a complaint at the point of the complaint being made. The outcome and resolution will be clearly communicated to the person making the complaint using the most appropriate means available e.g. face to face or email, normally within five working days. In the unusual event that it is not possible to resolve the complaint within this timescale, the complainant will be advised of this at the earliest opportunity and alternative timescales for a response agreed.

The complaint will be logged, and the outcome recorded.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint

In the event that a complaint cannot be resolved informally, then the student or parent/guardian should put their complaint in writing (via letter or email) and send this to the Head of Phase or the Principal.

1. The Head of Phase or the Principal will acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint within 2 working days.
2. The Head of Phase or the Principal will review the complaint and decide upon an appropriate person to undertake further investigations.
3. Where appropriate, the nominated individual will review and record the details of the complaint, and may arrange to meet with the student or parent/guardian (face to face or via video conferencing) to discuss their complaint more fully.
4. They will also conduct any necessary investigations as may be required, gather relevant information and evidence, and respond to the complainant within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. The response to a complaint will endeavour to address all issues raised as well as outline actions that will be taken following the complaint.
5. The formal complaint will be logged, plus the investigation and outcome recorded.

Stage 3: Panel Hearing

In the event that a formal complaint cannot be resolved; or if a student or parent/guardian is dissatisfied then they must inform the Proprietor in writing.

1. All complaints received by the Proprietor will be acknowledged within 5 working days.
2. A complaint hearing is normally convened within 10 working days and no later than 15 working days of the receipt of a request for a hearing, but will be done so with due regard for the circumstances of the complainant. A hearing will only be held outside of this timeframe in exceptional circumstances.
3. The hearing panel will be appointed by the Proprietor and will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint; one member of the panel will be independent of the management and running of the College. The panel will hear from the complainant, the member of staff who investigated and responded to the original complaint, and any witnesses that the complainant or College wish to bring.
4. The student or parent/guardian may be accompanied to the hearing by a third party for support

5. The outcome will be communicated to the complainant within 10 working days of the hearing.
6. The panel's findings and recommendations will be confirmed in writing to the complainant and, where relevant, to the person which the complaint related to.

This is the end of the College complaints procedure.

Complaints against the College Principal

Any complaint made against the Principal will automatically be referred to the Proprietor however it will be addressed as per the stages identified within this policy.

Record Keeping

A written record will be retained of all formal complaints that are made in accordance with this Policy, whether they are resolved through the formal procedure or proceed to a Panel Hearing convened by the Proprietor. These records will remain confidential, except where required for inspection or other regulatory purposes, and will include information pertaining to the actions taken by the College as a result of the complaints, whether or not it was upheld.

A copy of the panel's findings and recommendations will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. It will also be made available for inspection on the college premises by the Proprietor and the Principal.

Conclusion

All complaints will be reviewed annually by The Principal and a formal report written to the Proprietor. The complaints will be treated in confidence and anonymity will always be protected in this report. This process will allow the Proprietor and the Principal to identify areas for improvement.

Appendix A - Complaints made by Students

Students at BCG have a right to be heard if they are concerned about any matter that affects their education or welfare. It is likely that such matters already surface in conversations with trusted friends and adults. However, if they feel the need to express themselves more fully, or if they are concerned, worried, or upset about any matter that affects their education or welfare, then there are two possible courses of action:

The Internal Informal Procedure

In the first instance, it is recommended that they make contact with one or more of the following: his / her parents, class teacher or form tutor, Head of Phase, or the Principal.

The Internal Formal Procedure

If they are dissatisfied with the results of the Informal Procedure, or feel that informal discussion is inappropriate to the situation, then they may hand a formal written complaint to the Head of Phase, or the Principal.

Such a complaint will receive a written reply within 48 hours, and if necessary may be referred to the Internal Review Panel, which may ask to hear his case. The Panel will consist of one Head of Phase, and two senior teachers selected by the Principal.

Appendix B - Complaints Made by Parents

Advice for Parents

BCG welcomes suggestions and comments from parents. The school takes seriously complaints and concerns parents may raise. This policy will show you how to use our complaints system.

A complaint will be treated as a serious expression of dissatisfaction which requires a response.

We wish to ensure that:

1. parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so
2. we respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way
3. parents know that we listen and that we take complaints seriously
4. we take action where appropriate

“How should I complain?”

- You can talk directly to a member of staff, write a letter, send an e-mail, or telephone. Be as clear as possible about your concerns.
- Any member of staff will be happy to help. It may be best to start with the person most closely involved – for example, class teacher or form tutor. They may be able to resolve matters quickly and effectively. However, you may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff, for example, to Maria Andrea, to a Head of Phase or the Principal.

“I don’t want to complain as such, but there is something bothering me”

- The school is here for you and your children, and we want to hear your views and your ideas. Contact a member of staff, as described above.

“I am not sure whether to complain or not”

- If as parents you have concerns, you are entitled to raise issues. If in doubt, you should contact The School as we are here to help.

“What will happen next?”

- If you raise something face-to-face or by telephone, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction.
- If you have made a complaint or suggestion in writing, we will contact you during term time within a week, to respond to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed.
- In some circumstances, the person you contact will need to discuss the matter with a colleague before responding. You will be given a date by which you will receive a considered response. If the issue needs to be investigated, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible. This will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

“What happens about confidentiality?”

- Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential and respectful manner. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Principal, the Senior Leadership Team and to those directly involved. The Proprietor may also need to be informed. It is BCG’s policy that complaints made by parents should never rebound adversely on their children. Similarly, your child should know that he will not be adversely affected or unfairly treated if you make a complaint.
- We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and of the identity of those involved. This would happen where, for example, a child’s safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police. You would be fully informed.
- While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints might not be pursued.
- Disciplinary action taken against staff as a result of a complaint will be handled confidentially within the school.

“What if a complaint is made against my child by another child or another family?”

- Whilst discord amongst students can usually be resolved by the school, there are some occasions, however, when you will be contacted – primarily when the school’s disciplinary policies have been breached. The school will work closely with both children and families to resolve the matter with a record kept in both students’ files.