

COMPLAINTS POLICY FOR BOARDERS

Introduction

Here at Bruern Abbey School, we want everyone to feel part of a safe and happy community. From time to time, you may be worried or upset about something. This policy tells you about various people available to help you, so that you can choose someone you feel you can trust. The experience of pupils in this and other schools is that, no matter how bad the problem may seem to be, it is almost always a great help to talk about it.

Is something worrying you?

Here are some examples of the kinds of thing which can be worrying for young people.

- you are having difficulty with one or more of your school subjects
- you think you may be ill and are too afraid or embarrassed to tell anyone
- you feel very depressed, or that life is not worth living
- you or your friends are being bullied or treated unkindly by another pupil
- you think that another pupil is not eating properly, or may be harming him/herself
- you are worried, angry or hurt about something happening at home
- you think that another pupil has done, or is about to do, something seriously wrong or dangerous
- you are caught in a serious situation that you don't know how to get out of, for example to do with drugs, alcohol, money or sex
- you feel you are being treated unfairly simply because you are boy, or because of your colour or religion, or because you have a disability or learning difficulty, or because you may be lesbian or gay.
- you feel that a member of staff has treated you unfairly e.g. in a punishment given, or in favouring other pupils
- you feel that you are not given enough privacy or independence.

What should you do?

If any of these things are happening, please talk to someone about it, even if you feel you can handle the situation. It may be that what's going on affects other people at school, or that you are unaware of all the different ways a problem can be tackled.

There are a number of different people who will be very happy to talk to you and to help you try to find a solution to the problem. It may help to talk first with another pupil who is a trusted friend. However, sometimes you may also need the help and

support of an adult or professional. Choose whoever you feel most comfortable and safe talking to:

- your tutor, the Headmaster, the Housemaster, Matron or any member of staff.

We would expect one of these to be the first person you speak to if you have a complaint about the School or a member of staff, as it is normally the quickest and most effective way to get to the heart of the problem and resolve it.

However, if you do not feel able to speak to a member of staff, other people to talk to are:

- Your parents or other relatives
- Social Services – Alison Beasley (LADO) Tel: 01865 815956 or Email: alison.beasley@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- An older pupil at the School
- The School Doctor Dr Brand, Montgomery House Surgery, Piggy Lane, Bicester OX26 7HT Tel: 01869 249222
- **Child Line: telephone 0800 1111**
- **The Independent Listener Christine Druce - 07969 262 505**

If you prefer, you can write to one of the people mentioned, although this does sometimes slow things down.

Who else needs to know?

The School understands that you may wish to talk about a problem only if it is kept secret. In many cases, this is possible, but there are two exceptions you should be aware of:

- The Headmaster is required by the Principal to make sure he is aware of all issues affecting the safety and welfare of pupils at the School. This means that the Headmaster will need to be kept informed by school staff of the broad nature (but not usually all the details) of any serious health, safety or welfare issue of which they are aware. If your problem or complaint involves the Headmaster, the Deputy Head will be informed instead;
- The School has a legal duty to keep your parents/guardians informed about your welfare and progress at school. However, if you do not wish them to be informed, please say so, so that the options can be discussed with you.

However, please do not let this stop you from raising complaints or saying when you are worried or upset. Most young people who speak up, say afterwards that it helped them enormously and that the problem did not seem quite as bad once they had a chance to talk it through with someone experienced and helpful.

Making a formal complaint

If you feel that you have not been able to sort out a complaint on an informal basis you have the right to make a formal complaint. You may wish to involve your parents at this stage if you have not already done so. You or your parents should write to the Headmaster setting out the complaint and what you want to be done about it. The Headmaster may suggest a meeting to discuss the complaint but will in any case give you a written answer explaining what he has decided to do about the complaint. You will not get into trouble for making a complaint if you believe that you have a good reason for doing so.

The Headmaster will keep a record of serious complaints from boarders and what happened to those complaints and will review them from time to time. Your parents can also use the School's formal complaints procedure which is available on the School's website.

You can also contact **Ofsted** or the Local Authority Designated Officer (**LADO**) - Alison Beasley (LADO) Tel: 01865 815956 or Email: alison.beasley@oxfordshire.gov.uk

What is you or your parents disagree with a decision made by the school about your complaint?

If you or your parents wish to appeal against a decision made by the school about your complaint, you or your parents should write to the Principal explaining why there is still a problem/complaint to be reviewed by a panel of three people. You and your parents may meet the panel to explain your concerns. You will be given details of the procedure to be followed. After the panel has considered the issues, they will give you a written response which may include making recommendations to the Headmaster and Principal. If you are still unhappy with the response to your complaint you or your parents can contact Ofsted or the LADO as explained below.

Contacting the local authority designated officer (LADO) or Ofsted

Local Authority Designated Officer

Each local authority has a designated officer known as a LADO who has responsibility for advising on cases where there are allegations that children may be at risk of significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect by a person who works with children. The designated person for child protection at your school Mr Banbury will be able to give you the name and contact details for the LADO with responsibility for your school. Local Authority Designated Officer (**LADO**) - Alison Beasley (LADO)

Tel: 01865 815956 or Email: alison.beasley@oxfordshire.gov.uk

You and your parents have the right to contact the LADO at any time if you have a complaint concerning your welfare.

Ofsted

The School can be inspected by Ofsted, an independent organisation which reports to the Government on schools. You and your parents have the right to contact an inspector at any time if you have a complaint concerning your welfare. Ofsted will usually expect you or your parents to have followed the school's formal complaints procedure before contacting them. However, you can report your concerns to Ofsted on 08456 404040 or you can write to Ofsted.

Authorised by: J. Floyd

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