



Procedure for Handling Parental Complaints

Burton Hathow Preparatory School Including EYFS

Burton Hathow Preparatory School

September 2025

Review date: September 2026

Introduction

Burton Hathow Preparatory School aims to educate and care for its pupils in a way that fully meets the expectations of their parents. But difficulties and misunderstandings may occur from time to time with the result that parental expectations are not met. Burton Hathow Preparatory School has established this procedure with the intention of meeting the concerns of parents (the term parent covers parent or legal guardian) before they develop into complaints and of resolving complaints that do arise as effectively as possible. 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 generally defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'

Background and summary of process

Burton Hathow Preparatory School is responsible with parents for the welfare of its pupils and for enabling them to develop in a happy environment and reach their full potential. The communities of teachers and of parents of pupils at Burton Hathow Preparatory School comprise individuals who inevitably have differing views of how best to discharge this responsibility, based on different experiences. These differences of view are to be expected both within the teaching community and within the parental community and between parents and teachers, despite the shared interest in the welfare and development of pupils. Given that there will be such differences, it may not always be obvious when a parent should express a concern or make a complaint.

Burton Hathow Preparatory School would prefer the parents of its pupils to raise any concerns they may have about the education and development of their children, or about any aspect of the running of the School, or any part of it, at the earliest possible time. Addressing a concern before it becomes a complaint is in the best interests of pupils, parents and the School, but it can only happen if the School is aware of the concern.

Burton Hathow Preparatory School sees a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction about a real or perceived problem in relation to which a parent thinks that the School or one of its staff has done something wrong, has failed to do something it should have done, or has acted unfairly or improperly. Most parents will have concerns of some sort about their children's education at some stage. To ensure that such concerns do not become complaints Burton Hathow Preparatory School wants parents to make use of this procedure to resolve concerns as well as complaints.

The procedure is in three stages. The first stage is an informal stage in which parents should raise their concerns orally with a teacher or with the

Head. The second stage is a more formal stage, in which parents may raise their concern or complaint in writing with the Head. The third stage is intended for matters that cannot be resolved through the first two stages and is a referral to a Complaints Panel. These stages are described in more detail below. Complaints not lodged within the standard period will not be refused. Complaints can only be made by parents of pupils on roll.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Burton Hathow Preparatory School hopes that most concerns and complaints can and will be resolved quickly and informally.

Parents with a concern or complaint should normally raise it with their child's class or Form Teacher. If the teacher cannot resolve the matter alone he or she may refer it to the Head. A parent may raise the matter directly with the Head if this seems appropriate (for example if the matter concerns the conduct of the Form Teacher).

Where a matter is referred to the Head they may ask a member of the SLT or another member of the teaching staff to handle it.

The person handling the complaint on behalf of Burton Hathow Preparatory School will make a written note of the concern or complaint, using the format at Appendix 1, and record the date on which it was raised. Burton Hathow Preparatory School's aim is that concerns and complaints raised informally should be addressed within seven days of being raised during term time and as soon as practicable during holidays.

Stage 2 – Formal Reference to Head

If a concern or complaint cannot be resolved informally **within the time frame set out above** or if the way in which the concern or complaint is addressed is not satisfactory to the parents who raised it, then the parents may put their concern or complaint in writing to the Head, ideally using the template at Appendix 1.

The Head will decide, after considering the concern or complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases the Head will speak to the parents. It is likely that the Head will need to investigate the matter or to arrange for a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or other member of staff to conduct an investigation on her behalf. The nature of the concern or complaint and of the investigation that is required will determine when the Head will speak to the parents and whether it is necessary to discuss the matter with them on more than one occasion. Receipt of a formal reference of a concern or complaint to the Head will be acknowledged immediately in writing during term time and as soon as possible during the holidays. Burton Hathow Preparatory School will aim to complete Stage 2 references within fourteen days of their receipt

Burton Hathow Preparatory School

September 2025

Review date: September 2026

whenever possible and will complete them within twenty-eight days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable during holidays.

The Head will keep or arrange for the keeping of written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to a Stage 2 reference.

The Head's proposals for resolving the concern or complaint will be put in writing to the parents who raised the matter, with reasons for the proposals.

Should a parent or guardian have a complaint about the Head, this should be put in writing to the Chair of the Board whose contact details are: Mr Simon Robinson Burton Hathow Preparatory School, Saxilby Road, Lincoln. LN1 2BB simon.robinson@burtonhathow.co.uk

This should include the nature of the complaint and how the School has handled it so far. The Chair, who is obliged to investigate the matter, will do everything possible to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the School. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 – Reference to a Complaints Panel

If a complaint cannot be resolved through the first two stages of this procedure, or if parents are dissatisfied with the proposals for resolving their complaint made through those stages, then they may apply in writing to the Head for the matter to be referred to a Complaints Panel. **A request to refer a complaint to a complaint panel must be requested within 7 days receipt of the level 2 complaint outcome.**

A Complaints Panel shall be appointed by or on behalf of the Head within seven days of receipt of the application for a referral to it and shall consist of a chair person, who will be independent, and at least two other people drawn from the board of Directors or teaching staff who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.

A Complaints Panel shall ensure that the parents bringing a complaint have the opportunity to meet the Panel on one or more occasions to present their complaint. The parents may be accompanied at such hearings by up to three advisers or friends of their choice provided that the Panel may agree to additional representation if requested by the parents.

The proceedings of a Complaints Panel shall be recorded in writing.

A Complaints Panel may adopt such additional procedures and conduct such investigations as it sees fit for considering a complaint.

A Complaints Panel may make such findings and recommendations, as it deems appropriate in the light of its consideration of the complaint, of the response of Burton Hathow Preparatory School to the complaint and of its investigations.

A Complaints Panel shall give a written copy of any findings and recommendations it makes and of its reasons for such recommendations to the parents bringing the complaint, the Chair of the Board, the Head, and, where relevant, the person complained about within six weeks of its establishment.

Parents should note that the decision of the Complaints Panel will be final.

Anonymous Complaints

Whilst the School would prefer an open approach to be made, it is recognised that on occasions, an anonymous complaint may be necessary. However, it must be recognized that resolution of anonymous complaints may be difficult if all parties cannot be consulted. Nevertheless, an anonymous complaint will be treated seriously and dealt with in an expeditious manner with the issue and outcome brought to the attention of all parents if the Head Teacher deems this as appropriate.

Confidentiality

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential by Burton Hathow Preparatory School except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 163 of the Education Act 2002 requests access to them or where disclosure is necessary for the purpose of disciplinary or related proceedings in relation to staff of Burton Hathow Preparatory School or is otherwise necessary in the interests of pupils in the reasonable opinion of the Head. Any complaint will not be shared with the whole Board or Advisory Body, except in very general terms, in case an appeal panel needs to be organised.

Further Records and Provision of Information

In addition to the records referred to above, Burton Hathow Preparatory School will keep a written record in relation to each concern or complaint dealt with under this procedure and whether it was resolved at Stages 1 or 2 or proceeded to a Panel hearing.

Burton Hathow Preparatory School

September 2025

Review date: September 2026

Burton Hathow, on request, will provide to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils, the Chief Inspector of Schools, the Secretary of State or a body approved for the purposes of section 163(1) (b) of the Education Act 2002 the number of complaints recorded under stages 2 and 3 of this procedure during the preceding School year. As a matter of course, the number of complaints raised will be published on an annual (academic year) basis.

There have been 0 complaints in the academic year (23/24) which have necessitated the initiation of the formal complaints procedures.

Appendix 1 – Details of Concern or Complaint

Appendix 2 – Action Taken in Response to a Concern or Complaint

Appendix 1

Details of a Concern or Complaint

{May be used for Informal or Formal Concern or Complaint}

[illegible]

CONFIDENTIAL (When submitted)

Appendix 2

Action Taken in Response to a Concern or Complaint

Decision Regarding Concern or Complaint:	
Action(s) Taken:	
Name:	Position:
Signed:	Date:
Any Follow-up Action Required:	

CONFIDENTIAL (When completed)

Burton Hathow Preparatory School

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