

# Bedford High School

A Specialist Business and Enterprise College

To Care To Learn To Achieve



## Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints Policy

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### Document control

Date updated:	May 2024
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Electronic copies of this plan are available from:	FROG VLN
Hard copies of this plan are available from:	HR, Facilities and Communications Manager

### Changes History

Date	Description	Changes
June 2022	Version 1 full new policy	All pages
June 2023	No Changes	
May 2024	No Changes	

# Policy for managing serial and unreasonable complaints

## Note:

This policy can also be adapted to manage unreasonable or persistent contact not directly associated with, or resulting from, formal complaints.

Bedford High School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to individuals with a grievance. 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 act to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Bedford High School 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 complaint's investigation process
  - refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaint's procedure
  - fails to engage with staff following raising a complaint and/or fails to attend scheduled meetings that have been arranged to discuss the complaint.
  - insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaint's procedure or with good practice
  - introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be considered and commented on
  - raises large numbers of detailed questions (and that are not necessarily linked to improving outcomes for the child), insisting 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
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- uses threats to intimidate
  - uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
  - knowingly provides falsified information

- following a satisfactory resolution, the complainant wishes to re-open a closed complaint
- 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.

When a member of staff believes the complainant is behaving unreasonably and/or the complaint is unreasonable, they must bring this to the attention of the headteacher, who will decide as to whether the complaint/complainant is deemed 'unreasonable'. This decision can only be made by the headteacher. The headteacher may then choose to delegate the task of dealing with the complainant to a senior member of staff.

The headteacher or delegated senior member of staff will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before the complaint is marked as '*unreasonable*'.

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 Bedford High School 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 Bedford High School.

This policy sits in conjunction with the school's Compliments and Complaints Policy available on the school's website.

Linked policies

Compliments and Complaints Policy

Work Related Violence and Challenging Behaviour Policy

Lone Working Policy