



## **British International Remote School (BIRS) Complaints Procedure for Parents & Guardians**

**Effective Date:**

### **1. Our Commitment**

British International Remote School (BIRS) is committed to providing a high-quality educational service and aims to resolve any concerns or complaints promptly, fairly, and effectively. This procedure outlines how parents/guardians can raise a complaint relating to BIRS or the services it provides. We value feedback and see complaints as an opportunity to review and improve our practices.

### **2. Principles**

This complaints procedure is guided by the following principles:

- a) **Accessibility:** This procedure is clear, straightforward, and easily accessible to all parents/guardians.
- b) **Timeliness:** Complaints will be acknowledged promptly and dealt with as quickly as possible, within stated timeframes where feasible.
- c) **Fairness & Impartiality:** Complaints will be investigated thoroughly, objectively, and impartially by individuals with appropriate expertise and seniority.
- d) **Confidentiality:** Complaints will be handled with discretion and sensitivity. Information will only be shared with those who need to know to investigate and resolve the complaint, in line with data protection principles.
- e) **Resolution-Focused:** We aim to find constructive solutions and achieve a satisfactory resolution where possible.

### 3. Stages of the Complaints Procedure

#### 3.1. Stage 1: Informal Resolution (Recommended First Step)

Most concerns can often be resolved quickly and effectively by discussing them informally with the relevant member of BIRS staff. This could be your child's teacher, the Head of Key Stage, or an administrator, depending on the nature of the concern.

- a) **How to raise an informal concern:** Please contact the relevant staff member via their official BIRS email address or arrange a virtual meeting through BIRS official communication channels.
- b) **Response Time:** We aim to address and seek to resolve informal concerns within five (5) working days of them being raised.

#### 3.2. Stage 2: Formal Complaint to the Headmaster

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, or if you believe the matter is sufficiently serious to warrant a formal investigation from the outset, you can make a formal complaint in writing to the Headmaster.

- a) **How to submit a formal complaint:** Please send your formal complaint via email to [contact@thebirs.co.uk](mailto:contact@thebirs.co.uk), ensuring the subject line clearly states, **"Formal Complaint for the Attention of the Headmaster"**.
- b) **Information to include:** Your email should provide:
  - Your full name and contact details (email and phone number).
  - Your child's full name and year group.
  - A clear and concise description of the complaint, including relevant dates, times, locations (if applicable), and names of any individuals involved.
  - Details of any steps already taken to try and resolve the complaint (e.g., at Stage 1).
  - What outcome you are seeking to resolve the complaint.
  - Copies of any relevant documents or correspondence.
- c) **Acknowledgement:** The Headmaster (or a designated representative acting on their behalf) will acknowledge receipt of your formal complaint in writing within three (3) working days.
- d) **Investigation:** The Headmaster (or a designated senior staff member not previously involved in the matter at Stage 1, if appropriate) will conduct a thorough investigation into the complaint. This may involve reviewing records, interviewing relevant staff members, and speaking with your child (with your consent, and in an age-appropriate manner).

- e) **Response:** You will receive a full written response from the Headmaster outlining the findings of the investigation, the conclusions reached, and any action taken or proposed, within ten (10) working days of the acknowledgment. If the investigation is complex and requires more time, you will be informed in writing of the delay and the new expected timeframe for a response (typically no more than an additional 10 working days).

### 3.3. Stage 3: Appeal to the BIRS Proprietor

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the Headmaster's investigation and response at Stage 2, you may appeal the decision to the BIRS Proprietor. The Proprietor's decision is the final stage in the school's internal complaints procedure.

- a) **How to submit an appeal:** Your appeal must be made in writing within ten (10) working days of receiving the Headmaster's written response from Stage 2. Please send your formal appeal via email to [contact@thebirs.co.uk](mailto:contact@thebirs.co.uk), ensuring the subject line clearly states, **"Formal Appeal for the Attention of the BIRS Proprietor"**. (Alternatively, if a specific email address for the Proprietor is provided on the BIRS website for such matters, please use that address).
- b) **Information to include in your appeal:** Your appeal should clearly state:
- The specific grounds on which you are dissatisfied with the Stage 2 outcome and decision.
  - The outcome you are seeking from the appeal.
- c) **Review Process:** The Proprietor will review all documentation related to the complaint, including the initial complaint, the evidence gathered during the Stage 2 investigation, and the Headmaster's response. To ensure a fresh perspective, the Proprietor will not have been involved in the day-to-day details of the Stage 2 investigation. The Proprietor may, at their discretion:
- Seek further information or clarification from any party involved.
  - In complex cases, appoint an independent person (not employed by BIRS and with no prior involvement in the complaint) to review the case materials and provide advice to the Proprietor. However, the final decision will rest with the Proprietor.
- d) **Response:** You will receive a final written response from the Proprietor outlining their decision and the reasons for it, within fifteen to twenty (15-20) working days of the appeal being formally lodged and all necessary information being received by the Proprietor. This decision by the Proprietor is the final stage of the BIRS internal complaints procedure.

#### 4. Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints

BIRS is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially. However, in cases where complaints are deemed to be unreasonable, persistent (after the procedure has been exhausted), or vexatious, BIRS reserves the right to manage these interactions in accordance with a separate procedure or to cease correspondence. This is to ensure that school resources are used effectively for the benefit of all students.

#### 5. External Recourse

- 5.1. BIRS aims to resolve all complaints internally through this procedure. If, after completing all stages of the BIRS internal complaints procedure, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may have recourse to external bodies.

As BIRS is an independent school operating under English law, for complaints relating to the school's failure to meet the Independent School Standards, parents may be able to refer their complaint to the Department for Education (DfE). Information on how to complain to the DfE about an independent school can typically be found on the [UK government's website](#).

- 5.2. For consumer-related concerns not directly related to educational standards, other bodies or dispute resolution services may be appropriate, where applicable.

#### 6. Record Keeping

A written record will be kept of all formal complaints (Stage 2 and Stage 3), including the investigation, findings, actions taken, and outcomes. These records will be stored securely and confidentially, in accordance with the **BIRS Privacy Policy** and UK GDPR.

#### 7. Policy Review

This Complaints Procedure will be reviewed at least annually by the Headmaster and Proprietor and updated as necessary to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant legislation and best practice.

#### 8. Contact for Complaints:

- a) For all stages of written correspondence as outlined above, please send to: [contact@thebirs.co.uk](mailto:contact@thebirs.co.uk)
- b) For **Stage 1 (Informal Concerns)**, you are encouraged to contact the relevant staff member directly via their BIRS email in the first instance.
- c) For **Stage 2 (Formal Complaint)**, please use the subject line: "Formal Complaint for the Attention of the Headmaster"
- d) For **Stage 3 (Formal Appeal)**, please use the subject line: "Formal Appeal for the Attention of the BIRS Proprietor" (or use a dedicated Proprietor's contact email if provided separately by BIRS).