"Community with learning, is a community with heart"
"Cymuned a'i chynefin, sy'n chymuned â chalon"

Branas School

Complaints Policy

2025 – 2026

Article 12

You have the right to be listened to.

Article 13

You have the right to find out and share information, and say what you think.

Article 14

You have the right to privacy.

Article 19

You have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.

Implemented	By Whom	Last Review	By Whom	Next Review
September 2022	T.Lewis	September 2025	R. Redman	September 2026

Document History (last 3 versions)			
Date of Issue	Version No.	Person(s) responsible for change	Nature of Change
Sept 2022	1	T. Lewis	Review and update
Sept 2024	2	G. Ashley	Review and Update
Sept 2025	3	G.Ashley	Review and Update

Description and Ethos of Branas School

OUR CULTURE AND ETHOS

Branas school is an independent special school for boys aged 11 – 18 years who have a history of harmful behaviours. The school is registered for up to 25 young people and consists of KS3, KS4 and 5 classes. As a community we are able to support young people with early childhood trauma and additional learning needs. We offer a secondary education which includes English, Maths, Science, Humanities, Art, PE, Careers, Music, PSHE and Careers. Specialist teachers offer individualised sessions for young people who have gaps in their learning. We are a registered AALA centre which enables our young people to develop their self-esteem and confidence, learning skills outside of the traditional curriculum through climbing, hill walking and kayaking. All young people access a range of qualifications including GCSE's, Functional Skills and AQA Awards. Careers lessons prepare them for life beyond school and transition in to college.

Branas Isaf is an integrated model of care which incorporates Education, Therapy and Care as a support system for young people. Therapy includes the Good Lives Model (GLM) which is grounded in the ethical concept of human dignity and universal human rights, and as such, it has a strong emphasis on human agency.

OUR SCHOOL

Branas School is committed to developing respectful and supportive relationships with all young people. We recognise that our young people bring different experiences, interests and strengths, and we understand these will influence the way they learn. Therefore, we take a child-centred approach to education that recognises and responds to individual need. We celebrate effort and achievements and set high expectations. We are here to help our young people learn the skills they need to become successful, motivated and resilient young adults who are fully equipped to make a positive contribution to society.

THE VISION

BELIEVE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE, ASPIRE

BELIEVE IN OUR TEAM AND IN OUR LEARNERS
EMPOWER OUR LEARNERS TO BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES AND THEIR PERSONAL JOURNEY
NURTURE OUR LEARNERS TO **ACHIEVE**
AND **ASPIRE TO BE THE BEST THEY CAN BE.**

The school moto is at the heart of everything we do at Branas School -

"Community with learning, is a community with heart"
"Cymuned a'i chynefin, sy'n chymuned â chalon"

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

We provide a safe and inclusive learning environment that nurtures mutual respect and encourages reflection so that our young people develop the knowledge skills and confidence to enable them to achieve their potential in all aspects of their lives.

1. The Complaints Policy

There is a separate policy for staff grievances.

INTRODUCTION

Branas School encourages open and constructive communications with parents/carers, young people and other stakeholders. The Head Teacher and Responsible Individual for the school welcome constructive comments and suggestions for improvements and take seriously any complaints that users of the school may wish to raise. There is a clear process to follow where any person putting in a complaint are invited to attend panel hearings and be accompanied if needed.

There may be a concern about a healthcare need of a young person which can be addressed using this policy if necessary. Expectations around healthcare needs whether temporary or more longer term are detailed in the policy 'Supporting Leaners with Healthcare Needs' 2023.

All complaints are treated as an expression of genuine concern or unhappiness. They will be considered very carefully in line with the procedures and timelines described in this policy. All correspondence, statements and records of complaint will be kept confidential although they must be made available to Estyn when inspected and copies must be provided for the Registration Authority (the Welsh Government) on request.

This policy has been formulated to comply with the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (Wales) 2003 (revised 2024).

A copy of the policy is available on request to parents and carers of pupils and prospective pupils. A copy is also held in the main office of the school, available to all stakeholders of the school.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU WISH TO COMPLAIN

If you have a complaint about any aspect of the school then please let a member of school staff know. We will do our best to provide an impartial, considered and appropriate response to your concerns. We aim to resolve the issues involved as quickly and as fairly as possible.

The school's complaints policy has three stages:

1. Informal resolution
2. Formal resolution
3. Independent panel

These stages are all explained in the policy.

We intend to resolve complaints promptly and informally. However, there is a clear procedure to be followed where the person who has made the complaint feels this has not been achieved.

Please note that it will not usually be possible to deal promptly with a complaint if it is made during a school holiday. Therefore, the term 'working days' used in this policy will normally refer to term-time only.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CONCERN AND A COMPLAINT

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'.

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal procedures. The School will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

There are occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. In those cases, the school's formal procedure will be invoked through the stages outlined within this policy.

WHO CAN RAISE A CONCERN OR MAKE A COMPLAINT?

Any person, including young people or members of the general public, may raise a concern or make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides, unless separate statutory procedures apply (such as exclusions or admissions).

It is important in Branas School that young people have a voice and are listened to as valued members of the school community. Central to this concept is the idea that all young people will be supported to raise any concerns they may have about the school, will be listened to, and can be assured that the staff team will act on these concerns to achieve resolution. Young people placed in the school have a variety of options when wanting to raise a concern and these include the following:

- Tutor time
- 1:1 with a member of teaching staff at any time
- School Council
- Independent Advocate
- To a member of staff in the residential home, who can then bring the concern to the school

- To any other professional involved in the life of the child, and who can then advocate on their behalf.

The school will make every effort to resolve the concern in an informal and timely manner, and will always give the person raising the concern the opportunity to express how they would resolve the situation, or the outcomes they would require for resolution to be achieved.

Should such resolution not be achieved, or someone request to make a formal complaint, then the formal complaints process will be initiated and adhered to, to conclusion.

STAGE 1 INFORMAL RESOLUTION

If you have a complaint about any aspect of your child/young person's education or treatment at the school, we urge you to contact us immediately, no matter how minor you feel the issue to be. We will do our best to listen and understand the nature of your complaint and resolve it your and our satisfaction.

Contact details are given at the end of this policy.

In order for the Head Teacher to deal with your complaint or concern he or she will need the following information:

- Who or what the complaint is about.
- The nature of your complaint, in as much detail as you wish to give.
- What you would like done to resolve it.
- Your contact details

The Head teacher will record your complaint. He or she will also record the nature of the complaint and the date on which it was received. He or she will then discuss your complaint or concern with the member or members of staff concerned.

Within ten days the Head teacher will then contact you to inform you of the outcome of his or her discussions with the member or members of staff concerned. If he or she has agreed a way of resolving the issue with them he or she will inform you about this. If you are happy with this outcome the agreed actions will be made and recorded. The procedure will end at this point.

If you do not agree with the outcome described to you by the Head teacher you have a right for your complaint to proceed to the next, formal, stage.

If your complaint is about the Head teacher, or you do not wish to discuss it with the Head teacher, please make your complaint to the Responsible Individual for the School or your social worker instead.

STAGE 2 FORMAL RESOLUTION

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis you should make your complaint in writing to the Responsible Individual of the school. Upon receipt of the complaint the Responsible Individual will contact you within **three working days**. The Responsible Individual will acknowledge receipt of your complaint and will inform you of the details of the procedure that will be followed in order to resolve the complaint.

The Responsible Individual will need to discuss your complaint with relevant staff and/or pupils. The Responsible Individual will also carry out any necessary investigations and give the matter full and detailed consideration.

The outcome of this investigation will be communicated in writing to you within a **further seven working days**. You will be informed about the evidence collected for the investigation and the reasoning which led to the conclusions drawn from it. You will also be informed about any actions which have or will be taken as a result.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation you can decide to go to stage three of the procedures, the independent panel.

STAGE 3 INDEPENDENT PANEL

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation you must write to the Responsible Individual of the school **within ten working days** and request that your complaint is further considered by an independent panel.

The Responsible Individual of the school will appoint a panel of at least three people who have not been involved previously with the matters detailed in the complaint. At least one of these people will be independent of the management and running of the school. The name and contact details of the independent person will be included in the formal letter for the appeal.

The panel will meet **within ten working days** and consider all the evidence collected by the investigation.

The Responsible Individual will attend the meeting of the panel. You will be invited to attend the meeting and may bring with you someone to support and advise you.

At the meeting you will be able to present and discuss your complaint fully. The Responsible Individual will explain the evidence and reasoning which led to the school's earlier written response to you.

The panel will consider all the evidence presented to it and will make findings and recommendations based on that evidence. Minutes will be taken of the meeting by a suitable person allocated this task.

Within ten working days of the meeting, you, the Head teacher, the Responsible Individual and, where relevant, the person complained about, will each be given a written copy of the panel's findings and recommendations.

This is the end of the process. There is no appeal procedure.

In the event of a complaint being raised against the Head Teacher at the School, this should be raised with:

Kate Jones – Director of Service and Responsible Individual for Branas School

Kate.jones@branas.co.uk

07887 523499

OTHER ISSUES

Written records will be kept of all complaints, including whether they are resolved at the preliminary stages or proceed to a panel hearing.

Correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential except where the Welsh Government or Estyn, conducting an inspection of the school request access to them.

This complaints procedure complies with standard 5 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

CONTACT DETAILS

For all complaints please contact the Head teacher of the school, unless your complaint is about the head teacher, in which case you should contact the Responsible Individual.

The contact details for Branas School are as follows:

By phone: 01490 440 545

Please ask to speak to the Head teacher.

By email: infoschool@branas.co.uk

Please address your email: *Confidential for the attention of the Head teacher.*

COMPLAINTS TIMELINE

1. The complaint is received at school.
2. The complaint will be investigated and the outcome discussed with the complainant within ten working days.
3. If the complainants are unhappy with the outcome they must write to the Head teacher or Responsible Individual to inform them of this.
4. An acknowledgement of the complaint will be sent within three working days.
5. An investigation will be conducted by the school and a written outcome will be sent to the complainants within a further seven working days.
6. If complainants are unhappy with the outcome they must write within ten working days requesting an independent panel to review their complaint.
7. The Panel will meet within ten working days.
8. The Panel will write to the complainants with the outcome of their review within ten working days of the date of the meeting.

This policy is reviewed annually. The next review date is September 2026.

APPENDIX – Child Friendly Version

COMPLAINTS POLICY – Young People Version

1) INTRODUCTION

Branas School encourages open and honest discussions with young people. The Head teacher and Responsible Individual for the school welcome comments and suggestions for improvements and take seriously any complaints that pupils of the school may wish to raise.

All complaints are treated as an expression of genuine concern or unhappiness. They will be considered very carefully and resolved to the timelines described in this policy. All correspondence, statements and records of complaint will be kept confidential although they must be made available to Estyn when inspected and copies must be provided for the Registration Authority (the Welsh Government) on request.

This policy has been formulated to comply with the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (Wales) 2003 – revised 2024.

A copy of the full policy is available on request to parents and carers of pupils and prospective pupils. A copy is also held in the main office of the school, available to all stakeholders of the school.

2) WHAT TO DO IF YOU WISH TO COMPLAIN

If you have a complaint about any aspect of the school then please let us know. We will do our best to provide an impartial, considered and appropriate response to your concerns. We aim to resolve the issues involved as quickly and as fairly as possible.

The school's complaints policy has three stages:

1. Informal resolution
2. Formal resolution
3. Independent panel

These stages are all explained in the policy.

We intend to resolve complaints promptly and informally. However, there is a clear procedure to be followed where the person who has made the complaint feels this has not been achieved. At each stage you will receive letter notifying you of the process and any outcomes.

Please note that it will not usually be possible to deal promptly with a complaint if it is made during a school holiday. Therefore, the term 'working days' used in this policy will normally refer to term-time only.

3) STAGE 1 INFORMAL RESOLUTION

If you have a complaint about any aspect of your education or treatment at the school we urge you to contact us immediately, no matter how minor you feel the issue to be. We will do our best to listen and understand the nature of your complaint and resolve it your and our satisfaction.

In order for the Head teacher to deal with your complaint or concern he or she will need the following information:

- Who or what the complaint is about.
- The nature of your complaint, in as much detail as you wish to give.
- What you would like done to resolve it.
- Your contact details

The Head teacher will record your complaint. He or she will also record the nature of the complaint and the date on which it was received. He or she will then discuss your complaint or concern with the member or members of staff concerned.

Within ten days the Head teacher will then contact you to inform you of the outcome of his or her discussions with the member or members of staff concerned. If he or she has agreed a way of resolving the issue with them she will inform you about this in writing. If you are happy with this outcome the agreed actions will be made and recorded. The procedure will end at this point and you will get a letter explaining the outcome.

If you do not agree with the outcome described to you by the Head teacher you have a right for your complaint to proceed to the next, formal, stage.

If your complaint is about the Head teacher, or you do not wish to discuss it with the Head teacher, please make your complaint to your Care Home Manager or to your Team Lead.

4) STAGE TWO FORMAL RESOLUTION

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis you should make your complaint in writing to Kate Jones. Upon receipt of the complaint Kate will contact you within **three working days**. She will let you know that they have your complaint and inform you of the details of the procedure that will be followed in order to resolve the complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation you can decide to go to stage three of the procedures, the independent panel.

5) STAGE THREE INDEPENDENT PANEL

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation you must write to the Kate Jones **within ten working days** and request that your complaint is further considered by an independent panel.

Kate will appoint a panel of at least three people who have not been involved previously with the matters detailed in the complaint. At least one of these people will be independent of the management and running of the school.

The panel will meet **within ten working days** and consider all the evidence collected by the investigation.

This is the end of the process. There is no appeal procedure.
If you need to contact Kate you can ask to go to Head Office or ask your Home Manager to contact the Head teacher.