

THE KING'S SCHOOL



Complaints Policy

AIMS

The Governing Body recognises its duty to comply with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2010 in respect of its complaints policy and procedures.

This policy aims to ensure that all complaints from parents, students and others are dealt with as quickly and sensitively as possible, and by the person best able to do so. As far as possible all concerns should be dealt with as informally as possible.

SUMMARY

1. The School recognises the importance of good communication with parents and carers.
2. It is accepted that parents and carers should have some formal means of making and pursuing a complaint in order to further dialogue between home and school and to remove potential handicaps or barriers to the effective education of the students.
3. Complaints may be made in relation to the curriculum or any aspect of school policy or against members of the teaching and support staff or governors.
4. Complaints should be made as soon as possible after the incident arises.
5. Parents/carers who wish to complain should:
Stage 1: Contact the appropriate Head of Year or Deputy Head Master either by letter or by phone *or*
Stage 2: Write to the Head Master detailing the basis of their complaint *or*
Stage 3: Write to the Chair of Governors (if the complaint concerns the Head Master) or to the Clerk to the Governors (if the complaint concerns the Chair of Governors).
6. Parents have the right of appeal to the Governing Body if they are not satisfied with the outcome of any complaints procedures and which they consider still prejudices their son's education.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most concerns and complaints will be resolved quickly and informally at Stage 1.
- If parents have a complaint they should, in the first instance, contact the person who the complaint is about. The following people can be contacted: Form Tutor, Subject Teacher, Head of Year or Subject Leader.
- If the Subject teacher, Form Tutor or Head of Year cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary to involve a Deputy Head Master.
- Should the matter not be resolved at this stage, parents will be advised to proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- Parents will put their complaint in writing to the Head Master.
- The Head Master will delegate responsibility for undertaking an investigation of the complaint to a Deputy Head Master, unless he deems it appropriate for him to deal with the matter personally.
- The Head Master will decide, after considering the complaint and investigation evidence, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases the Head Master will meet with parents to discuss the matter.
- A written record will be kept of all meetings held in relation to the complaint.
- Parents will be informed of the decision in writing, giving reasons for the decision.
- Where parents are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage 2 procedure, they should move to Stage 3.

Stage 3 - Governors' Hearing

- If a parent is not satisfied with the response from the Head Master regarding their complaint or if their complaint is about the Head Master, then he/she is entitled to take their complaint to the Governing Body.
- All complaints to the Governing Body must be initiated by means of a letter, detailing the complaint and accompanied by any supporting evidence, and sent to the Chair of Governors, care of the school. The Chair of Governors will then ensure the complaints process is commenced as soon as practicable. In the event of the complaint being against the Chair of Governors, the Clerk to Governors will initiate the process.
- The Governors will appoint a minimum of two of their number plus one independent member to form a Complaints Committee to adjudicate upon the complaint. Those chosen should have no knowledge whatsoever of the details surrounding your complaint. Ideally, they should also have no knowledge of the complainant.
- Once the Complaints Committee has been formed, they must then decide how they wish to investigate the complaint.
- The Complaints Committee effectively have two options available. They can elect to deal with the complaint by means of an oral hearing or through written representations.
- If the Complaints Committee elect to have an oral hearing, the parent will be invited to attend a meeting where they will be able to put their complaint personally to the panel. The Head Master will also be present to respond to the complaint. The Complaints Committee will then decide following hearing both parties' evidence.
- The structure of such a meeting will be flexible. However, it is anticipated it will follow a similar process to exclusion or admission appeals. The complaint will be put to the Complaints Committee who will then have an opportunity to ask any questions, as will the Head Master. The complaint will then be responded to by the Head Master with questions from both parties being permitted. Each party will then summarise their position. Both parties will then leave to allow the panel to make their decision.
- The complainant or the Head Master will be entitled to bring a representative with them if they wish. Although it would not normally be necessary, either party may bring a friend if they wish. Either party intending to bring a representative is expected to contact the Clerk to the Governors prior to the hearing to notify them of the name.
- If the Complaints Committee do not wish to hold an oral hearing; the investigation will proceed by way of written representations.
- Should the Complaints Committee elect to adopt this procedure, the Chair of Governors or the Clerk to the Governors will write to the complainant, outlining the procedure. The complaint will be forwarded to the Head Master who will then have 7 working days in which to respond. That response will then in turn be sent to the complainant for comment, any responses to be provided within 7 working days. Finally, that response will go to the Head Master who has 7 days in which to respond. All the responses are then put before the Complaints Committee for adjudication.
- For the avoidance of doubt, all communication should be through the Chair of Governors or Clerk to the Governors; neither party should send their response to the other directly.
- Regardless of which method is adopted, the Complaints Committee must take a robust approach and not simply endorse the decision of the Head Master without any consideration of the evidence.
- The Complaints Committee must have all the necessary evidence to make their decision. If they are not satisfied and require further evidence from either party, they should adjourn and request that information. The Complaints Committee should only make their decision if they are satisfied they have sufficient evidence with which to make a final decision.
- The Complaints Committee can:
 - Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
 - Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
 - Decide upon appropriate action to resolve the complaint
 - Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur
- The decision of the Complaints Committee should be given to the complainant in writing within five working days of the decision. There is no right of appeal within school following this decision.
- The decision letter will outline the nature of the complaint, the factors taken into consideration and the decision of the Complaint Committee. Minutes will not be disclosed.

- The complaint and the investigation papers will not be attached to the child’s file as they do not relate to the child. However, the school will keep a central register of complaints received.

Stage 4 – Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

If you believe the governors have not followed agreed school policies or procedures properly, or at all, then you should contact the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

The ESFA can only look at complaints about academies on two grounds:

- The academy did not comply with its own complaints procedure when considering a complaint or the academy’s complaints procedure does not comply with statutory requirements.
- The academy has failed to comply with a duty imposed on it under its funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education.

Complaints about academies should be sent via the Department for Education’s [schools complaints form](#) or by post to Ministerial and Public Communications Division, Department for Education, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD.

Vexatious Complaints

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after all stages have been properly followed, the Chair of Governors is empowered to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed, referring them to the ESFA if appropriate (see above). Similarly the Chair of the Governing Body reserves the right to refuse to consider a complaint if they believe it is frivolous or vexatious.

Anonymous Complaints

The school will not normally investigate complaints that are made anonymously.

Reviewed	November 2017
To be Reviewed	November 2020

THE KING'S SCHOOL COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete and return to Mrs S Orrey, PA to the Head Master, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your Name:

Student's Name:

Your relationship to the student:

Your Address:

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Postcode:

Daytime & Evening Telephone Numbers:

.....

Email Address:

.....

Please give details of your complaint:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint (who did you speak to and what was the response)?

THE KING'S SCHOOL COMPLAINT FORM

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By Whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

RESOLUTION? Notes: