



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR THE KING'S SCHOOL/HIGHFIELD PRESCHOOL

Introduction

The King's School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided for its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School with care and in accordance with this Complaints Procedure.

The King's School makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the school's website and in the school office during the school day and, The King's School will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and the form in which it is published or available. This procedure is not however available for use by prospective parents - it may only be used by parents of current pupils.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, The King's School will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate, details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

COMPLAINTS RELATING TO EYFS:

The King's will provide ISI/ Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least 3 years.

Parents may complain directly to Ofsted or to ISI if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Schools must make available details of how to contact Ofsted and/ or the ISI:

Ofsted may be contacted on:

Telephone: 0300 123 4234

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

By post: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

ISI may be contacted on:

Telephone: 020 7600 0100

Email: concerns@isi.net

By post: Independent Schools Inspectorate, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA

What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, acted unfairly or failed to do something that it should have done.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The School is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you or your child raise in good faith.



THE THREE-STAGES COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Class Teacher/Tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Class Teacher cannot resolve the matter, it may be necessary for parents to consult the Head of Primary or Secondary or Principal.
- Complaints made directly to the Head of Primary or Secondary or Principal will usually be referred to the relevant Class Teacher unless the Head of Primary or of Secondary or the Principal deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Head of Primary or Secondary or Principal will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 7 working days or in the event that the Class Teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Complaints Procedure.
- If, however, the complaint is against the Principal, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Trustees.

Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint, in writing, to the Principal. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Principal will meet with or speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, an agreement will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Principal to carry out further investigations.
- The Principal will **keep written records** of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Principal is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Principal will also give reasons for his decision.
- If the complaint is against the Principal, the Chair of Trustees will call for a full report from the Principal and for all the relevant documents. The Chair may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chair of Trustees will give reasons for his/her decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to the final stage of this Procedure.

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), the matter will be referred to David Crook, the Chair of Trustees, who has been appointed to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.



- **The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school.**
- The Panel members will be appointed by Trustees and the Panel will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 working days.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matters be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 7 working days prior to the hearing.
- **The parents may attend the meeting and may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish.** This may be a relative or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- After consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, **the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations.**
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, normally **within 7 days of the hearing**, although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. **A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about,** as well as the Chair of Trustees and the Principal. **A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the Chair of Trustees and the Principal.**

Time frame for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within 5 working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure **within 20 days** if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 20 days, if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, **'working days' refers to weekdays** (Monday to Friday) during term time, excluding bank holidays.

Recording Complaints

The Parent Complaint Memorandum, available from the Bursar's or Secretary's Office, should be completed for all complaints.

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing and any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld).

At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:



- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations).

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

Renewed: September 2018

Next Review: August 2020

Legislation: **Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010;**
The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
Children's Act 1989;
Section 39(1)(a) of the Childcare Act 2006.