

## The King's School, Worcester

### Complaints Procedure

#### Introduction

The King's School Foundation (School) has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents/guardians do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School with care and in accordance with this procedure. The 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 School will ensure that parents/guardians of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and of the form in which it is published or available such as on Firefly.

In accordance with Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, the 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 for the purposes of section 162A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (as subsequently amended), details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

This policy does apply to past pupils if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered, and it will be used in support of complaints relating to the Suspension and Expulsion policy.

#### 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, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the school is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent/guardian believes that the school has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

Parents/guardians 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 raises in good faith.

## The three-stage 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/form teacher or year group tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the class/form teacher or year group tutor cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult a head of department/the Deputy Head/the Head.
- Complaints made directly to a head of department/the Deputy Head/the Head will usually be referred to the relevant class/form teacher or year group tutor unless the head of department/the Deputy Head/the Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- Should the matter not be resolved within 5 working days or in the event that the class/form teacher or year group tutor 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 procedure.
- If, however, the complaint is against the Head of King's Hawford or King's St Albans, parents should make their complaint directly to the Headmaster of King's School, Worcester. If the complaint is against the Headmaster of King's School, Worcester, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chairman of Governors.

### 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 Head of the relevant school within the Foundation. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will meet/speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 days *in term time* of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head 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 normally within 14 days of receiving the complaint *in term time*. The Head will also give reasons for his decision.

- If the complaint is against the Head of King's Hawford or King's St Albans, the Head of King's School Worcester will call for a full report from the Head and for all the relevant documents. The Head 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 Head 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, normally within 14 days of receiving the complaint *in term time*. The Head will give reasons for his decision.
- If the complaint is against the Head of King's School Worcester the Chairman of Governors will call for a full report from the Head and for all the relevant documents. The Chairman 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 Chairman 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 Chairman will give reasons for his decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

### **Stage 3 - Panel Hearing**

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Clerk to the Governors who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. This should be done in writing within 10 days of receipt of the decision at Stage 2 setting out their grounds of appeal. Any supporting evidence which the parents wish to rely on should also be provided with their grounds of appeal.
- The Clerk to the Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint within 7 days *in term time* and schedule a hearing to take place normally within 21 days of receiving the complaint *in term time*.

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 and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school.

- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 7 days prior to the hearing *in term time*.
- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not be appropriate. The Panel will decide whether it would be helpful for witnesses to attend.

- The manner in which the hearing is conducted shall be at the discretion of the Panel.
  
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
  
- After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings as to whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and accordingly decide whether to:
  - Dismiss the complaint(s) in whole or in part;
  - Uphold the complaint(s) in whole or in part; and
  - may make recommendations
  
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, within 7 days of the hearing *in term time* (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 Chairman of Governors and the Head. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Chairman of Governors and the Headmaster.

### **Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints**

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within 7 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 28 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 28 days during term time and as soon as reasonably practicable during holiday periods.

### **Recording Complaints**

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all complaints made to the Senior Management Team at Stage 1, and all formal complaints that reach Stage 2 and/or Stage 3 and any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld).

The School processes data in accordance with its Privacy Notice. When dealing with complaints the School (including any Panel member appointed under the Stage 3 process) may process a range of information, which is likely to include the following:

- 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)
- Notes and minutes of the hearing, and
- The Panel's written decision

This may include 'special category personal data' (as further detailed in the School's Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy, but potentially including, for instance, information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint. This data will be processed in accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy.

The School will keep records of formal complaints and Complaints Panel hearings, as required by regulation. It will do so in accordance with its Privacy Notice, Data Protection Policy and Retention of Records Policy. Complaints that do not have a safeguarding implications will be retained for a minimum of 7 years.

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.

### **Complaints Record**

Complaints Log Location: Headmaster  
 Supporting Documentation for Stage 2 and 3: Bursar

Number of Complaints in 2018/19 for Stage 2 = 1, Stage 3 = 0

Number of Complaints in 2019/20 for Stage 2 = 0, Stage 3 = 1

## EYFS Complaints

### Written complaints relating to the requirements under the statutory framework for the EYFS:

Parents of EYFS children should follow the three stages of this Complaints Procedure. If parents remain dissatisfied and their complaint is about the School's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, then parents may take their complaint to the ISI or Ofsted. Parents will be notified by ISI or Ofsted of the outcome of the investigation into their complaint within 28 days of the complaint being received.

The School 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 in accordance with its Privacy Notice and Retention of Records Policy.

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 ISI:

- Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 123 1231 or by email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).  
<https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/online-complaints>

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

- ISI may be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)

Independent Schools Inspectorate  
CAP House  
9-12 Long Lane  
London  
EC1A 9HA

## Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Bursar every three years or at more frequent intervals if there are relevant legislative changes, and/or the evaluation of the policy highlights the need for a review. **Next Review: August 2023**

Version	Reviewed	Approved by Governors	Author
1	17/03/2017	17/03/2017	Bursar (HLJ)
2	09/10/2017		Bursar (HLJ)
3	24/09/2018		Bursar (HLJ)
4	23/09/2019		Bursar (HLJ)
5	04/03/2020	20/03/2020	Bursar (HLJ)
6	19/08/2020	28/08/2020	Bursar (HLJ)