



Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

The King's School, Worcester Foundation (the Foundation) comprises three schools: King's Worcester, King's St Alban's and King's Hawford. This Complaints Policy and Procedure (the Policy) applies to all of them.

The Foundation has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents/guardians of pupils do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the Foundation with care and in accordance with this Policy.

The Foundation makes this Policy available to all parents/guardians of current pupils and of prospective pupils on its website. The Foundation will ensure that parents of current and prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is available and that it includes the number of formal complaints registered during the previous school year.

Complaints by parents of former pupils will be dealt with under this Policy only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil was still registered as a pupil at one of the Foundation schools.

Although this Policy is made available to parents of prospective pupils, it is not available for use by them.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the Foundation will also make available, on request, to Ofsted, the Department for Education (DfE) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), details of this Complaints Procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

The only exception to this is if the complaint is a review of a decision taken by the Head of Foundation to exclude or require the removal of a pupil under Clause 7 of the Foundation's Terms and Conditions in which case such a review must be requested by no later than five working days from the date of the decision to exclude or require the removal of a pupil.

The Foundation will be mindful of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 in the application of this policy.

In this Policy:

"Head of Foundation" means the Head of The King's Worcester Foundation;

"working days" means weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time, excluding bank holidays; and

"parent" or "parents" means the holder(s) of parental responsibility for a current or former pupil about whom the complaint relates, and this includes for the avoidance of doubt guardians.

2. What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the Foundation or one of its constituent schools, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff. Any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the Foundation is within the scope of this Policy. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the

Foundation has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done, or has acted unfairly.

There may be circumstances in which the Foundation is required to share information relating to a concern or a complaint in order to comply with its legal or regulatory obligations.

All parents are assured that the Foundation is fully supportive of pupils at all times and that no pupil will ever be penalised for a complaint that you have raised in good faith.

3. 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 Tutor or Head of House in the senior school, or Form Teacher in the prep schools. If the Tutor or Head of House cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a Head of Department, a Deputy Head, or the Head of the respective school.
- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department/Deputy Head/Head will usually be referred to the relevant Tutor or Head of House unless the Head of Department/Deputy Head/Head deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- If the complaint is against the Head of King's Hawford or Head of King's St Alban's, parents should make their complaint directly to the Head of Foundation.
- If the complaint is against the Head of Foundation, parents may wish to discuss it informally with the Head of Foundation or alternatively they may make their complaint to the Chair of Governors via the Clerk to Governors (clerk@ksw.org.uk).
- Written records of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received will be recorded on a Foundation-wide complaints log.
- Should the matter not be resolved within 10 working days, or in the event that the parents are not satisfied with the resolution, parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure. As a general rule, complaints should go through the Stage 1 Informal Resolution process before being raised at Stage 2 Formal Resolution.

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 Foundation
- The Head of Foundation (the decision maker) may in some circumstances deem it appropriate to nominate a member of the Foundation Leadership Team or someone external to the Foundation (the investigator) to conduct the investigation and produce a report (with supporting documents and statements).
- If the complaint is against the Head of Foundation, the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors via the Clerk to Governors (clerk@ksw.org.uk). The Chair of Governors will nominate a member of the Governing Body or, in some cases, someone external to

the Foundation to conduct an investigation and determine the outcome. The nominated person will be both the investigator and the decision maker.

- The investigation process to be followed is at the discretion of the investigator in consultation with the decision maker, but generally it will be as set out below.
- In most cases, the investigator will contact the parents **within 5 working days** of receiving the complaint to discuss the matter and clarify any of the points raised. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may then be necessary for further investigations to be carried out. The investigator may call for a report from the subject of the complaint.
- **Written records** of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint will be kept.
- Once the decision maker is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all relevant information has been collected, they will, where possible, inform the parents of the outcome, and the reasons for their decisions, in writing within 25 working days of receipt of the Stage 2 complaint.
- A copy of any recommendations, suitably anonymised, will be sent to the Compliance Committee of the Governing Body to monitor implementation.
- If the parent is 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 Governors, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. The parents must request Stage 3 in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the Stage 2 outcome, 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.
- To the extent the parents are unable to provide their complaint within the time period stipulated due to extenuating circumstances which have impeded the parents from taking action, the parents should request an extension in writing. Such a request should be made to the Clerk to Governors in advance of the original deadline, setting out the further time period requested and the reason for this. This will be considered by the Clerk to Governors, in consultation with the Head of Foundation, acting reasonably. In the event the parents are unable to provide their complaint within the time period stipulated (including to the extent applicable any extensions if agreed) the Foundation reserves the right to conclude the complaint process and not progress the matter to Stage 3.
- The complaint will be heard by a Complaints Panel consisting of three people appointed by the Governors and not previously directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One of the Panel members must be independent of the management and running of the Foundation. One of the Panel members will be appointed as Chair.
- The Clerk to Governors will acknowledge the complaint **within 5 working days** and schedule a hearing of the Panel members which will normally take place **within 30 working days** of receipt of the final documentation for the grounds of the appeal.

- 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 or further investigation be carried out. This may require the date of the hearing to be delayed until the information is available. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties **not later than 5 working days** prior to the hearing.
- At the Complaints Panel's discretion, **the parents may attend part or all of the hearing and may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish**. The Panel will decide whether it would be helpful for witnesses to attend. The witnesses shall also be entitled to be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. In both cases, the companion may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation at the hearing is not appropriate and the companion should not be a lawyer. The identity of the companions should be confirmed to the Clerk to Governors as soon as possible and by no later than **2 working days** before the hearing.
- The manner in which the hearing is conducted shall be at the discretion of the Panel.
- The Clerk to Governors will normally attend the hearing as secretary to the Panel and will take notes of the proceedings.
- The Complaints Panel may, at its absolute discretion, choose to make a sound recording of the hearing solely to assist with the creation of the written record. The recording will be deleted as soon as the written record has been approved by the Chair of the Complaints Panel, and will remain confidential to the secretary to the Complaints 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 the merits of the complaint and all facts it considers relevant, **the Panel will make findings as to whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and accordingly decide whether to:**
 - not uphold the complaint(s) in whole or in part; or
 - uphold the complaint(s) in whole or in part; and
 - make recommendations if appropriate.
- The Chair of the Complaints Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, **within 10 working 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 Complaints Panel will be final.
- A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of Governors and the Head of Foundation. A copy of the recommendations, suitably anonymised, will also be sent to the Compliance Committee of the Governing Body to monitor implementation. This will also be available for inspection on the Foundation premises by the Chair of Governors and the Head of Foundation.

- Any complaint about a decision taken by the Head of Foundation to exclude or require the removal of the pupil under Clause 7 of the Foundation's Terms and Conditions will be governed by this Stage 3 of the Foundation's Complaints Procedure. There may be circumstances in which the Foundation consider it necessary and appropriate to deviate from the Stage 3 procedure in the context of appeals for exclusion and required removal, and the Foundation will inform the parents of this. In such circumstances, the Panel may only uphold the complaint and ask the Stage 2 decision-maker to reconsider their decision if they consider, having regard to the process followed by the Head of Foundation, that their decision to exclude/require the removal of the pupil was not a reasonable decision for the Head of Foundation to have taken.

4. Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously, sensitively and within clear and reasonable timescales.

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the Foundation's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure **within 35 working days**. Stage 3 would expect to be completed **within a further 40 working days**.

Please note that, for the purposes of this policy, **working days** refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time, excluding bank holidays and half term. This means that during school holidays it may take longer to resolve a complaint, although the Foundation will do what is reasonably practicable to avoid undue delay. It may also take longer to resolve a complaint during periods of significant disruption to Foundation life or as a consequence of unavoidable staff absence. However deviation from the normal timescale for resolving a complaint during term time will only occur on an exceptional basis, and the Foundation will take all reasonable steps to limit any such delay. The Foundation expects parents to engage in the process in a reasonable, constructive and responsive manner to help ensure matters can be dealt with in a timely way and in line with the targets set out in this Procedure.

5. Unreasonable Complaints

The Foundation is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to parents. This includes removing all practical barriers to making complaints.

However, we do not expect our staff to be subject to unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff, including from behaviour which is abusive, offensive or threatening. Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this will be regarded by the Foundation as vexatious and outside the scope of this procedure.

We adopt the Department for Education definition of vexatious complaints [found here](#) and may follow its guidance and/or model policy for managing serial, unreasonable or vexatious complaints.

6. Record of Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the Foundation will keep a written record of all complaints and any action taken by the Foundation as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld).

For the academic year 2024/25 the Foundation received 5 formal complaints.

7. Use of Personal Data

The Foundation processes data in accordance with its Privacy Notice, which you can find [here](#).

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 and contact details 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/minutes of the hearing, and
- the Panel's written decision.

This may include 'special category personal data' (as further detailed in the Foundation'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 Foundation's Data Protection Policy.

The Foundation 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 Data Retention Policy. All records relating to complaints shall be treated as confidential. In addition to where requested by the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, there may be other circumstances where disclosure of the substance of a complaint or particular confidential records relating to it is required, for example, where there is a legal, regulatory, safeguarding or data protection obligation (e.g., in response to a subject access request) which prevails over the requirement to maintain the records as confidential.

8. EYFS Complaints

Parents of EYFS children should follow the three stages of this Policy. If parents remain dissatisfied and their complaint is about the Foundation's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, then parents may take their complaint to the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) or Ofsted.

The Foundation will provide the 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.

Parents may complain directly to Ofsted or to the ISI if they believe the Foundation is not meeting the EYFS requirements.

Ofsted can be contacted on 0300 123 1231 or by email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

The ISI can be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: info@isi.net

ISI
CAP House
9-12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA

9. Complaints Record

Complaints Log Location:


Head of Foundation

Supporting Documentation for Stage 2 and 3:

Clerk to Governors

10. Approval

This policy will be reviewed by the Director of Operations annually or at more frequent intervals if there are relevant legislative changes, and/or the evaluation of the policy highlights the need for a review. Changes to the policy will be approved by Governors.

Authorised by	Resolution of the Governors
Signature	
Date Approved	27 June 2025
Review due	June 2026
Circulation	Members of Governors/ all staff / parents / pupils [on request]