

Member of staff responsible : Head Teacher  
Date of policy review : June 2011  
Approved by Governors : June 2011

## **King's House School Complaints Procedure for Parents**

### **Circulation**

This policy has been approved by the Governors and Head of King's House School and is addressed to the Senior Management Team and Head of Pastoral Care; to all members of the teaching and pastoral staff, and, is available, to parents and pupils on the website and on request from either office.

### **Introduction**

King's House School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure. Certain of the procedures can only be carried out during term time.

"Parent/s" includes a current or prospective parent or legal guardian or education guardian and may at our discretion include a parent whose child has recently left the School.

Separate procedures apply in the event of a child protection issue or if the Head expels or asks a pupil to leave and the parents seek a Governors' Review of that decision.

This procedure applies to all areas of the school and is inclusive of EYFS pupils.

### **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. Examples might include a dissatisfaction about some aspect of teaching or pastoral care, or about allocation of privileges or responsibilities, or about a timetable clash or some other aspect of the School's systems or equipment, or a billing error.
- If parents have a complaint or concern about an educational issue relating to the classroom, the curriculum or special educational needs or a pastoral issue relating to matters outside the classroom they should initially contact their son's Form Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for parents to consult the appropriate member of the Senior Management Team.

A problem over any disciplinary matter should be raised first of all with the member of staff who imposed the sanction, and, if not resolved, the parents

should raise the issue with the appropriate member of the Senior Management Team or the Head.

- A query relating to financial matters should be stated in writing to the Bursar.
- Complaints made directly to a senior member of staff or the Head will usually be referred to the Form Teacher or other relevant staff unless the senior member of staff or the Head deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- The staff concerned will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. The school will acknowledge a written notification by telephone, fax, e-mail or letter within two working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable in the holidays. Should the matter not be resolved within a reasonable period not exceeding 28 days or in the event that the relevant staff and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution by that time then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

## **Stage 2 – Formal Resolution**

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing with full details and sent with all relevant documents and full contact details in an envelope addressed to the Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will speak to and/or meet with the parents concerned, normally within ten days of receiving the complaint in term time and as soon as practicable in holidays, 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 with the result that a resolution will be postponed while those investigations are carried out. The Head may ask a senior member of staff to act as investigator and/or may involve one or more Governors.
- 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. The Head will also give reasons for her decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

### **Stage 3 - Reference to the Chairman of Governors**

- Parents may renew their complaint in writing to the Chairman of Governors addressed via the clerk to the Governors at the school. Their letter to the Chairman should give full details of the complaint and enclose all relevant documents and full contact details. The letter will normally be acknowledged by telephone or in writing within four working days during term time, and as soon as possible during the holidays, indicating the action that is being taken and the likely time scale.
- The Chairman will arrange for the complaint to be investigated following procedures equivalent to those described in Stage 2 (above). When the Chairman is satisfied that he has established all the material facts and relevant policies, so far as is practicable, he will notify parents in writing of his decision and the reasons for it.

### **Stage 4 – Reference to Panel**

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 4 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Clerk to the Governors. Requests will only be considered if parents have completed Stages 1 to 3 and make their request in writing to the Clerk to the Governors within seven working days of the decision complained of. Parents must state in their letter the outcome desired and all the grounds of complaint. They must also send a list of the documents parents believe to be in the School's possession and wish the Panel to see. The Clerk will acknowledge parents' request in writing within four working days and will call a hearing of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least 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. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chairman of Governors (or his nominee). The Chairman of Governors (or his nominee), on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within three term-time weeks. The Panel will not normally sit during half terms or School holidays.
- 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 five days prior to the hearing
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend, who should not be legally qualified.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

- A hearing before the Complaints Panel is a private proceeding. No notes or other records or oral statements about any matter discussed or arising from the proceeding shall be made available directly or indirectly to the press or other media. At the hearing both the school and parents will be asked to confirm their agreement to the hearing taking place on that basis.
- 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 reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within seven days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. (The decision of the Panel will be final.) The Panel's findings and any recommendations will be sent in writing or via email to the parents, the Head, the Chair of Governors and, where relevant, the person(s) about whom the complaint was made.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

The school holds a record of all written complaints on file for at least three years.

Parents of EYFS pupils can also make a complaint to ISI/Ofsted at the contact numbers/address included below.

**Ofsted**

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). A simple form can be completed on-line  
08456 014772

**ISI**

[Durell.barnes@isi.net](mailto:Durell.barnes@isi.net)  
020 7776 8830

Ofsted and ISI are provided on request with a written record of all complaints made and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

If you have any concerns/complaints about King's House School please contact the Chairman of the Governors, Simon Readhead QC, via the school office

Number of formal complaints received 2010 - 2011. 0

Number of formal complaints received 2009 - 2010. 0