

KINGSWOOD SCHOOL

Complaints Procedure for Parents of Pupils

This procedure applies to the whole school, inclusive of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Legal Status:

- This policy incorporates the manner in which complaints are to be managed in accordance with Part 7, paragraph 33 (a) to (k) inclusive, along with the provision of information being made available in Part 6 Paragraph 32 (3) (f) of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations currently in force and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) regulations.

Applies to:

- The parents of current pupils at Kingswood School;
- The parents of past pupils of Kingswood School if a complaint was raised when the pupil was still registered, but does not cover exclusions

Timescale:

- The process of dealing with a complaint in writing from the moment that it is received by the School to resolution will take no more than twenty eight (28) working days, except in circumstances in which the normal timescales are affected by issues that delay resolution; namely school holidays and other factors.

Availability:

- The Complaints Procedure is provided in the information for prospective pupils, parents and guardians, when a parent makes an enquiry for admission to the School.
- This procedure is also made available to parents, staff and pupils on the School website: <http://www.kingswoodschool.co.uk/> It is also made available to parents or guardians of pupils on request to the School office, during the School day, or by e-mail: info@kingswoodschool.co.uk

Monitoring and Review:

- The Headmaster logs all complaints received by the School and records at which stage and how they were resolved. The record includes, at least: the person making the complaint, the date of the complaint, the nature of the complaint, any action taken and the outcome of the complaint.
- The Proprietor monitors the complaints procedure, to ensure that all complaints are handled properly, taking into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and making any modifications necessary to this policy. The Proprietor also retains details of the number of complaints, registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.
- The Headmaster will undertake a formal annual review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Signed: 

Signed: 

Date: 21 January 2019

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Introduction

Kingswood School prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to all of its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by Kingswood School in accordance with this Procedure. This procedure encompasses the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It is the aim of this procedure to resolve complaints either to the parent's satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils. Pupils will not be penalised for making a complaint in good faith. We aim to be open about the decisions we make and the actions we take and will always explain our rationale. Those who have complaints should feel these can be voiced and that they will be taken seriously.

A complaint is likely to arise when there are issues of physical or emotional well-being and security at stake, or when the School's stated aims or values are being ignored. A breach of the law will always constitute a complaint. At every stage of the procedure, the handling of the complaint will be swift (using the agreed time frame), fair and necessarily confidential. Throughout the process, Kingswood School will be willing to: listen, learn, admit mistakes, apologise if appropriate, address any issues raised and change practices and procedures if appropriate.

The Complaints Process

At all stages in the complaints process a written record is to be kept of the date a resolution was reached and the agreed nature of this. The parents will then be informed in writing.

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution (Who should you contact?)

(References to the number of working days refer to term-time only)

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- Any person with a complaint, should normally raise it in person with the member of staff/individual concerned.
- The member of staff/individual involved will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Our ideal is that no concern should ever become a formal complaint, as through open dialogue, a resolution should always be accomplished. If the member of staff/individual cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary to consult with colleagues.
- For matters on the curriculum, subject related issues or general academic concern, please contact the Assistant Head (Upper School) or the Assistant Head (Lower School) as appropriate.
- For matters concerning finance, fees and non-academic services, please contact the Bursar.
- Should the matter not be resolved within seven (7) working term days, or in the event that Kingswood School and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution (What to do if you remain dissatisfied?)

(References to the number of working days refer to term-time only)

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents should put their complaint in writing, with any relevant documents, to the Headmaster who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headmaster will either meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within seven (7) days of receiving the complaint at Stage 2, to discuss the matter. Ideally this would take place on the day that the complaint is received. The Headmaster will establish what has happened so far and who has been involved; clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved and what the parents feel would resolve the issue. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations that may delay a resolution. The Headmaster may ask an Assistant Head to act as investigator.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing within twenty (20) days of

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receiving the complaint at Stage 2, if possible. The Headmaster will give reasons for the decision. A written record will also be kept of when a final outcome was reached.

Stage 3 – Complaints Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke stage 3 (following a failure to reach an early resolution of this procedure) they will be referred to the Panel Convener who has been appointed by the Proprietor to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. The Panel Convener is The School Administrator, Kingswood School, St James Place, Shirley, Solihull, B90 2BA.
- Parents will be asked to provide the specifics of the complaint in writing
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel within seven (7) days of receiving the complaint at Stage 3 for consideration. The panel will consist of at least three (3) people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The panel members are appointed by the Proprietor. The Proprietor will normally be a member of the panel. At least one panel member is independent of the management and running of the School. The Department for Education has given the following guidance on the identity of an independent panel member. *“Our general view is that people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to scrutinising evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, Headmasters or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force might be considered.”*
- The School Administrator, on behalf of the Proprietor, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen (14) days of referral to the panel. A secretary will be present to take notes.
- If the Complaints 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 (5) days prior to the hearing.
- The complainant(s) may be accompanied to the hearing. This may be by a relative or friend.
- If possible, the Complaints Panel will resolve the parent's complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Complaints Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Complaints Panel will reach a decision and may make findings and recommendations, which it shall complete normally within five (5) days of the Hearing.
- The Complaints Panel's findings, and, if any, recommendations and the reasons for them, will be sent by electronic mail or in writing to the parents and, where relevant, the person complained about. These findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the School premises and kept by the Proprietor and the Headmaster for at least three (3) years. The decision of the panel will be final.
- Kingswood School will take the Complaints Panel findings seriously and will make appropriate changes to policies, procedures and practices as a result.

Summary of Time Scales

During School Time:

- *Stage 1 Informal resolution:*
Resolved in seven (7) days or progress to Stage 2
- *Stage 2 Formal resolution:* Response to parents within seven (7) days for meeting to resolve. If still unresolved or a further investigation needed, a letter from the Headmaster will be received by the parents within twenty (20) days of the initial meeting.
- *Stage 3 Panel Hearing:*
Complaint sent to the Complaints Panel within seven (7) days. The date of the hearing is to be set normally no later than fourteen (14) days. Copies of the particulars of the complaint are supplied to all parties not later than five (5) days prior to the hearing. If possible the parent's complaint will be resolved immediately. If further investigation is required, a decision will be sent within five (5) days of the hearing.

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During Holiday Periods

The complaint will normally be resolved within twenty eight (28) days of the lodging of the complaint to its resolution whenever possible. Allowable exceptions to this rule are for instances when persons involved in the complaint are unavailable during holiday periods. In this case the parents will be kept informed. However, as far as possible, the meeting should not be delayed if the referral comes at the end of term, especially at the end of the Summer Term. Since the aim of the procedure is to resolve the issue and effect reconciliation if necessary, it will be best if the matter can come to the Panel as quickly as possible, especially if the parents will already have been engaged over a longer period in attempts to put things right.

Confidentiality

Parents and Guardians can be assured that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except:

- where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Record keeping for the Whole School, including Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

A written record of all complaints and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing is kept by the Headmaster, for a minimum of three years. The record includes, at least: the person making the complaint, the date of the complaint, the nature of the complaint, any action taken and the outcome of the complaint. A written record will also be kept of when a final outcome was reached. The Headmaster/Proprietor and Company Secretary examine this written record on an annual basis. The School will provide, on request to Ofsted, a written record of all complaints made during a specified period and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. Parents may contact the Headmaster to ask for the number of formal complaints made during the previous academic year. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the last school year (2015-2016) has been 2. The School will provide, on request to Ofsted, a written record of all complaints made during a specified period and the action that was taken as a result of each complaint.

Child Protection

For any complaint that involves a potential child protection issue, this must be reported immediately to the Headmaster (See our Child Protection Policy for details of the procedure).

Should a parent or guardian have a complaint about the Headmaster, an approach should first be made to the Proprietor who is Dr Shahzad Yousuf and whose contact details are as follows:

Dr Shahzad Yousuf, Chief Executive, The City of London College, 71 Whitechapel High St, London E1 7PL,
London, E1 1LX
Tel : +44 (0) 20 7247 2177
yousuf@clc-london.ac.uk

This should include the nature of the complaint and how the School has handled it so far. The recipient of the complaint is obliged to investigate the matter and will do everything possible to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the School. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Complaints from External Bodies

Complaints from the public about the behaviour of a group of pupils will be dealt with on a general basis, with reminders to all about the School's expectations.

In addition to the Complaints Procedure detailed above, parents may also make a complaint to Ofsted should they wish to, the relevant contact details are: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD.

Telephone: 03001231231 Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk