



KING'S COLLEGE SCHOOL
WIMBLEDON

Complaints Policy

The Corporation of King's College School

King's College School, Wimbledon
King's College Junior School, Wimbledon

Wimbledon Common Preparatory School

Complaints Policy

This policy is available in hard copy on request and is published on the school's website.

This policy applies to King's College School, King's College Junior School and Wimbledon Common Preparatory School ("WCPS") together "the school" and parents of current pupils at the school.

In this policy references to the head refers to the heads of the junior school and senior school and the head teacher of WCPS as appropriate unless otherwise stated.

I. Introduction

- (i) The school is committed to providing a high level of teaching and pastoral care for its pupils. However if a parent (which term includes a guardian) does have a complaint they can expect it to be treated by the school with care and in accordance with this policy.
- (ii) If a parent of a pupil has a complaint or a significant concern in relation to that pupil, the school will seek to resolve that complaint promptly, fairly and, if possible, informally. This policy will be used for that purpose.
- (iii) In this policy a complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly. It may be made about the school as a whole, a specific department or an individual member of staff. Any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the school is within the scope of this policy, except for the following:
 - a. complaints which arise from the expulsion or removal of a pupil. These are dealt with under the expulsion removal and review policy;
 - b. complaints arising from a safeguarding matter. These are dealt with under the safeguarding policy.

However, if, following an investigation into a matter under iii a) or b) above, a parent wishes to complain about the manner of that investigation that complaint will then fall under this policy.

- (iv) This policy has been approved by the head, the Education Committee and the Governing Body of the school and is the process by which the school will handle complaints made by parents of current pupils. It takes account of Part 7 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014. The procedures below may be adapted as necessary to meet the policy aims and circumstances of each case.
- (v) Certain of the stages in this policy can only be carried out during term time. Where the term "working days" is used this shall mean any day that is not a Saturday or Sunday or a bank holiday and which falls within the school's term time as published on the school's website. This means that during school holidays it may take longer to resolve a complaint although the School 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 school life or as a consequence of unavoidable staff absence, however deviation from the normal timescale for resolving a complaint during term time will only be permitted on an exceptional basis, and the school will take all reasonable steps to limit any such delay.
- (vi) If the complaint is made against the head of the senior school, the parent should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will appoint a member of the governing body to follow the process as set out in this policy. The Chair of Governors can be contacted via the secretary to the governors at the address set out in paragraph 5 (iv) below.

2. Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- (i) A parent with a complaint shall wherever possible, in the first instance, contact the pupil's tutor in the case of the senior school or form teacher in the case of the junior school or WCPS, who shall do everything possible to resolve the matter straightaway to the parent's satisfaction.
- (ii) If the tutor or form teacher is not able to resolve the matter alone, they may seek assistance from the head of the department or from the deputy head or the head.
- (iii) Where a parent initially contacts a head of department, the deputy head or the head, they will refer the complaint to the pupil's tutor or form teacher unless, in the circumstances of the particular case, that member of staff decides that it is not appropriate to do so.

The school expects that parental communications should be acknowledged in accordance with normal school practice during term time. If after 10 working days of a complaint being acknowledged a parent is not satisfied that the matter is working towards a resolution they may proceed to stage 2 of this policy.

3. Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- (i) Under the stage 2 of this policy (Formal Resolution) the parent should address the complaint, in writing, to the head stating that it is made under stage 2 of the school's complaints policy.
- (ii) Wherever possible the head will contact the parent within 10 working days of receiving the complaint in order to:
 - a. discuss the matter and try to achieve an acceptable resolution or;
 - b. at the head's discretion, confirm that the complaint will proceed directly to step (iii) below.
- (iii) Where a resolution has not been reached under step (ii (a)) or the head has dispensed with step (ii (a)), the head may ask a senior member of staff of the Corporation who has not been involved in the matter that is the subject of the complaint, to act as investigator. The investigator may request additional information from the parent and may wish to speak to them and others who have knowledge of the circumstances. The investigator will report the outcome of the investigation to the head. At the head's discretion this step may be dispensed with and the head may reach a decision on the evidence without appointing an investigator.
- (iv) The head's decision and their reasons for it shall be set out in writing and sent to the parent within 15 working days of the head contacting the parent under step ii.
- (v) Where a parent is still not satisfied that the matter has been resolved, they may proceed to stage 3 of this policy.

4. Stage 3- Panel Hearing

- (i) A parent may proceed to stage 3 by requesting a panel hearing and by sending details of the grounds of the complaint which they believe has not been resolved at stage 2 to the secretary to the governors within 10 working days of the date of the decision at stage 2. The letter should give full details of the matters which they believe have not been resolved and state the outcome which is sought. The letter will be acknowledged by the secretary

to the governors within 7 working days and indicating whether any further information is required.

- (ii) The secretary to the governors shall convene a panel as soon as is reasonably practicable within 1 month of the receipt of the request for the panel hearing or receipt of further information whichever is later, to hear the grounds of complaint which the complainant believes have not been resolved. The panel will not normally sit during school holidays and thus, it may not be possible to meet this timescale if the complaint is to be heard outside term time in accordance with paragraph 1 (v) above.
- (iii) Where a parent has requested a panel hearing in compliance with paragraph 4 (i) above, the panel hearing will take place unless the parent later indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further. Unless such notice is given, the panel hearing will proceed whether or not the parent decides to attend. If the parent decides not to attend the panel will consider in their absence the parent's grounds for believing the complaint to be unresolved and the outcomes requested and make a determination.
- (iv) The panel may require additional material or further particulars of the grounds of complaint which the parent believes are unresolved, or any related matter, in advance of the hearing. Any such additional material or further particulars shall be supplied to all parties at least 7 working days before hearing. The panel may, if necessary, defer the hearing date.
- (v) A parent may attend the hearing of the panel and be accompanied by a friend or relative. Legal representation is neither necessary nor appropriate but if the parent wishes to be accompanied by a legally qualified person, acting in his or her professional capacity, the school must be notified at least 7 working days before the hearing. The school reserves the right to have legal representation at the hearing.
- (vi) The hearing will be a private proceeding chaired by the chair of the Appeals Disciplinary and Complaints committee and will be conducted in an informal manner. The chair may nominate another governor as chair if they are unable to conduct the hearing for any reason. No notes or other records or oral statements about any matter discussed in or arising from the proceeding shall be made available directly or indirectly to the press or other media. All those attending the hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners or, after due warning, the hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the chair. If the hearing is terminated for this reason, the original decision will stand. Any parent who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way the hearing is conducted must say so before the proceedings go any further and their comment will be minuted. The role of the panel is to establish the facts surrounding the complaints by considering the documents provided by both parties and any representations made by the parties at the hearing. The panel is not empowered to make any financial award nor impose sanctions on staff, pupils or parents. At the hearing the panel will attempt to achieve a resolution.
- (vii) Where a resolution has not been reached and where the panel is satisfied that it has established all the relevant facts (if necessary having carried out further investigations) and has duly considered all that the parent and the school has said, the panel shall make its findings and recommendations (if any). If the panel considers that the complaint has been proven, it will uphold the complaint. If the panel does not consider that the complaint has been proven, it will dismiss the complaint. These decisions will be made on the balance of probabilities. The decision of the panel is final.
- (viii) The panel's findings and any recommendations (which shall be made not later than 28 days from the date of the final hearing) and its reasons for them, shall be recorded in writing and sent to the parent, the head, the secretary to the governors and, where relevant, the person complained about. The decision, findings and any recommendations

will be made available for inspection on the school premises by the governing body and the head.

- (ix) Where a repeated attempt is made to raise the same complaint on the same facts, after it has been considered at all three stages, the school is entitled to regard this as vexatious and outside the scope of this policy.

5. Confidentiality and Records

- (i) All concerns and complaints are treated seriously and kept confidential. All correspondence, statements and records relating to the complaint are kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School by paragraph 33 of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014; where disclosure is required by the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008; or where any other legal obligation prevails.
- (ii) The record of formal complaints made under this procedure must record whether the complaint has been resolved following an informal or formal procedure or whether it has proceeded to a panel hearing. It must also give details of the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints, regardless of whether the complaint has been upheld.
- (iii) Details of individual complaints will be kept in accordance with the school's information and records retention policy which can be found on the school's website.
- (iv) The number of complaints registered under the formal resolution procedure in the preceding school year is available from the secretary to the governors by writing to:

Secretary to the Governors
King's College School
Southside
Wimbledon Common
London
SW19 4TT

By email: AM.Clarke@kcs.org.uk

- (v) Parents of pupils at WCPS may contact OFSTED or ISI directly, should they feel the school is not meeting the EYFS requirements, on the contact details below:

	OFSTED	ISI
Telephone	0300 123 1231	020 7 600 0100
Email	enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk	concerns@isi.net
