



KING'S COLLEGE SCHOOL  
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## Complaints Procedures for Parents and Guardians

### General Guidelines and Principles

1. Complaints made to the school will always be listened to and acted upon.
2. Complaints will be investigated thoroughly, fairly and promptly.
3. A senior member of staff will acknowledge any complaint made by parents within 5 working days, and a formal response to the complaint will be made within 5 days following this acknowledgement.
4. Complaints made by students will normally be dealt with by their Form Tutor/Class teacher, the Head of Primary, Head of Secondary or Deputy Head.
5. Complaints made by parents concerning an employee of the College will be dealt with by a senior member of staff.
6. When the complaint is directed at a senior member of staff, the Headmaster will deal with the matter directly.
7. When the complaint is against the Headmaster, the CEO and Chairman of the King's Group Board will be informed.
8. Complainants will not suffer as a result of a complaint.
9. When a complaint is made against a member of the boarding staff, the College reserves the right to arrange temporary off-campus accommodation for the staff member concerned whilst the complaints procedure is in progress.

### Procedure Structure

#### **Stage 1 – Informal Complaint**

Most complaints are easily resolved informally by discussion with staff at the school; more difficult or complex concerns may take more than one discussion.

The complaint will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt, and a target date for providing a formal response will be given. This will normally be within 5 working days following acknowledgement.

Procedure for initial contact by office staff or a member of the teaching staff:

1. Listen to, and record, in writing, basic details of complaint.
2. Decide upon the appropriate person to pass information on to, or who should deal with the complaint.
3. An appropriate member of staff interviews complainant or makes telephone contact.
4. Complaint listened to and details recorded.
5. Member of staff decides upon action to be taken including who needs to be seen, what information is required, possible further interviews, decision on urgency of action and timescale to work to:



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Action to be taken:

1. Speak to those involved in complaint.
  2. Speak to witnesses if required.
  3. Take written statements if required.
- If possible, collect sufficient evidence to make an objective decision about the complaint. Is the matter concluded?
  - If yes, agree action, communicate with complainant. If no, refer to higher authority or repeat procedure.
  - If the complaint cannot be resolved at this stage, the parent should be informed how to move on to the formal stage of the complaints procedure by making a formal written complaint to the Head of Primary, Head of Secondary, Deputy Head or Headmaster (Stage 2).

## **Stage 2 – Formal Written Complaint**

The Headmaster will carry out an investigation or instruct the Deputy Head or other Senior Leaders to carry out an investigation and respond to the complainant.

The complaint will be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt, and a target date for providing a formal response will be given. This will normally be within 5 working days following acknowledgement.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Headmaster will report the matter to the CEO and legal advice may be sought.

The Headmaster may request to meet the complainant to gain further information relevant to the complaint. Parents may be accompanied by one advisor if they so wish to any meeting with the Headmaster. In cases where an advisor will accompany parents the name and profession of the advisor must be submitted to the Headmaster before the meeting.

Statements from witnesses will be collected where necessary and witnesses or other staff members may be called to any meeting with the complainants, at the Headmaster's discretion.

When all the relevant facts have been established, the Headmaster may either call a meeting with the complainant and provide a verbal response, or produce a written response to the complainant, as considered appropriate. It is recommended that the Headmaster provides a written response.

The Headmaster shall decide whether the complaint is upheld or not and, if so, is of a minor nature, a serious nature, or constitutes gross misconduct in the case of a complaint about staff. In the light of the conclusions of the investigation the Headmaster shall decide what sanction to apply or actions to take in accordance with the school procedures. Reference should be made, when appropriate, to relevant school documents including the contract between the school and the parents, *the School Rules, the Staff Code of Conduct, ICT policies, the Staff Disciplinary Procedures, Pupil Sanctions and Behaviour Policies and the School Exclusions Policy.*



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All stages of the formal procedures should be conducted as speedily as possible in the interests of parties concerned. Time limits in this procedure may be varied by mutual consent. As indicated above the complaint should be resolved within 5 working days from acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint.

If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, the complainant will be given the option to move the process to Stage 3.

### **Stage 3 – Executive Body Hearing**

The complainant may make a complaint to the CEO and Chairman of the King's Group Board within 7 days of the receipt of the outcome of the original formal complaint from the school. The complaint must set out the grounds for appealing the outcome of the formal complaint.

The Chief Executive will review the formal complaint with members of the King's Group Board or School Council not involved in the earlier formal process. They will decide whether a formal panel hearing should be held. The Chief Executive's decision should be communicated within 7 days from acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint. In the case of a panel hearing the Chief Executive will arrange the panel hearing within 21 days.

Should a Panel Hearing with the King's Group Board be held, the complainant will be informed of the time, date and venue of the hearing and they may choose to be accompanied by one independent advisor if they so wish. The Headmaster may attend such a meeting as a witness and be accompanied by an advisor. The panel should include three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the earlier formal complaint. At least one member of the panel should be independent of the management of the school.

The name and profession of any advisor accompanying the parents or the Headmaster must be submitted to the panel no less than 7 days before the panel hearing.

If new facts emerge during the Panel Hearing, the Chair of the Panel Hearing should decide whether further investigation is required. If it is, the hearing should be adjourned and reconvened when the investigation is complete. A timeline and date for the recommencement of the hearing must be given to all parties concerned.

Following the conclusion of evidence the Panel should call an adjournment before reaching a decision and come to a clear view about the facts and, if they are disputed, decide on the balance of probability what version of the facts is true and if appropriate what sanction applies.

A final decision including findings and recommendations will be made and communicated to the complainant (in writing) and to any person directly involved within the complaint, the Headmaster and the proprietor within seven days of the conclusion of the hearing.



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## Record-Keeping

Complaints are recorded in the Complaints File or in the iSams database. Any correspondence, statements and records will be kept securely and confidentially unless the College or Company is legally forced to share them with an agency or other body.

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