

King Edward VI High School for Girls Complaints Procedure

King Edward VI High School for Girls
COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

KEHS 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.

This policy is available on the KEHS website (www.kehs.org.uk) and is also available on request from the school office. In this policy "parents" includes current parents and may at the School's discretion include a parent whose daughter has recently left the School.

We aim to resolve any complaints in a timely manner. Timescales for each stage are set out below in the relevant paragraphs. When we refer to **school working days**, we mean Monday to Friday, when School is open during term time. The dates of terms are published on the School's website.

Application

This Procedure applies to complaints from parents of current pupils and to parents of former pupils if the complaint was raised when the pupil was registered at the School.

This procedure relates to complaints other than those relating to: whistleblowing; staff grievances and disciplinary procedures; matters likely to warrant a child protection investigation; applications for admission to the school; and complaints about services provided by third parties using school facilities or premises. Issues relating to exclusion or removal of pupils are dealt with through the review provisions of the Exclusions, Removal and Review Policy.

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 daughter'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 him or her to consult a Head of Department, a Pastoral co-ordinator, a member of the Leadership Team or the Principal.
- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, a Pastoral co-ordinator, or a member of the Leadership Team will usually be dealt with by them personally, unless they deem it more appropriate to ask the Form Teacher or subject teacher to respond.
- If a complaint refers to a member of the Leadership Team, it should be made to the Principal. If the complaint refers to the Principal, it should be made to the Chair of the Independent Schools' Governing Body ('ISGB').

- The person dealing with the complaint will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved **within ten school working days** or in the event that the member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents may 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 to the Principal without delay and at most within 15 school days of the conclusion of Stage 1 above. The parents should state in the letter that they want the matter to be dealt with under the Stage 2 procedure. The complaint will be acknowledged within **five school working days**. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- It may be necessary for the Principal to carry out further investigations and she will usually appoint a member of the Leadership Team act as investigator. The investigator may request additional information from the parents and will probably wish to speak to them personally and to others who have knowledge of the circumstances. The investigator will prepare a report on the investigation which will be considered by the Principal.
- Once the Principal 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, usually **within twenty school working days** from the receipt of the complaint. The Principal 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.
- In the event of a formal complaint about the Principal, it should be addressed to the Chair of ISGB who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. In all cases, the Chair will inform parents of his decision within 20 school working days of receipt of the complaint.
- Written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint will be kept securely in school.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents are dissatisfied with the Principal's decision under Stage 2, they should put their request for a Panel Hearing in writing to the Chair of ISGB, c/o the Foundation Office, Edgbaston Park Road, Birmingham, B15 2UD **within ten school working days** of the decision complained of. It is not possible to move to this stage without completing Stage 2 of this procedure.
- The Clerk to the Governors will convene a meeting of the Review Panel. They will, on behalf of the Panel, acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and within fifteen school working days.

- The Review 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. The Panel members shall be appointed by the Clerk to the Governors and one of them will be appointed to be the Chair of the Panel.
- If the Review 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 working days** prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative or friend. The Panel hearing is not legal proceedings and so legal representation is not necessary. If the parents do wish to be accompanied by someone who is legally qualified, they should notify the Chair of the Review Panel of this at least **five school working days** prior to the hearing. The parents should note that the Panel will wish to speak to them directly and this person will not be permitted to act as an advocate.
- **At least two school working days** before the Review Panel hearing, the Principal will provide a statement to the Review Panel and to the parents of the circumstances of the case and the action she has taken so far.
- The parents, and friend and pupil if attending, will come before the Review Panel at the same time as the Principal. When it is agreed that all have read and understood the Principal's statement, the parents will make their statement, identifying the factors which give grounds for their complaint. There will be an opportunity for clarification and discussion of the points raised by all concerned.
- The parent, the Principal and, where relevant, the person complained about will be given a written copy of the Review Panel's findings and recommendations within five school working days. The findings of the panel will be final.
- A copy will be filed in school for inspection on the premises only by the Chair of ISGB and the Principal.
- The correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education & Skills Act 2008 requests access to them. The School will provide upon request to the Independent Schools' Inspectorate a written record of all formal complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

Parents have the right to contact the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) if they have a complaint that has not concluded to their satisfaction through the School's Complaints Procedure. ISI can be contacted at concerns@isi.net, on 020 7600 0100 or at the following address:

Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9 - 12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA

It is expected that complaints will go through the School's Complaints Procedure before ISI is contacted.

Record of complaints

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school will maintain a written record of all formal complaints and of whether they are resolved at Stage 2 or proceed to a Panel hearing. The written record will also include a record of the action taken by the school as a result of these complaints.

Matters raised by parents during 2016 were all resolved at stage 1.

This procedure was reviewed by Governors in June 2017 and will be reviewed again in June 2018.

The Principal is responsible for the monitoring and review of the Complaints Procedure.

The implementation and review of the school's Complaints Procedure is presented to the Risk & Compliance Committee of the ISGB.