



CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

This policy is available on the school website and on request from the School Office.

Kingston Grammar School prides itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its students and we welcome suggestions and comments from parents, which may enable us to improve what we do. If, however, parents do have a complaint they can expect it to be treated by the School with care and in accordance with this procedure. For clarity, a complaint is any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school.

At Kingston Grammar School we aim to:

- Take complaints seriously
- Respond to complaints within a reasonable timeframe and in a courteous and efficient manner
- Use any complaint as an opportunity to learn and thereby improve the School
- Take any action where appropriate

The Informal Process

We hope to resolve most complaints and concerns quickly and informally. In the first instance a complaint or concern should be raised with your child's Head of Year. The matter will be investigated and the Head of Year will respond to you as soon as reasonably possible, usually within 10 working days. We hope in the vast majority of cases the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to everyone's satisfaction.

The Formal Process

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then you should put your complaint in writing to the Deputy Heads or, in the case of a financial query, to the Bursar. If the complaint is against the Head Master, you should refer your complaint directly to the Chair of Governors.



The complaint should include full written details of the nature of the complaint, any relevant supporting documents and details of any members of staff you have already spoken to. The School will endeavour to acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days of receipt. The staff concerned will make a written record of complaints; this record will include the date on which the complaint was received.

We will conduct any investigation necessary and would expect to resolve the matter in a written response to you within 10 working days.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome you may refer your complaint in writing to the Head Master or, in the case of a complaint against the Head Master, the Chair of Governors. This should also include full written details of the nature of the complaint, any relevant supporting documents and details of any members of staff you have already spoken to.

The Head Master, or Chair of Governors, will consider the complaint and decide the appropriate course of action to take within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. The Head Master, or Chair of Governors, may ask a senior member of staff to act as investigator. Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Head Master, or Chair of Governors, is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and you will be informed of the decision in writing, giving reasons for the decision. We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least will understand the situation more fully and be assured that your concerns have been fully considered.

Right of Appeal - Panel Hearing

If you are still not happy with the outcome, then you may within 10 working days of receipt of the response letter write to the Clerk to the Governing Body requesting an appeal hearing. The appeal letter should set out in full the reasons for the appeal, the reasons why you consider the response you received to be unacceptable; include copies of all documents you wish to be considered or rely on; state what action you wish to be substituted in place of the response; state whether you wish to have an oral hearing or whether the panel may deal with the matter based on written submissions.

The Panel

The Clerk to the Governors will liaise with the Chair or, in the case of a complaint against the Head Master, the Vice Chair of Governors to convene a panel of at least three members who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and who do not know you or your child, consisting of two Governors and a member who is independent of the management and running of the School. One member of the panel shall serve as panel Chair.



The Clerk to the Governors will notify you and the Head Master or Chairman of Governors of the names of the panel members.

The panel will consider the complaint and will decide the appropriate course of action to take and timescales, as soon as practicable. The panel will have sole and full authority to determine the outcome of the appeal and all matters of procedure arising in the course of the appeal whether or not provided for in this procedure. If possible the panel will resolve your complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it should be carried out.

The panel will not normally sit during school holidays.

The panel may require that: 1. further particulars of the complaint be supplied by the parents, copies of which will be supplied to the Head Master; 2. the Head Master provides a written explanation of the original response and any other issues raised by the parents in their appeal or their further particulars of complaint, together with copies of any documents (except see below) on which she intends to rely, copies will be supplied to the parent. In each case the parent or the Head will be given 10 days to respond.

In exceptional circumstances where disclosure of documents by the Head Master will disclose information about other pupils, in breach of their rights under the data protection act or for reasons of Child Protection and where redacting names would not be adequate, copies of these documents may be supplied to the panel only.

Arrangements for the Hearing

A Panel Hearing will take place within 21 working days of receipt of an appeal hearing request. The Clerk to the Governors will prepare a bundle of papers for transmission to you, the Head Master, or Chair of Governors, and the panel members.

The Clerk to the Governors will give you and the Head Master, or Chair of Governors, not less than 5 working days' notice of the date, time and place of the meeting to hear the appeal, whether or not you have requested an oral hearing.

One other person who may be a relative, teacher, work colleague or friend may accompany both you and the Head Master, or Chair of Governors, to the Hearing. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

The panel may retain the services of a Clerk (usually the Clerk to the Governors), who may make written records of the hearing, but shall take no part in deciding the appeal.



Hearing procedure

The hearing shall take place in private and everything said during its course shall be confidential. No audio recording may be made of the proceedings.

The parent and the Head Master will address the panel separately. No cross-examination by the other party will be permitted. If the parent requested an oral hearing, they will address the panel first. The Panel may question either party.

Neither party will be entitled to put before the panel any document which has not previously been submitted, unless the panel consents otherwise. Such consent shall only be given in exceptional circumstances. The panel shall not usually hear witnesses unless there is no reasonable and fair alternative method of establishing a disputed fact.

Outcome of the Hearing

After due consideration of all the facts the panel will make a decision and may make recommendations. The panel Chair will record the findings and recommendations in writing, setting out the decision and the reasons for it. A copy of the findings and recommendations will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. This will normally be sent out within 14 days of the panel hearing. A copy of the findings and recommendations will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Head Master and Chair of Governors.

The panel may make its decision by a majority.

The panel's decision shall be final, shall be binding on both you and the Head Master and shall not be subject to any further appeal.

Record Keeping

A written record will be kept of all complaints that are made whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing. A record will also be kept of any action taken by the School as a result of a complaint (regardless of whether or not a complaint is upheld).

Confidentiality

1. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints are treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records 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.



2. In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will be kept for as long as is considered to be reasonably necessary in the circumstances.
3. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure in the preceding school year is available from the Clerk to the Governors by writing to:

Clerk of the Governors
Kingston Grammar School
70 London Road
Kingston upon Thames
KT2 6PY

NOTES

Reference to 'working' days will be taken to mean Monday to Friday during term time, including INSET days.