

KES (Senior School, Junior School and Pre-Prep) COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

The three schools which make up King Edward's School endeavour to maintain and improve constantly the high quality of teaching, academic standards, pastoral care and extra-curricular programmes for which they have earned such a good reputation. Consequently, the School aims to respond sensitively to parental complaints. The following published procedure sets out both the process which the School expects parents to use to register any complaint and, similarly, the process which parents can expect the School to adopt in responding to any complaint.

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 initially contact their son's/daughter's Form Teacher/Tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Teacher/Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult:
 - ~ in the Pre-Prep, the Head
 - ~ in the Junior School, the Deputy Head or Head
 - ~ in the Senior School, a Head of Department, Head of Year/Sector, one of the Deputy Heads, Second Master or Headmaster.
- Complaints made directly to the Head of the Pre-Prep/ Head or Deputy Head of the Junior School/ Head of King Edward's, Second Master, Deputy Heads, or Heads of Year/Sector/Department will usually be referred to the relevant Form Teacher/Tutor unless it is deemed appropriate to be dealt with initially at a higher level.
- The teacher (at whatever level of seniority) handling 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 5 working days or if the Form Teacher and the parent 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

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head of the relevant school who will log it formally on a central log. The Head of that school will consider the complaint and decide (in the case of the Pre-Prep and Junior Schools in consultation with the Headmaster of King Edward's) the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head of the relevant school will meet or telephone the parents concerned, normally within 5 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head of the relevant school to carry out further investigations.
- The Head of the relevant school will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head of the school concerned is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made (in the case of the Pre-Prep and Junior Schools in consultation with the Headmaster of King Edward's) and parents will be informed of this decision, and the reasons for this decision, in writing.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3. Intervention of Chairman of Governors

- In the event of a complaint against the Headmaster, or in the event of a complainant remaining dissatisfied, the matter should be referred formally to the Chairman of Governors via the Bursar who acts as Clerk to the Governors.
- The Chairman will call for a full report from the Headmaster, and for all relevant documents. On the basis of these, the Chairman may decide to call for a briefing from individual members of staff.
- As he/she starts work on the case, he/she will write to the parents, informing them of the action being taken, and whether or not he/she intends to call a meeting.
- Should a meeting be called, it will normally involve
 - the Chairman of Governors
 - at least one other Governor
 - the Headmaster and at the most one other member of staff
 - the parents

- The Chairman, after questioning and listening to the parents and the Headmaster, and in consultation with his/her fellow Governor, will come to a decision as to whether the complaint is justified, what action is required, and how and when it should be implemented.
- The Chairman will inform the parents and any other affected parties of these deliberations in writing.
- If the parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 4 of this procedure.

Stage 4 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 4 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Chairman of Governors, who is authorised by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of two Governors not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and a third member who is entirely independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chairman of Governors. The Chairman of Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 7 working days.
- If the 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 2 working days prior to the hearing.
- The Parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 3 working days of the Hearing. The Panel will advise the Chairman of Governors of their decision and she/he will write to the parents informing them of their decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel is final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

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