

COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy forms part of our Parent-School Issues Policy (please see full list of policies on the website)

Complaints

(Ref: ISI Handbook, part 7; ISSR 25)

- 6.16 The King's School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes seriously complaints and concerns that they might raise. A complaint will always be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which requires a response. We wish to ensure that:
- parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so
 - we are able to resolve concerns and complaints informally where at all possible
 - we respond to complaints quickly and in a courteous and efficient manner
 - parents realise that we take complaints seriously
 - we take action where appropriate
- 6.17 This procedure should not be invoked where complaint is against expulsion or removal of a pupil from the school when parents should request a review of the Headmaster's decision under the review procedure.

Informal procedure for complaints

(Ref: ISI Handbook, part 7; ISSR 25)

- 6.18 The first point of call for most complaints or comment is likely to be the pupil's Form Tutor (hereafter referred to as tutor). The tutor may report to the relevant Head of Year (Deputy Head or Head of Junior School or Head of Sixth Form). Depending on the seriousness of the complaint, parents may wish to copy it to the Head of Year who will in any event be informed by the tutor of any complaint. The Headmaster (or Head of Junior School) will normally only become involved if recourse to the tutor, Head of Year or Deputy Head Pastoral/Academic has failed to produce a result with which the person making the complaint is happy.
- 6.19 As a general point, staff will always try to be in a position to take and respond to telephone calls. However, most staff spend a majority of their day in the classroom and so it usually preferable, if a complaint is not urgent, to make it in writing or by email.
- 6.20 Sometimes specific complaints need to be directed to specific people. The list below cannot be exhaustive and if in doubt please contact the school. At all times parents have the right to raise complaints with the Headmaster should they so wish.
- 6.20.1 Complaints regarding the academic, pastoral or social progress of a pupil should be made in the first instance to the tutor.
- 6.20.2 If a complaint relates to a member of staff, it is always helpful if the matter can be raised first with the member of staff concerned. Should that prove difficult or impossible the Headmaster should be contacted.
- 6.20.3 Any complaints or concerns regarding fees, or specifically financial matters, should be raised direct with the Bursar in the first instance, as should any complaints regarding health and safety matters or catering.
- 6.20.4 Worries, concerns and complaints relating to transport should be directed to the Deputy Head or Head of Junior School as appropriate.
- 6.20.5 Complaints about medical matters should be referred in the first instance to the school nurse.
- 6.21 All complaints should receive a response within five working days. In many cases the person contacted will need to discuss the matter with other people and consider it further before responding. The response will give the outcome of the complaint, the reasons for the conclusion and will state any action taken or proposed.
- 6.22 A written record is kept of all complaints and the date on which they were received; the record is kept centrally in the Headmaster's office.

Formal procedure for complaints

(Sections 6.16 – 6.30 are also in Quick links) *(Ref: ISI Handbook, part 7; ISSR 25)*

- 6.23 If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, or if you feel that your concerns have not been fully and fairly considered, you should write to the Headmaster who will undertake a full investigation into the matter and report back to you.
- 6.24 The Headmaster will meet you within seven days of receiving the complaint to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- 6.25 The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- 6.26 If you remain dissatisfied, or if your complaint was against the Headmaster and has not in your opinion been dealt with satisfactorily, you should write to the chairman of the governors who will refer the complaint to the school's conciliation committee. The committee will be convened and will meet within three weeks of the Chairman being informed. The convenor of this committee is always a member of the governing body who is not chairman, assisted by another member of the governing body and a third person who shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The members of the committee will not have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. It is their task to look at issues in an impartial and confidential manner.
- 6.27 The committee convenor will invite you to a meeting. This will be attended by the Headmaster and, where relevant and possible, those against whom the complaint has been made. You will be asked if there are any papers you would like to have circulated beforehand. You will be invited to bring a friend along with you. Legal representation would not be appropriate. The convenor will attempt to reach a resolution of the complaint and will notify you of the outcome in writing within fourteen days of the meeting.
- 6.28 The committee will make a group decision and agree findings and recommendations, a copy of which will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. A copy of the decision will be available for inspection on the school premises by the governors and the Headmaster. A record of action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether it is upheld) will be kept.
- 6.29 Formal complaints during the Academic Year 2013 – 2014: none.
Formal complaints during the Academic Year 2014 – 2015: two.

Confidentiality of complaints

(Sections 6.16 – 6.30 are also in Quick links) *(Ref: ISI Handbook, part 7; ISSR 25)*

- 6.30.1 Your complaint will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to those directly involved. It is school policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children. We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to occur where a pupil's

safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police, or as otherwise required by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 or by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families. You would at all times be kept fully informed.

6.30.2 An exception to the confidentiality of complaints will be made where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

6.30.3 We reserve the right not to pursue anonymous complaints.