

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

Kingsmead School has always aspired to be a school with a Christian ethos and a caring, family atmosphere. This being the case, most problems are resolved quickly and easily. However, if parents do have a complaint, they may expect it to be treated by the school with care and in accordance with this procedure. Kingsmead School makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the school's website and in the school office during the school day, and will ensure that parents of pupils and prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published on the school website and available from the school office.

In accordance with paragraph 32 (1) (b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Kingsmead School will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate, details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the school is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do so something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you [or your child] raises in good faith.

The three-stages Complaint Procedure

- Stage 1 – Informal resolution
- Stage 2 - Formal resolution
- Stage 3 - Panel hearing

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- a) It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- b) If parents have a complaint, they should contact their child's form teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway, to the satisfaction of all concerned. If the form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary to consult the Head of Department (Infants, Juniors or Senior Master).
- c) Complaints made direct to a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) will usually be referred to the relevant form teacher, unless the SMT member decides to deal with the matter personally.
- d) We aim to acknowledge receipt of any complaints within 48 hours during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.
- e) The form teacher 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 15 days if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods,

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and in the event that the form teacher and parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

- f) If however, the complaint is against the Headmaster, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chairman of Governors, Mr T Turvey, marked Private and Confidential. The complaint should be sent to the school address.

Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

- a) If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- b) All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within five working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 28 days if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.
- c) In most cases, the Headmaster will speak to the parents concerned to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- d) It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- e) The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- f) Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headmaster will also give reasons for his decision.
- g) If the complaint is against the Headmaster, the Chairman of Governors will call for a full report from the Headmaster and for all the relevant documents. The Chairman may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chairman is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chairman will give reasons for his/her decision.
- h) If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure by writing to The Chairman, c/o Kingsmead School, Bertram Drive, Hoylake CH47 0LL requesting a Panel Hearing.

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

- a) If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the particular person appointed by the Governors (the Convenor) who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- b) The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters details in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Governors. The three panel members will not be directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint within 48 hours and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 25 days if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.
- b) 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 10 days prior to the hearing.

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- c) The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- d) 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.
- e) After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 15 days of the Hearing.
- f) The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it within 5 working days of the hearing (although additional time may be required if it necessary to carry out further investigations following the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chairman of Governors and the Headmaster. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Chairman of Governors and Headmaster.
- g) The panel will provide the parents at the conclusion of the final stage of the complaint the name and address of a certified alternative dispute resolution (ADR) entity.

Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within 48 hours if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 28 days if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 28 days, if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld). At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

Date when the issue was raised

- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

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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 and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

Kingsmead School will provide ISI/Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least three years.

Parents may complain directly to Ofsted or to ISI if they believe the provider is not meeting the **EYFS** requirements:

- Independent School's Inspectorate ISI. (www.isi.net/)
Independent Schools Inspectorate
Ground Floor
CAP House
9-12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA Tel: 020 7600 0100
Email: concerns@isi.net

- Parents of EYFS children may wish to raise their concerns with
OFSTED
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD Tel: 0300 123 4234
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
(www.ofsted.gov.uk)

- Parents may wish to raise their concerns with the Local Authority Designated Officer regarding any complaint concerning the welfare of pupils.
Suzanne Cottrell
Area Team Leader
Children and Young People's Department, Wirral
Hamilton Building
Conway Street
Birkenhead
Wirral
CH41 4FD

Please also refer to the school's Safeguarding Policy available on the school's website.

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Appendix For complaints relating to Foundation Stage or after school care provided to children aged 8 or below.

Complaints relating to the categories of children mentioned above must be dealt with using the "Provider Complaints Record", a copy of which is attached.

Staff members are asked to note the following points as they fill in the complaints record:

When completing the record you should bear in mind it may be shared with a parent who asks to see it as well as with ISI or Ofsted. It is important to maintain appropriate confidentiality when filling in the record. This means that you should not name the person making the complaint or any persons (adults or children) that relate to the complaint.

1. The record is intended only for complaints relating to the national standards. You must record here one or more national standards to which the complaint refers. If you are unsure you should refer to your national standards and the accompanying guidance. You must record all details associated with the complaint, taking care not to name individuals. For example, use "child A", "staff member B".
2. You must share an account of the findings of your investigation and the action, if any, that you took or you intend to take as a result of your investigations with parents at the school. You must do this within 28 days from the date the complaint was made. You can do this by sharing this record. If they ask you to do so, or if you think it is appropriate, you should send a separate letter to the parent who made the complaint giving more details.

Compiled	March 2011	M G Gibbons
Reviewed	March 2014	M G Gibbons
Approved	30/10/11 and 13.11.12 March 2014 September 2014	T Turvey (Governor) All Governors (Main Board) D Renison (Governor)
Revised	September 2015	T Evans
Circulated	Autumn 2011	School P Drive/Website

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Early Years Provider Complaints Record.

DATE OF COMPLAINT			
A: Source of complaint			
Parent (in Writing, including e-mail) ⁵	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff member	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent (in person)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent (phone call)	<input type="checkbox"/>	OFSTED (Include complaint number if known)	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other (Please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>
B: Nature of complaint (Please tick all specific legal requirements that the complaint relates to)			
Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare			
Suitable people			
Suitable premises			
Organisation			
Documentation			
Please give details of the complaint:			
C: How it was dealt with			
Internal investigation	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Investigation by OFSTED	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Investigation by other agencies (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

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Please give details of any internal investigation or attach any outcome letter from Ofsted

D: Actions and outcomes		
Internal actions	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Actions agreed with Ofsted	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Changes to conditions of registration	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other action taken by Ofsted	<input type="checkbox"/>	
No action	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Actions imposed or agreed with other agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Please give details

Has copy of this record been shared with parents? YES/NO

Name of recorder	Outcome notified to parent (within 28 days)⁶
Position: Name: Signature:	Date completed

⁵Regulations require providers to investigate all complaints notified to them, in writing, by a parent of a child attending the setting.

⁶regulations require providers to give an account of the findings of the investigation into the complaint and any action taken to the parent who made the complaint, within 28 days of the complaint