

Complaints Policy

Introduction

The aim of Kingsdown School's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Every complaint is a matter of serious concern to Kingsdown School and will be investigated with due urgency and thoroughness. The school will not investigate anonymous complaints or allegations but confidentiality will be respected. Kingsdown School is committed to taking concerns seriously at the earliest possible stage and taking action to try to prevent a reoccurrence of the problem. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow the school's formal complaints procedure.

If you do not understand any part of this policy please do not hesitate to contact the head teacher or the Chair of Governors (please contact the school office in confidence to obtain contact details). Your complaint will then be investigated fully, ensuring all relevant facts are taken into consideration.

Raising a Concern

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. On some occasions the concern may require investigation or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within a day or two. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. If you are not satisfied with the outcome at this stage, please put your concerns in writing to the head teacher.

Registering a Formal Complaint

Formal complaints should be put in writing to the head teacher or chairman of governors. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The school will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 school working days of receiving it. In many cases this response will also report on the action the school has taken to resolve the issue.

Alternatively a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. This meeting will normally take place within 10 school working days. The aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome at this stage, please contact the school within 10 school working days of getting our response and tell us why you are still not satisfied and what you would like the school to do.

Further Investigation

The head teacher will arrange for further investigation and provide you with an opportunity to meet, to supplement any information provided previously. If you intend to be accompanied by a friend, relative or other representative it is desirable that notice of such accompaniment be given in advance. As part of this investigation the head teacher will interview witnesses and take statements from those involved. At the end of the investigation the head teacher will write to you with a full response including details of what action the school will take to resolve the complaint and what to do if you are still not satisfied with the outcome.

If you are still not satisfied you will need to write to the Chair of Governors within 20 school working days of receiving the letter.

Contacting the Governing Body

If the matter has still not been resolved you will need to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint (contact details available in confidence from the school office). Each governing body has a complaints committee who hear and make a decision about formal complaints which have not been resolved either at the informal stage or following an investigation by the head teacher.

A hearing will be arranged within 15 school working days of receipt of your letter.

The Hearing

The aim of the hearing is to resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. Any documents from either yourself or the head teacher to be considered by the committee, and the names of any witnesses who might be called must be received by the clerk at least 5 working days before the meeting. The agenda, plus copies of any papers submitted will be sent to the complaints committee members, the head teacher and yourself at least 3 working days before the meeting date. In addition, the head teacher will copy relevant papers to any members of staff named in your complaint.

You will be invited to attend the meeting and bring with you a friend or representative. (If you intend to be represented you will need to advise the clerk to the governors prior to the meeting)

The committee will be made up of governors who have not previously had any involvement with your complaint.

The head teacher will attend and may bring a friend or representative. Other members of staff may be asked to be present, they also have the right to bring a friend or representative.

A clerk will record details of the hearing and the decision reached.

You will be given the opportunity to explain your complaint, and the head teacher will be given the opportunity to explain the school's response. You will have the opportunity to question the head teacher and/or other members of staff about the school's response and the head teacher will be able to question you about your complaint.

The committee will question both you and the head teacher. Witnesses may be called (subject to the approval of the Chairperson of the Committee) and all parties will have the right to question all the witnesses.

The governors will consider your complaint on the basis of the papers they have received together with what is said at the meeting.

If either you or the school representatives do not attend the meeting, the chairperson has discretion to proceed or to adjourn at any stage.

The Outcome

The governors will consider your complaint and all the evidence presented and will reach a decision.

The committee can uphold your complaint in full, uphold it in part or dismiss it.

The Chairperson of the Committee will send you and the head teacher a statement outlining the decision within 5 school working days of the meeting confirming the final decision. The head teacher will copy relevant papers to any members of staff named in the complaint.

If you are still dissatisfied after the completion of the formal hearing stage you may contact the Local Authority (contact details may be obtained from the school office at any time.)

Review of Complaints

The governing body will monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary.

The head teacher will make an anonymised report of any official complaints in the Head teacher's Report to Governors. As well as addressing an individual's complaints, the process of listening to and resolving complaints will contribute to school improvement. When individual complaints are heard the governing body may identify underlying issues that need to be addressed. The monitoring and review of complaints by the school and the governing body will be a useful tool in evaluating the school's performance.

Publicising the Procedure

A copy of this policy is available from the school office.

Written by: Linda Sadler - March 2011

Reviewed by: Linda Sadler - October 2013

Ratified by: The Governing Body - December 2013