

PARENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

POLICY STATEMENT

Queen's College has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. Nevertheless, parents may occasionally have concerns they wish to raise and the School will receive these concerns in a positive and constructive manner. While parents will often wish to raise issues on behalf of their children, there may be issues which pupils will wish to raise on their own behalf and which are best raised by them and they will also be dealt with in a positive and constructive manner. Further information about pupil complaints can be found in Pupils Complaints Procedure Policy. Complaints from both parents and pupils will be treated as equally important and serious and should follow the procedure outlined below.

Complaints from Parents

Stage 1 – Initial Actions

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally in the first instance contact their son/daughter's Tutor/Houseparent. It may be advantageous in appropriate cases to hold a preliminary meeting with the Chaplain. In many cases, this will enable the speedy resolution of the problem to the parents' satisfaction. If the Tutor/Houseparent cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for [*him/her*] to consult another senior member of staff (for example, the Chaplain, Director of Studies, Assistant Head Pastoral).
- Complaints made directly to a Deputy Head/the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant Tutor/Houseparent unless the Deputy Head/the Headmaster deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- The Tutor/Houseparent will keep written records of all meetings, interviews and telephone conversations held in relation to the complaint and the action(s) taken to resolve it. Should the matter not be resolved within 7 days or in the event that the Tutor/Houseparent and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution the complaint will be referred to the Headmaster by a brief written report by the Tutor/Houseparent, copied to the parent.

Stage 2 – Parents referred to the Headmaster for informal resolution as per above

- The Headmaster will meet/speak to the parents concerned, as soon as possible after receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headmaster to carry out further investigations.
- The Headmaster will keep written records of all meetings, interviews and telephone conversations held in relation to the complaint.

- 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 parents will be informed of this decision (in writing). The Headmaster will also give reasons for his/her decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they may lodge an appeal to the Governors.

Stage 3 – Appeal Hearing

- To lodge an appeal, the parents should write, outlining the basis of their complaint, to the Bursar, as Clerk to the Governors, formally requesting that the complaint be considered by the Governors' Complaints Panel.
- The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the College. Each of the panel members shall be appointed by the Board 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 14 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 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 but must be someone who is not involved with the complaint. Legal representation is not appropriate or necessary at this stage.
- 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 2 days of the Hearing. The Panel's decision(s) and, if any, recommendations, together with the reasons for them, will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmaster, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of. The decision of the Panel will be final.
- Wherever possible the recommendations of the Panel will be adopted by the College without delay, however there may be circumstances where the Board of Governors is not able to carry out these recommendations due to legal constraints or where to do so would, in their view, be of significant detriment to the College. In the event of the Governors deciding not to carry out or part of a recommendation of the panel, the Finance Director, as the Clerk to the Governors will inform the parents in writing with the reasons for the non-adoption of the recommendation.

- If in view of the parents the complaint has not been adequately resolved by the Complaints Panel, they may wish to take appropriate legal advice.

Confidentiality

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

It will be made clear to all concerned that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children and similarly that complaints raised by pupils should not rebound on them or on other pupils.

It may be possible to deal with a problem without naming individuals. However it may be impractical to investigate a complaint without identifying the member of staff or the child and in these instances, the complaint will be dealt with as sensitively as possible.