

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, LONDON

(Including Early Years Foundation Stage)



Complaints

POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Staff Handbook Ref: 21.

Introduction

Queen's College London and Queen's College Preparatory School pride themselves on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to their pupils. However, if parents of pupils who are at the school do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure. Complaints will be considered individually and not from a group.

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- It is generally hoped that complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their daughter's form tutor/teacher or relevant member of staff, who will discuss the matter with them and will investigate the complaint as necessary. If the member of staff dealing with the complaint cannot resolve it alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a senior member of staff for assistance.
- Complaints initially brought to the attention of a senior member of staff may be referred to the relevant teacher, or will be dealt with directly as part of the stage one process.
- All complaints will initially be dealt with informally, whether made verbally or in writing.
- The staff member(s) dealing with the complaint will make a note of the complaint and the date on which it was received. Should the matter not be resolved within ten working days then parents may continue to seek to resolve the issue at an informal level by asking for further assistance, possibly from the Principal/Headmistress asking for further investigations to be made. Alternatively they may chose to pursue the complaint formally in accordance with stage 2.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then parents should put their complaint in writing stating they wish to make a formal complaint to the Principal/Headmistress. The Principal/Headmistress will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Principal/Headmistress will meet/speak with the parents concerned to discuss the complaint within five working days of receiving the complaint and within 15 working days if this has not been possible. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Principal/Headmistress to carry out further investigations.
- The Principal/Headmistress will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Principal/Headmistress 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 Principal/Headmistress will always give reasons for her decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they may proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure and should let the Principal/Headmistress know they wish to do so within 5 working days of being given the Principal/Headmistress's decision following Stage 2.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Chairman of the Council of Queen's College.
- The matter will then be referred to a Complaints Panel for consideration. 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 school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Council of Queen's College London. The Chair of the Panel will then acknowledge the complaint and will schedule a

hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within twenty 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 5 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. Parents are to inform the Principal/Headmistress if they are to be accompanied by a person with a legal qualification. Staff may be accompanied too, eg by a union representative.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will adjourn the hearing for no more than ten working days, and the further investigation will be carried out by the Principal/Headmistress. Any further facts arising from the investigation will be placed before the Panel when the hearing is reconvened. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within a further ten working days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Principal/Headmistress, the Council members and, where relevant, the person complained of. The findings and recommendation of the panel will be available for inspection on the premises by the Chairman of the Council and the Principal/Headmistress.
- Parents who wish to do so can make a complaint to the Independent Schools' Inspectorate at ISI, First Floor, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1 9HA.

Timings

There will be times during the school holidays and when key personnel are not available, that it will be difficult to comply with stipulated timings. In these circumstances, in the interest of justice, all parties may agree to adjust the timing of procedures with the understanding there must be no undue delay.

Correspondence

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be retained for a minimum of three years and kept confidential except to the extent required by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003, by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, or where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or under other legal authority.

Summary

Parents can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially, and hopefully they will be settled informally and amicably.

This policy is reviewed each year by the Council of Queen's College at its AGM.