



Queen Mary's Grammar School

A statement of our policy on

Complaints

Approved by the LGB, December 2018

Introduction

This policy aims to ensure that all complaints from parents are dealt with as quickly and sensitively as possible and by the person best able to do so. It is recognised that most complaints can be, and should, dealt with as informally as possible. For this reason, complaints will not be investigated if they relate to matters that occurred over 12 months earlier.

Types concerns and complaints

The majority of complaints likely to be received by a school fall into the following categories:

- Financial and administrative;
- Academic (curriculum, unsatisfactory teaching, homework, progress in a particular subject etc);
- Pastoral (discipline, sanctions, bullying, general unhappiness etc).

This policy should not be used for the following, which will otherwise be dealt with as indicated:

- complaints by staff relating to grievances about their employment; (dealt with under the separate staff grievance procedure);
- complaints about the actions of a governor; (dealt with by a report to the Chair of the Governing Body or the Clerk to the Governors, who may be contacted care of the school);
- complaints about the actions of another parent; (dealt with by reference to the Headmaster, who will consider whether action can be taken by the school);
- allegations of abuse; (dealt with by a discussion with the Headmaster or a senior staff member in the first instance, who will decide whether to implement the school's Safeguarding Policy);
- issues between the school and community groups and organisations connected to the school, such as the Parents' Association (dealt with informally by discussion).

Informal resolution

- Most trivial/simple complaints will be dealt resolved immediately. Such resolution will often be by a discussion and explanation. More serious complaints may also be dealt with informally by a meeting, discussion, explanation and resolution.
- The person dealing with a complaint should meet the complainant, consider the complaint and make such investigations as are appropriate, and respond to the complaint, ideally within 5 working days.

- If a complaint is received directly by the Headmaster or the Chair of Governors, they may, at their discretion, refer it another person to investigate and resolve as they think fit.
- If the complaint cannot be resolved satisfactorily, a complaint will be resolved under the formal procedure.
- All complaints resolved informally will be recorded and the record kept by the Headmaster

Formal Procedure Stage 1: Complaint to the Headmaster

- If a complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster, using the complaint form in Appendix A.
- However, failure to complete such a form will not be good reason not to investigate a complaint, provided that sufficient information is available.
- The Headmaster will either investigate the complaint personally or delegate responsibility for the resolution of the complaint to an appropriate person.
- The person having responsibility for resolving the complaint should, unless there are exceptional circumstances, meet parents within 5 working days, and if possible reach a satisfactory conclusion. It may be necessary for this person to carry out further investigations.
- Once the person investigating the complaint is satisfied that all relevant facts have been established, so far as is practicable, a decision will be made and parents informed of this decision in writing, with reasons being given.
- The Headmaster will keep appropriate records.
- If the parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 2 of the formal procedure.

Formal Procedure Stage 2: Panel hearing

- Parents who are not satisfied with the decision reached in Stage 1 of the Formal Procedure will be entitled to have their concerns resolved by a formal Governors' Complaints Panel to be convened by the Clerk to the Governors.
- Parents who wish to proceed to this stage must notify the Clerk to the Governors in writing of their intention to do so.
- The Panel will meet to discuss the complaint with the parents at a suitable time for all concerned within 15 working days of the Clerk receiving notice of the complaint unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Such a meeting will be held in private, though the Panel will be at liberty to ask for the attendance of the Headmaster and any other person it thinks fit in order to collate necessary information, and the parents and the Headmaster will be permitted to call such witnesses as they think appropriate.
- The Complaints Panel will consist of two governors of the school and one person independent of the school. The Panel members will be appointed by the Clerk to the Governors, who will ensure that none of the members will have been involved in any stage of the procedures to date.
- The Clerk will collate any paperwork (including any material from any previous stage of the procedure) and ensure that it is available for the Panel and the parents before the meeting.
- Parents will be entitled to be accompanied by one other person, though legal representation will not normally be considered appropriate. It will be for the Panel to decide how the meeting will be conducted, though the procedure must allow fair a fair hearing.

- Wherever possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where investigation is needed, the Panel will decide how it is to be carried out, including whether another meeting with the parents is appropriate.
- Once all the necessary material is available, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations. It will write to the parents indicating its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The decision will be sent to the Headmaster, the Governors and any other interested party.
- A record of the complaint will be retained securely by the Headmaster for the duration of the time any relevant pupil remains at the school.

Appendix A - Complaints Form

Please complete and return to the Head of School or the Clerk to the Governors who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name:
Your relationship to the pupil:
Address:
Postcode:
Day time telephone number:
Evening telephone number:
Email:
Please give details of your complaint.
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.
Signature:
Date:
<i>Official use</i> Date acknowledgement sent: By whom: Complaint referred to for action: Date: