



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

The Royal Grammar School and RGS Prep School (the School) are proud of the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to their students. As part of our provision, we aim to actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and to develop tolerance and understanding towards each other. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with the procedure laid out below.

The School makes their complaints procedure available to all parents of students, and prospective students, from EYFS to Upper Sixth, on the School's website and on request from the Bursar.

Complaints by parents of former pupils will be dealt with under this Complaints Procedure only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil to which the complaint relates was still registered as a pupil at the School.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

The following steps make up the informal resolution stage:

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- At the RGS, if parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their son's form tutor or Head of Year. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If, however, the form tutor or Head of Year at the RGS cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult a Head of Department, the Director of Studies or the Deputy Head.
- At the RGS, complaints made directly to a Head of Department, the Director of Studies, the Deputy Head or the Headmaster will usually be referred to the relevant form tutor or Head of Year unless the Head of Department, the Director of Studies, the Deputy Head or the Headmaster deem it appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally.
- At RGS Prep, if parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their son's class teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If, however, the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult the Deputy Head with responsibility for complaints, who will determine how best to address the issue.
- At RGS Prep, complaints made directly to the Headmaster will usually be referred to the Deputy Head unless the Head deems it appropriate to deal with the matter directly.
- The form tutor/Head of Year/class 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 fourteen days** during term time, or **within fourteen days** of the start of term



following the Christmas, Easter, Summer or October half term in the case of complaints made during a holiday, or in the event that the form tutor/Head of Year/class teacher and the 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.

- If the complaint is against the Headmaster of either school, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chairman of Governors.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmaster of their child's School who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. The following process will be followed during stage 2:

- In most cases, the Headmaster will meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally **within seven days** of 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 a written record of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing **within seven days**. The Headmaster will also give reasons for their decision.
- If the complaint is against the Headmaster, the complaint should be made to the Chair of Governors. The Stage 2 process described above will then be followed.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) the following process should be followed:

- The parents should put their appeal in writing to the Clerk to the Governors **within seven days** of receiving the decision at Stage 2, setting out their grounds of appeal. Any supporting evidence which the parents wish to rely on should also be provided with their grounds of appeal.
- To the extent the parents are unable to provide their complaint within the time period stipulated due to extenuating circumstances which have impeded the parents from taking action, the parents should request an extension in writing. Such a request should be made

to the Clerk to the Governors in advance of the original deadline, setting out the further time period requested and the reason for this. This will be considered. In the event the parents are unable to provide their complaint within the time period stipulated (including to the extent applicable any extensions if agreed) the School reserves the right to conclude the complaint process and not progress the matter to Stage 3.

- The Clerk to the Governors, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel, will then refer the appeal to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of 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. The Chair of Governors will appoint one Panel member to act as Chair of the Panel.
- The Clerk to the Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint within **five working days** and schedule a hearing to take place 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 or further investigation be carried out. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than **five working days** prior to the hearing.
- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not be appropriate and the companion should not be a lawyer. The Panel will decide whether it would be helpful for witnesses to attend.
- The remit of the Panel shall be at the discretion of the Chair of Governors and the manner in which the hearing is conducted shall be at the discretion of the Panel.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint 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 the merits of the complaint and all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings as to whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and decide whether to:
 - dismiss the complaint(s) in whole or in part;
 - uphold the complaint(s) in whole or in part; and
 - make recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, within **seven working days** of the hearing (although additional time may be required if it is 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 recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of Governors and the Stage 2 decision-taker. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the Chair of Governors and the Headmaster.



Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously, sensitively and within clear and reasonable timescales. 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 thirty working days**. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed **within a further thirty working days**.

Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, working days refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time, excluding bank holidays and half term. This means that during School holidays it may take longer to resolve a complaint although the School will do what is reasonably practicable to avoid undue delay. It may also take longer to resolve a complaint during periods of significant disruption to School life or as a consequence of unavoidable staff absence, however deviation from the normal timescale for resolving a complaint during term time will only occur on an exceptional basis, and the School will take all reasonable steps to limit any such delay.

Persistent correspondence

Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this will be regarded by the School as vexatious and outside the scope of this procedure.

Recording Complaints and use of personal data

Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all complaints, whether they are resolved at the informal stage (Stage 1), the formal stage (Stage 2) or proceed to a Panel hearing (Stage 3) and any action taken by the School as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld).

The School processes data in accordance with its Privacy Notice which can be found on the Schools website. When dealing with complaints the School (including any Panel member appointed under the Stage 3 process) may process a range of information, which is likely to include the following:

- 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 and contact details 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)
- Notes/minutes of the hearing, and
- The Panel's written decision

This may include 'special category personal data' (as further detailed in the School's Privacy Notice, but potentially including, for instance, information relating to physical or mental health where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint. This data will be processed in accordance with the School's Privacy Notice.

The School will keep records of formal complaints and Complaints Panel hearings, as required by regulation. It will do so in accordance with its Privacy Notice and Retention of Records Policy. All records relating to complaints shall be treated as confidential. In addition to when requested by the Secretary of State or an inspector (see above), there may be other circumstances where disclosure of the substance of a complaint or particular confidential records relating to it is required, for example, where there is a legal, regulatory, safeguarding or data protection obligation (e.g. in response to a subject access request) which prevails over the requirement to maintain the records as confidential.

Parents of EYFS pupils should follow the three stages of this Complaints Procedure. If parents remain dissatisfied and their complaint is about the School's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, then parents may take their complaint to the ISI or Ofsted. Parents will be notified by ISI or Ofsted of the outcome of the investigation into their complaint **within twenty eight days** of the complaint being received.

The RGS 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 in accordance with its Privacy Notice and Retention of Records Policy.

Parents may complain directly to Ofsted or to ISI if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Schools must make available details of how to contact Ofsted and/ or the ISI:

Ofsted can be contacted on 0300 123 1231 or by email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

ISI can be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: concerns@isi.net

[ISI, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA](#)

In the academic year 2023-24 there was one formal complaint received by the School.

Reviewed by: Bursar
Date of last review: 28 June 2024
Date of next review: Trinity 2025