

Complaints Policy

This policy covers the Senior and Prep Schools and EYFS

Governors' Committee normally reviewing policy	Governing Body
Date policy formally approved by Governors	October 2021
Period of review	1 Year
Last review date	August 2026
Next review date	August 2027
Person responsible for monitoring implementation and effectiveness of the policy	The Head
Other relevant policies	General Policies

Kingsley School Bideford is owned and operated by KSI Schools Group Limited, which is the School's Proprietary Body ("the Proprietor").

Any reference in this policy to the Governors or Governing Body means the School's local body of governors, which operates as a local advisory board on behalf of the Proprietor. The local governing body does not constitute the Proprietary Body of the School.

The Proprietor has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the School meets its statutory and regulatory obligations and for ensuring that this policy is appropriate, effective and implemented in accordance with those requirements.

The Governors provide local oversight and scrutiny on behalf of the Proprietor and undertake appropriate review and monitoring to satisfy themselves that this policy is being implemented effectively. They advise and make recommendations to the Proprietor and the School's leadership as appropriate.

The core principle that guides everything we do is **Putting Students First**.

Policy Statement

Kingsley School prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its students. Nevertheless, complainants may occasionally have concerns they wish to raise and the School will receive these concerns in a positive and constructive manner.

The purpose of this policy is to enable a parent's complaint to be addressed with the intention of seeking a satisfactory resolution that would enable the child to remain at the school under improved conditions. The policy is made available to parents whose children are at the school at the time that the complaint is made using the form in the appendix of this document. It is also applicable to past students if the complaint was initially raised whilst the student was still on roll at the school. It does not cover exclusions. It is on the school website and copies are available from the Head's PA on request. Parents are informed on a regular basis via the Head's newsletters. All complaints will be treated seriously and should follow the procedure outlined below.

Complaints raised by persons no longer at the school or directly associated with the school will not be addressed within the parameters of this policy. It would still be the intention of the school however to adequately address any complaints received from persons outside the school, or persons previously associated with the school, as far as it is reasonable to do so.

Safeguarding Concerns

If, at any stage of a complaint, the School considers that the matter raises a safeguarding or child protection concern relating to the welfare of a student, the concern will be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL. The School will then follow the procedures set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

In such circumstances, safeguarding procedures will take precedence over the Complaints Procedure and the complaint may be paused or discontinued while safeguarding enquiries are undertaken. Where appropriate, the matter may be referred to external agencies, including Children's Social Care, the Police, or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), in accordance with statutory safeguarding guidance. The School will act in the best interests of the child at all times.

Stage 1 – Initial Actions

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

Complainants should normally in the first instance contact the relevant line-manager of the member of staff against whom the complaint is being made. This may be a Head of Department / Subject Lead, Houseparent or Tutor. In many cases, this will enable the speedy resolution of the problem to the complainants' satisfaction. If the line-manager cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult a member of the Strategic Leadership Team.

Complaints made directly to a Deputy Head or the Head will usually be referred to the relevant line-manager unless the Deputy Head or Head deems it appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally.

The line-manager will keep written records of all meetings, interviews, emails and telephone conversations held in relation to the complaint and the action(s) taken to resolve it. The school aims to resolve the matter within 5 working days during term time. During the school holidays, the complaint will be addressed on the first day of the next term.

Where the line-manager and the complainant fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then the formal part of the process may begin.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaints

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally then the complainant should put the complaint in writing to the Head using the form in the appendix of this policy. This will be sent upon request to the complainant.

The Head will delegate complaints at this stage to the relevant member of the Strategic Leadership Team to investigate further and will communicate this to the complainant. If the complaint is about a member of the Strategic Leadership Team, then the Head will manage this stage. If the complaint is about the Head, then the Named Proprietor will manage the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the investigating lead to carry out further investigations.

The investigating lead will keep written records of all meetings, interviews, e-mails and telephone conversations held in relation to the complaint in the Complaint's Record.

Within 10 term-time working days of receipt of the complaint form (see above regarding holidays), once the investigating lead is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and complainants will be informed of this decision in writing. The investigating lead will also give reasons for their decision.

If complainants are still not satisfied with the decision, they may proceed to stage 3 of the process within 14 days of receipt of the response to the formal complaint.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

To request a panel hearing complainants should write to the Head. The Nominated Proprietor has appointed the Head to convene hearings of the Complaints' Panel.

A formal request for the school to convene a Stage 3 Complaints Panel must be received by the Head using the Stage 3 Complaint Form in the appendix of this policy within 14 days of the Stage 2 outcome notice.

The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The Head will also be present to present the School's responses at the previous stages. One member of the panel shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the other panel members shall be members of the Governing Body or Directors of KSI (School's owner), one of whom shall be appointed Chair. The Head on behalf of the panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 15 working days.

The Panel Hearing will only consider the particulars of the initial complaint and will decide;

- a. To uphold the complaint and make recommendations to the School to resolve the matter accordingly, or
- b. Uphold the complaint but consider the School's response at Stage 2 to have adequately resolved the matter, or
- c. Not uphold the complaint due to it being unfounded, unsubstantiated, or unreasonable.

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 complainants will be invited to attend the Panel hearing and they may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. Legal representation will not be recognised at this stage.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the complainants' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

The Panel Hearing will proceed even if a parent subsequently changes their mind about their complaint.

The Panel Hearing will take place once scheduled, irrespective of whether the complainant can attend or not. Attendance at the Panel Hearing is not mandatory.

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 7 days of the Hearing. The Panel's finding(s) and recommendations (if any are made), together with the reasons for them, will be sent in writing to the complainant, the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person to whom the complaint relates. The decision of the Panel will be final.

Wherever possible the recommendations of the Panel will be adopted by the School without delay, however there may be circumstances where the Head 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 School. In the event of the Head deciding not to carry out all or part of a recommendation of the panel, the Head will inform the complainants in writing with the reasons for the non-adoption of the recommendation.

The outcomes of complaints will be held on the school site for inspection by the Head or Chair of the Advisory Board.

Confidentiality

Complainants can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously, respectfully and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to formal complaints and actions taken by the School, regardless of whether or not the complaint is upheld, will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School by section 108 & 109 of the 2008 Act, where disclosure is required by request of the Secretary of State or in the course of the School's inspection. No complaint made by complainants in good faith will influence a student's school life.

Complaint Record

A written record will be kept of all complaints whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing. Any action taken by the school will be recorded. This will be kept secure and completed by the Head. All formal complaints (stage 2 & 3) will be recorded. Informal complaints will also be identified and noted as this will enable management to identify any patterns of concern. Complaints relating to Boarding and EYFS will be identified separately in the Record. Details of timings will be recorded.

Two complaints were recorded as being resolved at Stage 3 in 2022-23.

EYFS

Any complaints relating to the EYFS provision will be resolved and the complainant notified of the outcome within 28 days. The Record must also be made available to ISI on request. Complainants will also be provided with the contact details for ISI if they believe that the EYFS requirements are not being met. EYFS parents have the right to complain to ISI if they believe the school is failing to fulfil its requirements and all other complaints procedures have been exhausted.

Inspection

The school will notify parents about an inspection as soon as they are notified. The inspection report will be provided to all parents of children who attend the setting.

Contact Details for ISI:

ISI, Cap House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC 1A 9HA concerns@isi.net 0207 600 0100

Parents have the right to pursue a complaint against the school with ISI as the school's inspectorate if they do not believe the school is fulfilling its requirements and all other complaints procedures have been exhausted.

RJ Pavis
Head

Appendix I: Stage 2 Complaint Form

Please note, this form can only be completed by parents whose children are currently enrolled at the school, or by parents whose children were enrolled at the school at the time of the complaint being first raised at Stage 1.

Parent's Name
Child's Name
Does the complaint relate to a member(s) of staff and if so, to whom?
Nature of Complaint
Details of the incident(s)
Were any school policies contravened, and if so, how?
What is your desired resolution?

Please email a copy of this form to head@kingsleydevon.com. You can expect a response within 15 days though this may take longer depending on the complexity of the investigation.

Appendix II: Stage 3 Complaint Form

Please note, this form can only be completed by parents whose children are currently enrolled at the school, or by parents whose children were enrolled at the school at the time of the complaint being raised at either Stage 1 or Stage 2.

This form must be submitted within 14 days of the school sending notice of the outcome from Stage 2.

Parent's Name
Child's Name
Why do you feel the complaint was not adequately resolved at Stage 2?
What is your desired resolution?

Please email a copy of this form to head@kingsleydevon.com. A Panel Hearing will be convened within 15 term-time working days to review the complaint at Stage 3