

TKS Complaints Policy

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1. Introduction

If your brother sins against you go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. Matt 18:15

For the purpose of this policy, the term 'parents' is used to describe parents and authorised carers of children currently enrolled at TKS Witney.

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The King's School operates as a partnership with parents. Its ongoing success depends upon good, open communication between parents and the school. Documents such as newsletters, reports and policies are intended to assist the transparency of the process. The extensive involvement of parents in the day-to-day life of the school further aids the communication process.

The school will take all concerns and complaints seriously and we would want to resolve these personally and effectively, hoping for a positive resolution for all concerned. We will strive to ensure that concerns are dealt with expediently and comprehensively. We would therefore ask that any concern is submitted to the school within 90 days of occurrence.

The process of resolving complaints is available to parents of current pupils.

2. Aims

At each stage in the procedure, our primary aim is to resolve the concern. When responding to complaints, we aim to:

1. Be impartial and non-adversarial
2. Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary
3. Address all the points at issue and provide a fair, effective and prompt response
4. Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality if requested
5. Treat complainants with respect and courtesy
6. Make sure that any decisions we are make are lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law and our ethos as a school
7. Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
8. Consider how the complaint can feed into school improvement evaluation processes

We try to resolve complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.

We will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full. To support this, we will make sure that we make this policy available on the school website. Throughout the process, we will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

3. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements as set out in part 7 of the schedule to the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#) which states that we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents/carers of pupils at the school.

It also refers to [government guidance on regulating independent schools](#).

In addition, it addresses duties set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#) with regards to dealing with complaints about the school's fulfilment of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

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4. Scope

This policy does not cover complaints procedures relating to:

- Admissions
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs
- Safeguarding matters
 - 9. Suspensions and permanent exclusions
 - 10. Whistleblowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline

Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaint.

Complaints about services provided by other providers who use the school premises or facilities should be directed to the provider concerned.

5. Principles for investigation

When investigating a complaint, we will try to clarify:

- What has happened
- Who was involved
- What the complainant feels would put things right

5.1 Timescales

The complaint must be raised within 90 days of the incident. If the complaint is about a series of related incidents, they must raise the complaint within 90 days of the last incident.

We will consider exceptions to this timeframe in circumstances where there were valid reasons for not making a complaint at that time and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.

When complaints are made out of term time, we will consider them to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

If at any point we cannot meet the timescales we have set out in this policy, we will:

- Set new time limits with the complainant
- Send the complainant details of the new deadline and explain the delay

5.2 Complaints about our fulfilment of early years requirements

We will investigate all written complaints relating to the school's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, and we will notify the complainant of the outcome within 28 days of receiving the complaint. The school will keep a record of the complaint and make this available to Ofsted on request.

Parents and carers can notify Ofsted if they believe that the school is not meeting EYFS requirements by:

- Calling 0300 123 4666

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- Emailing <mailto:CIE@ofsted.gov.uk>
- Using the contact form available at
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted#org-contacts>

6. Complaints Process

6.1 Stage 1: Informal

Our school will take informal complaints seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that the provision or clarification of information will resolve the issue.

The complaint should be addressed to the relevant member of school staff or the principal, either in person or by letter, telephone or email. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the school office: office@tkswitney.org.uk

The school will acknowledge informal complaints within five school days, which will confirm how the school intends to proceed, including an indication of the anticipated timescale.

The informal stage will involve a meeting between the complainant and the principal and/or the subject of the complaint, if appropriate. A written response will be provided by the school within five school days following the informal meeting.

If the complaint is not resolved informally, it will be escalated to a formal complaint.

6.2 Stage 2: Formal

The formal stage involves the complainant putting the complaint to the principal in writing within fifteen school days of an informal complaint not being resolved. During term time, the principal will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within five school days.

The complainant should provide details such as the relevant dates, times and the names of witnesses of events alongside copies of any relevant documents. The complainant should also state what they feel would resolve the complaint.

The principal (or other person appointed for this person) will then conduct their own investigation. The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to complainant within ten school days of the acknowledgement of the complaint.

How to escalate a complaint

If the complainant wishes to proceed to the next stage of the procedure, they should inform the chair of governors within fifteen school days. This request can be made verbally or in writing. The Chair of governors will acknowledge receipt of the request within two school days (during term time).

6.3 Stage 3: Review Panel

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The chair of governors will convene a panel to convene initially within 20 school days of the formal written complaint being received.

The panel will be appointed on behalf of the proprietor and must consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. At least one panel member must be independent of the management and running of the school.

The panel will have access to the existing record of the complaint's progress.

The complainant must have reasonable notice of the date of the review panel, which will aim to find a date that provides at least five school days' notice of the meeting, but that takes place within fifteen school days if possible.

If the complainant rejects three proposed dates without good reason, the chairman of the panel will set a date. The meeting will go ahead using written submissions from both parties.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings are not normally permitted unless required as part of reasonable adjustments. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties will be sought before recordings of meetings or conversations take place. The information presented at the meeting is to be available to all parties concerned, including the complainant. Any findings and/or recommendations of the panel are to be presented in writing. The decision of the panel is final. Copies must be given to all directly affected parties, including the Chair of Governors, the Principal, staff directly involved, and the complainant.

The complainant may be accompanied to the panel hearing if they wish. If the complainant asks that they be accompanied by a legal representative, the representative cannot address the panel, and the complainant must give advance notice of this wish.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

The panel can:

- Uphold the complaint, in whole or in part
- Dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part

If the complaint is upheld, the panel will:

- Decide the appropriate action to resolve the complaint
- Where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The panel should aim to provide a report within ten school days of the initial meeting.

7. Complaints against the principal, a governor the governing body

If a complaint relates to the principal, then the complaint should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, c/o the school office who will liaise with the governors. If the complaint relates to one or more governors, the complaint should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees, Oxfordshire Community Churches c/o the school office.

The complaint will follow the same process as outlined in sections 6.1 – 6.3

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8. The Department for Education

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the school's complaints procedure and the complaint is regarding the school not meeting the standards set by the DfE in any of the following areas, the complainant can refer their complaint to the DfE:

- Education
- Pupils' welfare and health and safety
- School premises
- Staff suitability
- Making information available to parents
- The spiritual, moral, social or cultural development of pupils

The DfE will consider reports of a major failure to meet the standards. Where appropriate, it can arrange an emergency inspection to look at pupil welfare and health and safety and make sure that the school deals with serious failings.

For more information or to refer a complaint, see the following webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

9. Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Principal or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

10. When responses stop

We will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns as we seek to bring peace and resolution to each situation. We will ensure we have given the complainant a clear statement on our decision and their options. If, however, a complainant contacts us repeatedly, raising the same complaint and providing no significant new information, the matter will not be further investigated, and we may take the decision to cease responding to the specific complaint.

In the following circumstances, the Chair of Governors will inform the complainant in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed:

- Any communication, including, but not limited to, letters, emails or telephone calls that are abusive or aggressive in nature;
- if complainants make insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff;
- or if we have reason to believe the complainant is contacting us with the sole intention of causing disruption or inconvenience.

11. Record of complaints

The school will record the progress of all complaints, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the final outcome. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls.

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This material will be treated as confidential and stored securely. It will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel.

This is except where the secretary of state (or someone acting on their behalf) or the complainant requests access to records of a complaint through a Freedom of Information (FOI) request or through subject access request under the terms of the Data Protection Act, or where the material must be made available during a school inspection.

These records will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law, our privacy records and our record retention schedule.

12. Learning lessons

The governing body will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the principal or heads of school where appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there are any improvements that the school can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

13. Monitoring arrangements

The governing body will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in making sure that complaints are handled properly. They will track the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues as stated in Section 12.

The complaints records are logged and managed by the principal.

The policy will be reviewed by the principal and full governing board annually.

14. Links with other policies

Policies dealing with other forms of complaints include:

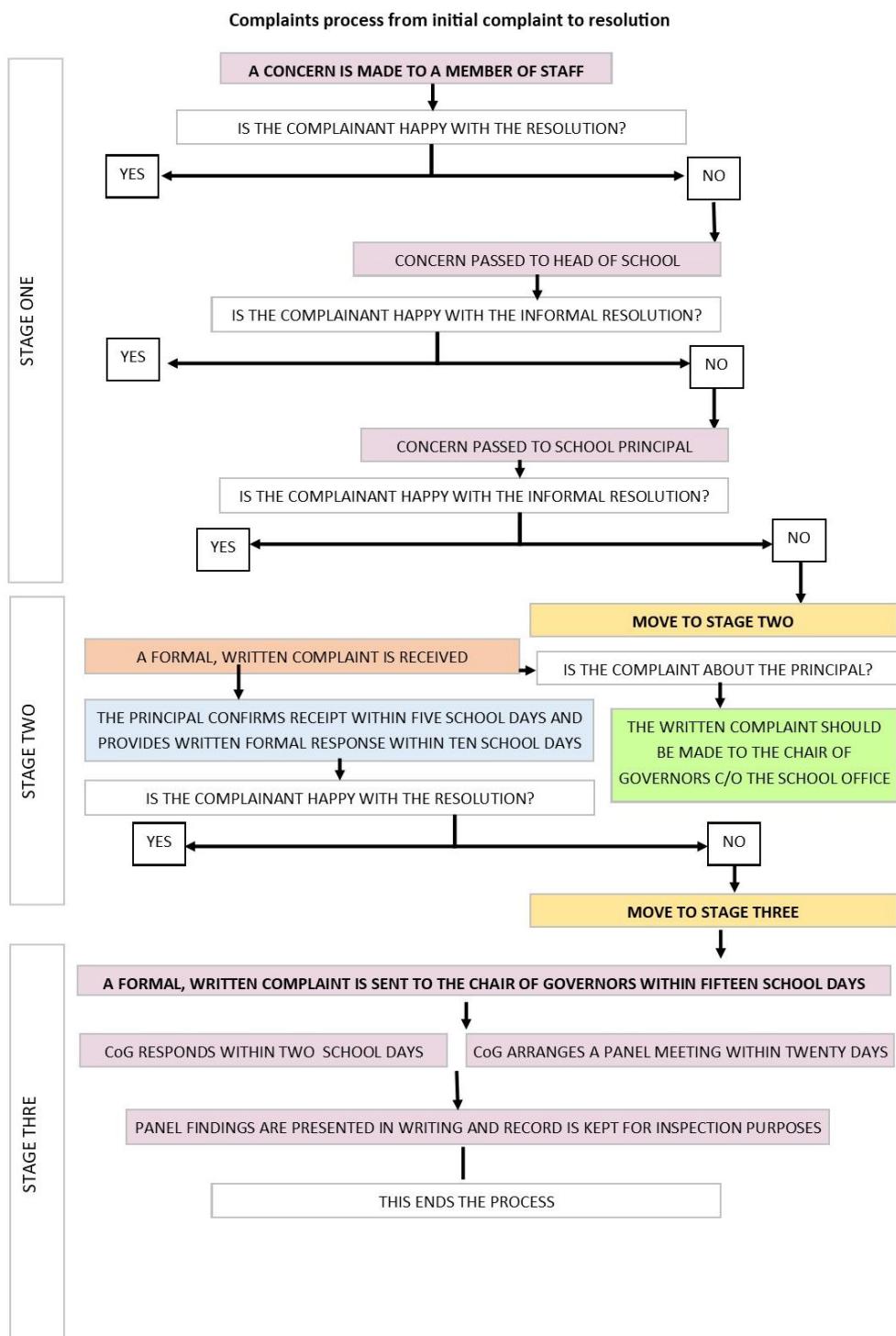
- Child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures
- Admissions policy
- Suspension and permanent exclusion policy
- Staff grievance procedures
- Special educational needs policy

Appendix 1 – Concerns and Complaints Flowchart

Appendix 2 – Formal Complaint Form

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Appendix 1.



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Appendix 2.

Formal Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Principal / Chair of Governors who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address:
Postcode:
Day time telephone number:
Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it:

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What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date: