



## **Complaints' Policy and Procedure**

This Complaints' Policy is made available to all parents of pupils including those in the EYFS via the school's public website, the parent portal and, on request, in writing from the School Office. This policy applies to the whole school, including the EYFS.

### **1 Introduction**

1.1 Knightsbridge School defines a complaint as any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school

1.2 Knightsbridge School aims to be a listening and responsive school. We encourage pupils, parents and staff to inform us of their concerns while they are still minor ones which can more easily be resolved. Knightsbridge School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, children and staff and takes seriously complaints and concerns as they may rise.

1.3 Knightsbridge School prides itself on the openness and on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. If parents, including those in the EYFS, have a complaint relating to Knightsbridge School, which they wish to be dealt with, they can expect it to be handled in accordance with the following procedure, which is based on the model recommended for use by independent schools.

1.4 All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within 5 working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. 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 15 days if the complaint is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. For **Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing – we will endeavour to complete this within a further 15 days, if the appeal is lodged during term-time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. In the event of a subject access request, this may necessarily take longer.**

1.5 There were no formal complaints during the academic year 2021 - 2022

### **2 How Should I Complain and to Whom?**

2.1 Parents can email, write, telephone or talk directly to a member of staff. Please be as clear as possible about what is troubling you. Any member of staff will be happy to help. It is usually best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue as they are likely to be able to sort things out quickly. However, parents may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff. This senior member of staff will determine who is best positioned to

handle the complaint and will redirect the complaint if necessary. (Please see Appendix A: Appropriate Channels for Complaints)

### **3 Statement of Policy on Dealing with Complaints**

3.1 Knightsbridge School aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

3.2 We believe that all complaints which we receive should be treated seriously and investigated fully and fairly. The School will always try to resolve complaints informally and in an amicable fashion where possible. The School's Complaints Procedure is divided into Informal, Formal and Appeals Stages and it is expected that the majority of complaints will be resolved quickly at the Informal Stage.

3.3 Complaints will be dealt with on as confidential a basis as possible, but it may be necessary for the person who first receives a complaint to discuss it with those who can resolve it, so anonymity and total confidence cannot be guaranteed. No one will receive adverse treatment as a result of having a complaint or because someone else has raised a complaint on their behalf.

3.4 In situations concerning alleged abuse, the Child Protection Procedures take precedence over the following complaints procedure. Separate procedures will also apply if the Head permanently excludes or requires the removal of a pupil from the School and the parents seek a review of that decision.

### **4 Stage 1 - Informal Stage of Complaints Procedure**

4.1 Many concerns arise from misunderstandings and can be resolved by simple clarification. It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally at this stage. (Please see Appendix B for guidance).

4.2 If a parent wishes to make a complaint, they should usually contact the member of staff concerned in the first instance. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction.

4.3 The member of staff will pass a written or electronic record of the complaint and the date on which it was received to their section head who will add it to the complaints log.

4.4 If a brief meeting or telephone call with the relevant Class Teacher/Tutor does not result in a solution then the complaint may be taken directly to the Head. The Head may then refer back to the relevant teacher unless the Head deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.

4.5 The complainant will hear back from the teacher, a member of SMT or Head within five working days.

4.6 In the event that a satisfactory resolution is not reached, then the complainant will be advised to proceed with his/her complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this procedure.

4.7 Should a complainant have a complaint about the Head, they should contact the Head informally to discuss the matter in the first instance.

4.8 Should a complainant have a complaint about the Principal, they should contact the Principal informally to discuss the matter in the first instance.

## **5 Stage 2 - Formal Stage of Complaints Procedure**

5.1 Formal complaints and complaints that it has not been possible to resolve informally should be addressed in writing to the Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

5.2 In most cases, the Head will meet or speak with the parents concerned, normally within five working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

5.3 If a resolution cannot be reached immediately or it is necessary to carry out further investigations, the Head may ask a senior member of staff to act as investigator who will prepare a report on the investigation for consideration by the Head. The complainant will be informed in writing, within ten further working days of the outcome of the investigation along with reasons for the Head's decision. Details of any action that may result in the use of disciplinary or other formal procedures will normally remain confidential.

5.4 The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

5.5 The formal complaint will be recorded in the Complaints File (R:\Registrar\Complaints & Positives) and will contain the date of the complaint, a brief outline of it, a summary of the steps taken to resolve it and the outcome.

5.6 Where a complaint is made by a parent in the EYFS setting, the complaint will be investigated in accordance with this procedure and the complainant notified of the outcome as in 5.1 and 5.3 and within 28 working days of the complaint being received.

5.7 Should a complainant have a complaint about the Head, s/he should write to the Principal who will follow the formal procedure above.

5.8 Should a complainant have a complaint about the Principal, the parent should write to The Principal c/o Knightsbridge School. The Principal will acknowledge receipt of the letter within 5 working days of receiving it and outline the timetable for further action. In most cases The Principal will meet with the parents concerned to discuss the matter further, if it is still not resolved then the complainant can escalate this to The Proprietor.

5.9 If the complainant is still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

## **6 Stage 3 - Complaints Panel Procedure**

6.1 A Complaints Panel hearing is a review of the decision taken by the Head or Principal. The role of the Panel is to establish the facts surrounding the complaints that have been made by considering:

6.1.1 the documents provided by both parties and

6.1.2 any representations made by the complainant and the Head or Principal

and to reach a decision on the balance of probabilities as to whether each complaint is made out.

Where the complainant is not satisfied with the response to their written complaint, a request for a hearing before the Complaints Panel must be put in writing to the School Secretary within five working days of the decision complained of. The request will usually only be considered if the procedures at Stages 1 and 2 have been completed and the Panel will not consider any new areas of complaint which have not been previously raised as part of the complaints procedure. The Proprietor will make provision for a hearing before a panel of at least three people who are not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. Where there is a panel hearing for dealing with the complaint, one person will be independent of the management and the running of the school. The Proprietor will be responsible for the appointment of the panel.

6.2 The panel will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 15 working days.

6.3 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 any documents the complainant wishes the Panel to consider should be sent to the School Secretary at least five working days prior to the hearing. Copies of all documents shall be supplied to all parties not less than three days prior to the hearing.

6.4 The parents may attend and be accompanied at the panel hearing if they wish by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. The Panel hearing is not a legal proceeding and so legal representation is not necessary. If the complainant does wish to be accompanied by someone who is legally qualified, the Panel must be notified of this at least five working days prior to the hearing and the complainant should note that the Panel will wish to speak to them directly and this person will not be permitted to act as an advocate.

6.5 Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out and may adjourn the hearing if necessary.

6.6 After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 10 working days of the Hearing. The decision of the panel will be final.

6.7 The Panel's findings with reasons and, if any, their recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, Principal, the Proprietor and, where relevant, the person about whom the complaint was made. These findings will be made available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Head. The completion of Stage 3 represents the conclusion of the School's Complaints Procedure.

## **7 Recording of Complaints**

7.1 The Complaints Procedure requires written records to be kept of all complaints, including whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage, the formal stage or whether they proceed to a panel hearing.

7.2 At the Informal Stages, these written records will be in the form of emails, notes from Parent-Teacher Meetings and minutes of SLT and Department meetings (electronic written records) at which Informal Complaints will be discussed. If appropriate, an Accident or Incident Report will also be completed. After each SLT or Department Meeting, the Head's PA will record any complaints discussed along with dates, emails and supporting material under the 'Complaints & Positives' file (R:\Complaints & Positives).

7.3 A written log of all complaints, actions taken by the school and how they were resolved is kept by the Head and protected by the school's Data Protection Policy.

7.4 The Head, in discussion with the Principal, will ensure that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where disclosure is required to the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act.

7.5 After a complaint has been resolved, the final outcome will be noted in the electronic Complaints file. Any changes in procedure resulting from a complaint will be made and noted in this file. All records of complaints, including those relating to the EYFS, will be kept for at least six years.

7.6 Knightsbridge School must provide Ofsted and the Independent Schools Inspectorate, on request, with a written record of all complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements made during any specified period, and the action that was taken as a result of each complaint.

## **8 Ofsted, ISI and EYFS**

8.1 Parents of pupils in EYFS who are not satisfied that the school is meeting the EYFS requirement, may complain formally to OFSTED and/or ISI. Should you wish to make a complaint to Ofsted about the school, you can contact their helpline on 0300 123 1231 or request advice by email on [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

8.2 ISI is the body that inspects independent schools. Should you wish to make a complaint to them, and your complaint is not of a safeguarding nature, you can contact them via the following address: Independent Schools Inspectorate, CAP House, 9 - 12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA. Tel: 020 7600 0100, [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net). Please note that ISI will expect any complaint to have gone through the school's own complaints procedure.

## **9 Monitoring and review**

9.1 The Head monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Head logs all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. The Head examines this log on a termly basis.

9.2 The Proprietor takes into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any necessary modifications to this policy.

**Reviewed by: Shona Colaco (Head)**

**Date:** July 2022

**Approved by: Aatif Hassan**

**Date:** July 2022

**Signed:**



**This policy will be reviewed annually**



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**Appendix A – Appropriate Channels for Complaints**

<b>Topic of Complaint</b>	<b>Appropriate Channels</b>
Specific to your child	Class Tutor/ Class Teacher > Head of Section > SLT & Head
Specific to the EYFS	Class Teacher > Head of EYFS > SLT & Head
General suggestion to the School	Class Representative > Head of KSPA > SLT & Head
General complaint to teacher	Specific teacher > Head of Section/Department > SLT & Head
Pastoral complaint	House Tutor/Class Teacher > Head of Section > SLT & Head
Financial complaint	Bursar > SLT & Head



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**Appendix B – Summary of Complaints Procedures**

<b>Concern</b>	Please do raise these with the school so that they can be resolved as quickly as possible.
<b>Informal Complaint</b>	Significant or persistent concerns should be discussed with those involved. It is hoped that most problems can be dealt with in this way.
<b>Formal Complaint</b>	A formal complaint is one made in writing and addressed directly to the Head.
<b>Appeals</b>	Where the complainant is not satisfied with the response to their written complaint, the Proprietor will make provision for a hearing before a panel of at least three people who are not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.