

KILGRASTON

COMPLAINTS POLICY

BACKGROUND

This policy was formulated in response to the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) Guidelines for complaints procedures and in recognition of the requirement by Education Scotland. The purpose of the policy is to provide parents with a framework through which they can raise a complaint.

RATIONALE

Kilgraston recognises the need to respond to complaints speedily and in a manner which is consistent and to keep a record of such procedures.

POLICY STATEMENT

- Kilgraston is concerned for the welfare and happiness of all pupils and recognises that complaints reflect genuine concerns which need to be addressed. It is hoped that any matters of concern can be resolved informally without recourse to more formalised lines.
- All staff have a responsibility to ensure that complaints are dealt with using the following procedures:

IMPLEMENTATION

All staff are encouraged to deal with parental concerns / complaints which lie within their area(s) of responsibility. Matters incapable of resolution at a particular level, especially complaints about members of staff, must always be referred to an appropriate senior person and be fully investigated.

PROCEDURE FOR CONCERNS/ COMPLAINTS

For all parents and guardians

A concern is a matter of interest or importance to a parent which they wish to bring to our attention.

A complaint is a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable. We shall treat any complaint you make as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction or anxiety which deserves a full response.

We would much rather know about it! You may be alerting staff to something of which they were not aware, but which may also affect the welfare of other pupils.

The three stage complaints procedure

Stage 1 – Informal resolution

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

Please get in touch immediately if you have a concern or complaint. It is important to air problems with us, however small they may seem: we always want to know and to do what we can to help. Talk directly to a member of staff, write a letter, email us or telephone. Any member of staff will be happy to help or to refer you to the right person, but it is easier to start with the person responsible for the area you are unhappy with:

Ms D Radulova	Director of Studies
Ms A Blair	Welfare Manager
Ms E Patton	Activities Manager
Ms D Douglas	Summer School Course Director

All the above listed members of staff are very experienced in listening to the concerns of parents and students, and they know how to handle complaints professionally. Please remember that all members of staff have many responsibilities, and they are unlikely to be able to respond immediately. Please do not be frustrated if you are asked to leave a telephone number so that they can ring you back when they are not teaching or have finished a meeting.

Complaints made directly to the Summer School Course Director will usually be referred to the relevant manager, Director of Studies, teacher or activity leader unless the Summer School Course Director or Head of Finance deems it appropriate for her to deal with the matter personally.

The person dealing with the complaint 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 5 working days** or in the event that the manager, Director of Studies, teacher or activity leader 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, however, the complaint is against the Summer School Course Director, parents should make their complaint directly to Ms M Mackie, Head of Finance via the school address.

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 Summer School Course Director. The Summer School Course Director will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

- In most cases, the Summer School Course Director will arrange to meet or speak to the parents concerned, **within 5 working days** of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- Dependent on the nature of the complaint it may be necessary for the Summer School Course Director or a member of Kilgraston's School Leadership Team to carry out further investigations.
- The Summer School Course Director will **keep written records** of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. The record of complaints will contain the following information:-
 - The date when the issue was raised
 - The name of the parent/guardian
 - The name of the pupil
 - A brief statement of the issue
 - The location of the detailed file
 - The name of the staff member handling the issue
 - A brief statement of the outcome

The record of complaints will be kept securely by the Summer School Course Director and must be made available for accreditation bodies and government inspectors.

- Once the Summer School Course Director is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Summer School Course Director will also give reasons for her decision.
- If the complaint is against the Summer School Course Director, Kilgraston School's Head of Finance will call for a full report from the Summer School Course Director and for all the relevant documents. The Head of Finance, or another member of Kilgraston's School Leadership Team, will conduct an investigation into the complaint.
- The Head of Finance or her designate may also call for a briefing from members of staff and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Head of Finance is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Head of Finance will give reasons for her decision.
- 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) they will be referred to Chair of the Board of Governors who will call a hearing of the Complaints Panel. If the complaint is against the Head of Finance they will be referred to the Chair of Trustees who will call a hearing of the Complaints Panel. The Panel will consist of three persons (Governors or Trustees) not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place within 10 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. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 5 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 normally be appropriate.
- 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 all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, within 5 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 Chairman of Governors and the Head of Finance. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Chairman of Governors and the Head of Finance.

Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within 5 working days if received during Summer School and as soon as practicable during the rest of the year.

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 20 working days. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 20 working days.

Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, 'working days' refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time.

Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all complaints, whether they are resolved at the informal stage, the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing and any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld). At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- 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 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)

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or a body conducting an inspection under section 99 of the Education Act 2008 requests access to them.

Kilgraston will provide HMI, 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 for at least three years.

Policy Review Record

Person responsible (Main School Policy) - Headmistress (DMacG)

Person responsible (Summer School Policy) - Summer School Course Director (DD)

Date	Action	Responsibility
Sept 16	Policy reviewed by BOG	DMacG
Sept 17	Policy Updated	DMacG
Jan 18	Reviewed by BOG	DMacG
Sept 18	Annual review	DMacG
Oct 19	Annual Review	DMacG
Sept 20	Annual Review	DMacG
Sept 20	Policy Updated for Summer School	DD

KILGRASTON COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Pro Forma for Internal Use

What a parent or guardian who has cause for complaint should do:

Should a parent or guardian have a complaint that relates to the School or to the way their child has been treated, the parent or guardian should, at the earliest possible opportunity raise the matter initially with the pupil's Tutor/Year Head or with the member of staff concerned. The rationale here is that a complaint should be dealt with at the closest point to where the difficulty arises.

If the complaint remains unresolved, the parents/guardian should raise the matter with an appropriate member of staff, preferably in person, by appointment or by writing. The appropriate senior member of staff will, having enquired into the parent or guardian's complaint, discuss it with parent or guardian and then notify them of his/her decision and of any action that is to be taken and by when. If the matter still remains unresolved, the parent/guardian should approach the Headmistress.

If the decision of the Headmistress is unacceptable to the parent or guardian, they may refer the matter in writing to the Chair of Governors. The chair will call a meeting of the complaints panel who will give the parent or guardian an opportunity to meet them to discuss the matter. At any such meeting, the parent or guardian will be entitled to be accompanied by anyone chosen by them for this purpose.

Date issue raised	
Name of Parent/Guardian	
Name of Pupil	
Description of the issue	
Location of file (if appropriate) including witness statements	
Name of Staff member handling issue	
Copies of all correspondence Statement of outcome	

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Statement for Pupils

If you have a complaint or a general worry about things happening in school, you should talk to one of the following:-

Your Parents, your Year Head, Residential Mistress, Tutor, Sister, Chaplain, Headmistress or anyone you feel you can talk to. You can also talk to The Care Inspectorate (0845 603 0890) or the Independent Listener through Mrs Muller/Mrs Harrison.

Alternatively, remember that the BFGs and your Prefects or Sixth Form will be able to listen and advise you.

Complaints of a general nature may be raised through School or Boarding Council.

If you wish to contact the Care Inspectorate who regulate the National Care Standards for school care accommodation services, telephone 0845 603 0890

A copy of the national care standards for school care accommodation services can be found in Butterstone, Mater and Barat and Swinton boarding areas. These care standards are for pupils (and parents) and describe what they can expect from the school as a Boarder.