

# Complaints and Grievances Resolution Procedure (Students and Parents) Policy



## 1. Introduction

The School has in place the following Procedure to deal with complaints and grievances of a general nature that may be held by parents (including guardians) and/or students.

The School recognises that parents and/or students may have a complaint or grievance over a School related issue and through the following Procedure the School is providing a mechanism by which parents and/or students can seek to have that complaint or grievance addressed. An outcome of the Procedure may be that the complaint or grievance is found to be groundless.

The Procedure is not intended to be overly prescriptive nor impose unreasonable time limits upon any party. It does seek to raise parents and/or students' awareness that the School acknowledges that such issues do arise from time to time and the following describes the arrangements that should be observed in order to assist parents and/or students to resolve them.

The School will seek to ensure that any complaint or grievance is resolved at the earliest opportunity and in a timely manner. However, reasonable periods of time must be allowed for discussion at each level (Local, Higher Internal, Final Internal and External) of the Procedure.

The School has appointed Mr David Swinfield as the Director of Continuous Improvement, who will assist parents, students, other senior staff and the Headmaster to resolve complaints and grievances from members of the School Community ([improve@kings.edu.au](mailto:improve@kings.edu.au) or 02 9683 8681).

The School acknowledges that the Head of each Campus may separately publish age-appropriate Guidelines to assist the understanding of their students and parents on the implementation and observance of this Procedure in the context of that Campus.

Parents should be mindful of the School's Parental Code of Conduct ([Parental Code of Conduct](#)) when seeking to address School related matters of concern to them or their child. The School is mindful of the confidentiality it is obliged to afford all parents and their children and parents seeking to act as a self-appointed spokesperson for a group of parents need to be aware the School will generally not enter discussions regarding other children or families.

## 2. Complaint Investigation Procedure for Alleged Reportable Conduct by a Member of Staff

The most serious complaint relates to allegations that fall within the School's Child Protection Policy, and the arrangements that are in place to address such allegations are as follows:-

**Making Allegations** - Allegations made by a parent, student or other School Community member against a member of staff or other School Community member for alleged reportable conduct:

- Should be made in writing to the Headmaster either by letter marked CONFIDENTIAL and addressed to: PO Box 1, Parramatta, NSW 2124 or by email to [headmaster@kings.edu.au](mailto:headmaster@kings.edu.au) or if inappropriate to contact the Headmaster, the General Counsel and Company Secretary at [clerktothecouncil@kings.edu.au](mailto:clerktothecouncil@kings.edu.au) or the Chairman of School Council should be contacted at [chairman@kings.edu.au](mailto:chairman@kings.edu.au);
- Should be made confidentially and will be treated as confidential;
- Will be acknowledged in writing by the Headmaster or his delegate.

**Investigations** – Allegations of reportable conduct will be investigated as per the School's Child Protection Policy ([Child-Protection-Policy](#)).

Definition of reportable conduct (The King's School Child Protection Policy, Part B, Section 2) is defined as follows:-

- any sexual offence or sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence or an offence involving child abuse material); or
- any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child; or
- any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child whether or not, in any case, with the consent of the child.
- Reportable conduct is *not*:
  - conduct that is reasonable for the purposes of the discipline, management, or care of children, having regard to the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the children and to any relevant codes of conduct or professional standards; or
  - the use of physical force that, in all circumstances, is trivial or negligible, but only if the matter is to be investigated and the result of the investigation recorded under workplace employment procedures; or
  - conduct of a class or kind exempted from being reportable conduct by the Ombudsman under section 25CA.

Please refer to the School's Child Protection Policy for other relevant definitions.

The Headmaster or his delegate will respond to the complainant in writing and keep them informed throughout the investigation and of the investigation final findings if appropriate.

### **3. General Complaints and Grievance Procedure Level 1 – Local**

The parent or student complaint or grievance must initially be dealt with as close to its source as possible, with graduated steps for further discussion and resolution at higher levels of authority, e.g.

(a) Student grievances with other students

If a student has a grievance with the way he/she has been dealt with by other students. He/she may:

- ask his/her class teacher, Housemaster, Mentor, Deputy Head – Students & Community, Director – Students & Community to help resolve the grievance;
- if the complaint or grievance is not resolved, he/she may take the matter to the Head of School in accordance with the Level 2 process below.

(b) Student grievance with a staff member or School process

When a student has a grievance with a teacher or School process he/she may take the following step.

Discuss the matter with his/her class teacher, Housemaster, Mentor, Deputy Head – Students & Community, or other trusted adult. If the student and teacher he/she has consulted believe it is appropriate, one or both of them may discuss the matter with the teacher or other staff member who is the subject of the complaint.

In the situation where the grievance/complaint is against the Head of School, the student or parent/guardian should contact the Director of Continuous Improvement, Mr David Swinfield at [improve@kings.edu.au](mailto:improve@kings.edu.au) (02 9683 8681) who reports to the Headmaster on such matters. In the event the matter remains unresolved, then the process described below in Level 3 Final Internal should be pursued. The final avenue of appeal will be the Chairman of School Council at [chairman@kings.edu.au](mailto:chairman@kings.edu.au).

Any complaint or grievance which arises shall, where possible, be settled by discussion at its source between the parent and/or student concerned and the responsible staff member e.g. Class Teacher, Housemaster, Subject Teacher, Year Co-ordinator, Head of an Academic Department, etc. Should it be inappropriate for one of these staff members to be approached e.g. that person is the perceived source of the complaint or grievance, then the parent and/or student should approach that staff member's supervisor or manager or another senior member of staff. The parent and/or student shall notify the senior staff member, preferably in writing, as to the substance of the complaint or grievance, request a meeting with the senior staff member for bilateral discussions and state the remedy sought.

#### **4. Level 2 – Higher Internal**

Every opportunity should be given to resolving the complaint or grievance at the Local Level before the matter proceeds to Level 2. A more senior staff member approached to commence the Level 2 process needs to satisfy themselves that the Local Level process has been exhausted.

If the matter is not resolved at the Local Level, then the parent and/or student may raise the matter with the Director of Continuous Improvement who will address the matter with the appropriate senior staff member e.g. Head of Senior School/Deputy Headmaster, Head of Preparatory School, Head of Tudor House, Director of Finance and Business Operations. At this stage the parent and/or student must make a written submission to the Director of Continuous Improvement if they have not already done so. The Director of Continuous Improvement and the appropriate senior member of staff will, after initial assessment and if still necessary convene a meeting involving the parent and/or student concerned, and other staff deemed necessary, by the Director of Continuous Improvement and senior staff member to progress the matter.

At the conclusion of the discussions, the Director of Continuous Improvement and senior member of staff, may make a finding themselves as to a suitable outcome, or refer the matter to the Headmaster to determine. In either eventuality the parent and/or student must be provided with a written response as to the findings of the Director of Continuous Improvement or Senior member of staff in respect of the complaint or grievance.

#### **5. Level 3 – Final Internal**

In the event that the matter has not been referred to the Headmaster and the parent and/or student do not agree with the outcome at the Higher Internal Level (Level 2 process) they may make a further written submission to the Headmaster requesting that he review the matter. At this stage the parent and/or student should provide reasons why the Headmaster should review the outcome of the earlier procedure together with any new and additional information that may be available. The Headmaster may take whatever action he deems appropriate e.g. convening meetings, interviewing staff etc. in order to determine the matter. Upon the conclusion of the Headmaster's deliberations on the matter he will inform the parent and/or student in writing of his determination of the complaint or grievance. The Headmaster may be assisted by the Director of Continuous Improvement or another staff member in the Level 3 process.

#### **6. School Council Oversight**

In the event the above preceding steps do not resolve the matter, the parents and/or student can forward their concerns to the Chairman of The Council of The King's School at [chairman@kings.edu.au](mailto:chairman@kings.edu.au).

#### **7. Level 4 – External**

If the parent and/or student remain dissatisfied, then it is acknowledged that they may be entitled to seek assistance from an external person or other appropriate authority. Should that action be taken by the parent and/or student, then the School may also seek external advice in respect of the matter.

#### **8. Review**

The School will review this Procedure on a regular basis and any suggested improvements should be forwarded to the Headmaster. It is not intended that this Procedure exceed any statutory obligation upon the School.

Complaints or Grievances that form the basis of more serious allegations will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant School policy and the School's legal obligations e.g. Child Protection Policy above and related legislation.

<b>Category</b>	Operational Council Endorsed
<b>Endorsed by</b>	CSE
<b>Reviewer</b>	Director of Continuous Improvement
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