

Complaints Procedures

These procedures have been agreed by the Governing Body of King Edward VI Handsworth School for Girls. They cover complaints about Governors, the Chairman, the Head and other staff. The complaint may arise from a pupil, a Governor or elsewhere, e.g. parents or neighbours of the School. The procedures are split into three main sections according to the source of the complaint with variations when the complaint is against the Governing Body as a whole, the Chairman, Head or an individual Governor.

A. Procedures for Dealing with Complaints (from Persons other than Governors and Pupils)

1. It is expected that many complaints or potential complaints will be resolved informally through discussions with the Head, other staff of the School and Foundation Staff. This is where the process should start.
2. Urgent complaints will be identified as such and given priority.
3. All complaints will be investigated fully, fairly and carefully, and complainants will be kept informed.
4. The aim will be to secure that the complaint is settled, or a decision reached so that it can, if required, proceed to the next stage.
5. Foundation staff will assist with advice and information.
6. The Governing Body recognises its duty to comply with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2010 (SI No. 1997) in respect of its complaints policy and procedures.
7. The formal complaint shall be made in writing to the Head who shall acknowledge the complaint. The Head shall respond to the complaint within 10 school days or give an indication of when a decision letter will be issued. The decision letter will point out to the complainant that any remaining dissatisfaction should be set out in writing within 10 days.

The Head will attempt to resolve the remaining complaint and the complainant shall be entitled to meet the Head to discuss the complaint.

A decision letter will be sent within 10 school days or (within the ten days) an indication will be given of when a decision will be reached.

8. The complainant will be informed that he may, within 10 school days of receipt of the above letter, appeal against the decision of the Head. Within 5 school days of such an appeal, the Head will inform the Chairman and the Clerk to the Governors.
9. A Complaints Committee of three members will meet formally to investigate the complaint and consider written and oral evidence. None of the Committee will have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.

Two members of the Complaints Committee will be Governors and the third member will be independent of the management and running of the School. The individuals will be selected by the Clerk to the Governors.

10. The Clerk will already have decided that the complaint falls to be considered under this procedure. Nevertheless, the members will satisfy themselves that the legal status of the complaint is established.
11. The complainant will be offered an opportunity of making representations in person and in writing. In the former case, the complainant may be accompanied by a friend or representative. Either party may call witnesses.
12. The Complaints Committee will have before them the complaint, the response, and any other relevant correspondence.
13. After reaching a decision, the Complaints Committee will inform the complainant of the decision taken and the reasons for it, any action taken or proposed to be taken, and the further recourse available to the complainant via the Education Funding Agency.

Variation for Complaints against the Headteacher, a Governor or the Governing Body as a Whole

Where a complaint is made which concerns the conduct of the Headteacher, a Governor (other than the Chairman) or the Governing Body as a whole, the Chairman shall act as complaints officer. Any appeal against the Chairman's decision shall be to a Complaints Committee of the Governing Body by written notice within 10 school days of receipt of the decision letter. Governors have determined that in such cases, the Complaints Committee will comprise three independent members.

Variation for Complaints against the Chairman of the Governing Body

The complaint shall be passed to the Clerk who shall present the complaint to a meeting of the Governing Body.

The Chairman will withdraw and the Governing Body will determine the complaint.

The complainant may appeal within 10 days of receipt of the decision letter to a Complaints Committee of three independent members nominated by the Bailiff of the King Edward's Foundation.

B. Procedure for Dealing with Complaints from Pupils

The procedure will mirror one of the procedures above according to the subject of the complaint.

C. Procedure for Dealing with Complaints from Governors

The complainant shall set out the complaint in writing to the Clerk. The subject of the complaint will be invited to respond in writing. The remainder of the Governing Body will consider the written statements. Both parties may attend to give oral evidence and may be accompanied.

The decision of the Governors shall be final.