Complaints Procedure for Parents

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Reviewed by | ***SMT***

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INTRODUCTION

Kew House School will take every step to assure the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided for its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this procedure.

Formal and informal complaints regarding the Head should be made to a member of the Board of the Gardener Schools Group. Complaints against the Head will also be addressed using the same three-stage procedure.

There is no right of complaint once a pupil has been formally withdrawn from the school or left at the end of their academic year, and no retrospective complaints will be entertained. Parents do have the right to continue with an existing complaint if the procedure set out below was initiated prior to the pupil leaving the school.

Directors and Complaints

The school has a genuine open-door policy. Directors are always happy to talk to parents informally at school events and are eager to hear about their children's experiences of school life. However, such conversations are not a part of the school's formal complaints procedure.

If you have a particular concern about your child or wish to raise a formal complaint, you should follow the school's published complaints procedure by sharing your concern directly with the school (except in the case of complaints against the Headteacher which should be addressed to the CEO Mr Theo Brehony t.brehony@gardenerschools.com)

In the event of a complaint reaching Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure, at least one director will normally review the complaint as part of the Complaints Panel.

This policy is freely available to parents on the school's website.

STAGE 1: INFORMAL RESOLUTION

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and **informally**.

- Parents should contact their child's Personal Tutor, the Head of Department or the member of staff concerned. In many cases, the matter will be resolved immediately (within 48 hours) by this means to parents' satisfaction. If the member of staff cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult their Head of Department (HoD) or a Deputy Head. Parents are encouraged to make initial contact verbally or by email, and staff will usually respond with a phone call or appointment time.

- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, a Deputy Head, or the Head will usually be referred to the relevant Personal Tutor unless the Head of Department, Deputy Head, or Head deems it appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally. This will be determined by the nature of the complaint. **Contact will be made within 24 hours from receipt of the initial complaint.**

- The Personal Tutor, teacher, or Head of Department will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved, or in the event of the Personal Tutor and parents failing to reach a satisfactory resolution within ten working days[1], parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

[1] "*working days*" are defined as Monday to Friday, during term time, excluding UK Public Holidays.

STAGE 2: FORMAL RESOLUTION

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then parents should put the complaint in writing to the Head using the form found in the appendix to this Policy. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

- At Stage 2, the Head will appoint an appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team, normally a Deputy Head, to investigate the complaint. The Stage 2 investigator will then make a report of their findings to the Head.

- In all cases, the Head will meet or speak to the parents concerned, normally within five working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter[2]. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

- Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be notified of this decision in writing, within 15 working days of the initial meeting / conversation.[3] The Head will also give reasons for their decision.

If parents remain unsatisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure within ten working days.

[2] Where practicable, reasonable and in agreement between the school and complainants
[3] Where practicable, reasonable and in agreement between the school and complainants

STAGE 3: COMPLAINTS PANEL

- Provision will be made for a hearing before a panel. The panel will be appointed within five working days of the complainant's request to proceed to Stage 3. The hearing will normally take place within a further ten working days of the panel being appointed.

- At least three people who were not directly involved in previous consideration of the complaint will be appointed by the school's Proprietors to sit on the panel. One of these panel members will be independent of the management and running of the school. Where possible, the independent person appointed will hold or have held a position of responsibility comfortable with analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments.

- Parents will be invited to attend and be accompanied to a panel hearing if they wish.

- The panel will make findings and recommendations. The panel will ensure that the complainant, Proprietors, Head and, where relevant, the person complained about, are given written copies of these or receive them by email. The findings and recommendations will be given to the relevant parties within five working days following the hearing.

- The Stage 3 resolution process should not take longer than 28 working days.*

** Where practicable and reasonable*

RECORD KEEPING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Written records will be kept of all complaints, their outcomes, and the actions taken by the school for three years, regardless of whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, whether the complaint was submitted in writing, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing.

- Parents are welcome to contact the school to request the number of formal complaints that have been raised during the last three years.

- All correspondence, statements, and records of complaints and their outcomes will be kept confidential except where the *Secretary of State* or a body conducting an inspection under Section 109 of the 2008 Act, as amended, requests access to them or where any other legal obligation prevails. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) may request records of all complaints made during a specified period and the actions taken as a result of each complaint.
- Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved at the formal stage (Stage 2) or proceed to a Panel hearing (Stage 3) and any action taken by the School as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld).
- The School processes data in accordance with its Privacy Notice. When dealing with complaints the School (including any Panel member appointed under the Stage 3 process) may process a range of information, which is likely to include the following:
    - 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 and contact details 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)
    - Notes/minutes of the hearing, and
    - The Panel's written decision
- This may include 'special category personal data' (as further detailed in the School's Privacy Notice, but potentially including, for instance, information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint. This data will be processed in accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy.

The School will keep records of formal complaints and Complaints Panel hearings, as required by regulation. It will do so in accordance with its Privacy Notice. All records relating to complaints shall be treated as confidential. In addition to where requested by the Secretary of State or an inspector (see above), there may be other circumstances where disclosure of the substance of a complaint or particular confidential records relating to it is required, for example, where there is a legal, regulatory, safeguarding or data protection obligation (eg, in response to a subject access request) which prevails over the requirement to maintain the records as confidential.

- The school recognises the mutual benefit to be gained from open and honest communication. We acknowledge your entitlement to complain, and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children whom you have placed in our care.

PERSISTANT CORRESPONDENCE

Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this will be regarded by the School as vexatious and outside the scope of this procedure.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

If you wish to make a complaint to the ISI about the school, you can write directly to:

Independent Schools Inspectorate
CAP House
9-12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA

Phone | 020 7600 0100
Email | concerns@isi.net

You are advised that the ISI will rarely consider a complaint unless the school's formal Complaints Procedure has been followed fully prior to contacting them.

Contacts

Managing Director | theo.brehony@gardenerschoolsgroup.com
Proprietor | maria.gardener@gardenergroupschools.com

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints are treated seriously and confidentially.

COMPLAINTS LOG

Formal complaints

Academic Year	Log
2024-25	*No Stage 3 complaints*
	4 Stage 2 complaints

APPENDIX – Stage 2

Complaint Form

Please read the *Complaints Procedure for Parents* (found here on the school's website) before completing this form. This form should be used when elevating an informal complaint to Stage 2 or 3.

To be completed by those with **parental responsibility** for a current pupil and returned to the Headmaster via headmaster@kewhouseschool.com or, if the complaint is against the Headmaster, Mr Theo Brehony, Managing Director of the Gardener Schools Group via theo.brehony@gardenerschools.com.

PLEASE USE **BLOCK** CAPITALS

Your name(s)	
Name of pupil(s), year(s) and your relationship to them	
Contact address	
Contact telephone day	
Contact telephone mobile	
Contact email address	
Details of the complaint	
Action taken to date (including staff member(s) who has/have dealt with it so far) and solutions offered	

The reason(s) that this was not a satisfactory resolution for you
What action(s) would you like to be taken to resolve your complaint?
Signature(s): **Date:**
School use
Stage in the complaints procedure (circle as appropriate): 1 2 3
Date acknowledgement sent:
By whom:
Complaint referred to:
Action taken:
Date:

How we may use personal information

The School processes data in accordance with its Privacy Notice available here. When dealing with complaints the School (including any Panel members appointed under the Stage 3 process) may process a range of information, which is likely to include:

- This completed complaint form
- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent(s) and pupil(s)
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations

- Pupil records (as appropriate)
- Witness statements (as appropriate)
- Name and contact details 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)
- Notes/ minutes of meetings including the Panel hearing, and
- The Panel's written decision.

As part of the complaints process we may also process 'special category personal data' (as further detailed in the School's Privacy Notice, but potentially including, for instance, information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint. This data will be processed in accordance with the School's Privacy Notice.

The School will keep records of formal complaints and Complaints Panel hearings, as required by regulation. It will do so in accordance with its Privacy Notice.