



KINETON HIGH SCHOOL

**COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE – A GUIDE
FOR PARENTS AND CARERS**

January 2016

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

ADVICE AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS, CARERS & GUARDIANS

INTRODUCTION

This policy and procedure is based upon the values and mission statement of Kineton High School.

It is also based on the following principles:

- a desire to encourage the resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- to make a clear distinction between a concern and a formal complaint;
- to be easily accessible and publicised;
- to be simple to understand and use;
- to be impartial;
- to be non-adversarial;
- to allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- to ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- to respect people's desire for confidentiality;
- to address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;
- to provide information to the Strategic Leadership Team so that services can be improved.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

This policy and procedure covers concerns or complaints about:

- The curriculum
- The breakdown of relationships, however temporary
- The behaviour of a student(s)
- The failure of someone in school to undertake a promised action
- Perceived lack of action on the part of an individual or the school to deal with a situation
- The way in which the school organises teaching groups
- The provision of school meals

It does **not** cover concerns or complaints about:

- Exclusions
- Additional Support Needs (ASN)
- Admissions
- The Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education (SACRE)
- Alleged mis-conduct of staff

These are all dealt with via separate arrangements.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE:

At Kineton High School we always welcome feedback and comments from parents and students. If you have a concern or complaint we would like you to tell us about it. Most concerns or complaints can be sorted out informally by speaking to your son's or daughter's form tutor, alternatively you may prefer to speak to the Head of House or drop in to Headteacher's Surgery on a Wednesday evening.

We hope we can resolve your problem informally but if you continue to be unhappy you should make a formal complaint to the Headteacher in writing. If the Headteacher does not sort out the problem to your satisfaction, (or if the complaint is about the Headteacher) then you should write to the Chair of Governors via the school office. The Chair of Governors will look into the matter and decide how to proceed. A meeting of the Complaints Panel may be convened to investigate your complaint.

Complaints about school problems are almost always settled within schools, but in exceptional cases if the situation cannot be resolved by the school, it may be possible to refer to an outside body such as the Local Authority, the Secretary of State for Education or the Ombudsman. If the LA cannot solve your problem they will advise you on what to do next.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS

The formal procedures will be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

All formal complaints should be passed to the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors if complaint about Headteacher). At each stage written records should be kept and passed to the Headteacher to be held centrally.

Stage One (a)

The Headteacher will decide who is best placed to deal with the complaint in the first instance, taking account of:

The nature of the complaint
The source of the complaint

Stage One (b): Complaint Heard by Headteacher

The Headteacher's influence will already have shaped the way complaints are handled in the school. At this point, the complainant may be dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled at Stage One (a) as well as pursuing their initial complaint. The head may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken.

If the problem is still unresolved Stage Two may be invoked by the complainant.

Stage Two

- Most complaints will have been resolved by this stage. If you are still unhappy the next step is to make a formal complaint to the governing body.
- You need to write to the Chair of Governors or Clerk to the Governing Body at the school address, giving details of the complaint. You can write a letter or use the form at the end of this booklet.
- You should send your complaint to the Chair of Governors or Clerk to the Governing Body. The envelope should be marked 'FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION' 'PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL' giving details of the complaint via the school office. You may wish to keep a photocopy to use later.
- On receipt of the complaint form, the Chair of Governors (or other governor) will:
 - Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
 - Meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary)
 - Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- At this point the Chair of Governors will decide whether the complaint should go straight to the governors' complaints panel or whether a mediation stage should be offered. Mediation can only proceed if the complainant and the Headteacher are willing for it to be tried. If mediation is not successful, the complaint will be considered by the governors' complaints panel.

Mediation

Mediation can be a good way to resolve a complaint because:

- It gives both complainant and Headteacher another opportunity to hear each other's point of view (with a third party facilitating)
- It gives the third party an opportunity to help Headteacher and complainant identify and build on areas of agreement
- It gives Headteacher and complainant a structure within which they can resolve remaining differences
- If both complainant and Headteacher emerge from the mediation satisfied, that is the best foundation for a continuing relationship between them
- Even if the complaint continues to a governors' panel, the issues to be considered are likely to be much clearer following the mediation

Mediation may elicit one or more of the responses listed below from either party:

- An acknowledgement that the complaint is valid in whole or in part
- An appropriate apology
- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again
- An acceptance that the complaint need go no further
- A commitment to review school policies in light of the complaint

Where the complainant is still not satisfied that their complaint has been dealt with fully and properly, they may choose to take it to a panel of Governors

Complaint heard by Governing Bodies Complaints Appeal Panel

- The Chair, or a nominated governor, may convene a Governing Body complaints panel. The governing body has nominated a number of members with delegated powers to hear complaints at this stage. The panel will be drawn from the nominated members and may consist of three or five people. The panel may choose their own chair.
- Individual complaints will not be heard by the whole Governing Body at any stage, as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.
- Your complaint will be acknowledged and you will be asked to suggest dates and times for a hearing.
- You will be given the opportunity to supply further information in writing at least 5 school days before the hearing.
- The Clerk to the Governors will confirm in writing the time, date and venue for the hearing. You may take a friend or representative with you as well as an interpreter, should one be required.
- Four school days before the hearing the Clerk will send you any papers submitted for the consideration of the Panel including the original complaint.
- At the hearing the Chair of the Panel will introduce the Panel members to you and remind you of the following process for the hearing.
- An opportunity for you to speak to the Panel about your complaint.
- The Governors on the Panel may ask you questions about what you have said or written.
- You will be invited to make a final comment and indicate how you might hope the matter would be resolved.
- You will then be free to leave the school.
- The Panel will invite the Headteacher to join them in order to outline the school's position.
- The Governors on the Panel may ask the Headteacher questions about what has been said or put in writing.
- The Headteacher will have an opportunity to make a final statement.
- The Headteacher will leave the Hearing.
- The Panel will discuss what they have heard and reach a decision.
- The Chair of the Panel will write to you and the Headteacher within five school days of the

Hearing to let you know the outcome.

- The governors' appeal hearing is the school-based stage of the complaints process, and is not convened to merely rubber-stamp previous decisions. The letter from the Chair of the Panel will tell you how to proceed if you are not satisfied with the outcome.

The Department for Education Stage 3

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the hearing at the school you may send your complaint to the Department for Education. This can be done on-line at www.gov.uk/complain-about-school and follow the links, or by writing to:

Department for Education
School Complaints Unit
2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

COMPLAINTS FORM

Please complete and return to the Headteacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Student's name:
Your relationship to the student:
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint.
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.
Official use Date acknowledgement sent: By who: Complaint referred to: Date:

FLOW CHART



