



COMPLAINTS POLICY

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Policy Author:	Mr Ian Roberts, Director of Finance and Operations
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COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

1. RGSW¹ has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure. RGSW makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the school's website and in the school office during the school day, and RGSW will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and the form in which it is published or available and of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, RGSW will also make available, on request, to Ofsted, the Department for Education (DfE) or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), details of this Complaints Procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Although this Procedure is made available to parents of prospective pupils, it is not available for use by them; it may only be used by parents of current pupils.

Complaints by parents of former pupils will be dealt with under this Complaints Procedure only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil to which the complaint relates was still registered as a pupil at the School.

'Parent(s)' means the holder(s) of parental responsibility for a current pupil about whom the complaint relates.

What Constitutes a Complaint?

2. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the School is within the scope of this policy. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do so something that it should have done or acted unfairly.

3. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The School is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you [or your child] raise[s] in good faith.

The Three-Stage Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – Informal Procedure

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

5. If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact their child's form tutor/class teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the form tutor/class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult with a more senior member of staff.

¹ RGSW incorporates RGS Worcester, RGS Dodderhill, RGS The Grange and RGS Springfield

6. If a complaint concerns a Form Tutor, an approach should be made to an Assistant Head (RGS Worcester); the deputy head (RGS Dodderhill and RGS The Grange); the Head (RGS Springfield).
7. Complaints made directly to a more senior member of staff will usually be referred to the relevant form tutor/class teacher unless it is deemed appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
8. The form tutor/class teacher or other person receiving 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 10 working days or in the event that the person dealing with the complaint fails to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this Procedure.
9. If, however, the complaint is against the Head, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Governors whose contact details are available on the website and from the School Office on request.

Stage 2 – Formal Procedure

10. If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
11. In most cases, the Head will contact the parents concerned as soon as possible and normally within 5 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
12. It may be necessary for the Head, or their nominee, to carry out further investigations.
13. The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
14. Once the Head 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 Head will also give reasons for their decision. In most cases, the Head will make their decision and provide the parents with reasons within 15 working days of the complaint being put in writing.
15. If the complaint is against the Head, the complaint should be made to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors or their nominee will call for a full report from the Head and for all the relevant documents. The Chair of Governors or their nominee 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 Chair of Governors or their nominee 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 Chair will give reasons for his/her decision.
16. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure within fourteen days of the date of the investigation report/letter.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

17. If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they may do so by writing to the Chair of Governors, c/o The Clerk to the Governors at the school.
18. The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall

be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of Governors. The Chair of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 21 working days.

19. 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.

20. The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. The Head shall also be entitled to 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.

21. The manner in which the hearing is conducted shall be at the discretion of the Panel.

22. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.

23. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings as to whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and accordingly decide whether to:

- Dismiss the complaint(s) in whole or in part;
- Uphold the complaint(s) in whole or in part; and
- may make recommendations.

24. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, within 10 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. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of Governors and the Head. A copy of the findings and recommendations will be held by the school and available for inspection on the school's premises by the Chair of Governors and the Head.

Timeframe for Dealing with Complaints

25. All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively and within clear and reasonable timescales.

26. 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 25 working days. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 21 working days.

27. Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, working days refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time, excluding bank holidays. This means that during School holidays it may take longer to resolve a complaint although the School will do what is reasonably practicable to avoid undue delay.

Recording Complaints and use of personal data

28. Following resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record of all formal 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).

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)
- Minutes of the hearing
- The Panel's written decision

This may include 'special category personal data' (potentially including sensitive data such as information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing 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 and Retention of Records Policy but in most cases for a period of at least six years after the pupil leaves the School.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

For the academic year 2019-20 the School received 7 formal complaints, one of which was resolved at Stage 1 and the other 6 at Stage 2.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

29. Parents of EYFS children should follow the three stages of this Complaints Procedure. If parents remain dissatisfied and their complaint is about the School's fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, then parents may take their complaint to the ISI or Ofsted. Parents will be notified by ISI or Ofsted of the outcome of the investigation into their complaint within 28 days of the complaint being received.

30. RGSW will provide ISI/Ofsted, 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 in accordance with its Privacy Notice and Retention of Records Policy.

31. Parents may complain directly to Ofsted or to ISI if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Schools must make available details of how to contact Ofsted and/ or the ISI:

Ofsted can be contacted on 0300 123 1231 or by email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

ISI can be contacted on 020 7600 0100 or by email: concerns@isi.net

ISI, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA

Sponsor – Director of Finance and Operations and Endorsed by the Chair of Governors

Reviewed, amended and Endorsed: September 2012, August 2013, August 2014, September 2015, September 2016, September 2017, September 2018, September 2019 and September 2020.