



33a COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE/POLICY

Queen Mary's School Complaints Procedure/Policy is written in accordance with the **(ISI Handbook for the Inspection of Schools, Commentary of the Regulatory Requirements, September 2020)**.

Queen Mary's School will always act with integrity and will act justly and compassionately in handling any complaints from parents of pupils. The School recognises that, "Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school is now a complaint, and in the scope of the Procedure/Policy, whatever the school labels it as". (ISI Regulatory Requirements 2018)

This Complaints Procedure/Policy, containing information about the Complaints Procedure/Policy is available to all via the School's website.

A 'concern' may be treated as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A complaint may be generally recognised as 'an expression or statement of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

It's in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to follow formal procedures.

Queen Mary's takes informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. However, there will be occasions when complainants want to raise their concerns formally. In those cases, this complaints procedure should be followed.

Anyone can make a complaint about any aspect of school life. This includes parents or carers of children no longer at the school as well as members of the public.

Complaints about the head or governing body

If the subject of the complaint is the Head, a member of the governing body or the entire governing body, it may be necessary or reasonable to deviate from the published complaints procedure. Complaints concerning the Head and a member of the governing body should be addressed to the Chairman of Governors who will decide on the suitability of the Complaints Policy in dealing with the complaint. When the entire governing body is the subject of the complaint, this should be pursued with Mr John Sherratt, Administrator for the Woodard Corporation, by emailing: johnsherratt@woodard.co.uk

The School aims to deal quickly and effectively with all complaints. Parents who make a complaint can expect to receive acknowledgement of their complaint within 24 hours during term time and within 7 working days during the holidays. Queen Mary's School will, where possible, aim to address a complaint and have the matter resolved within 10 working days.

Complaints Procedure

Stage 1: Complaints to be considered on an informal basis

- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's Form Teacher/Tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Form Teacher/Tutor cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the appropriate member of the Leadership Team. A dated record of the complaint and action taken should be sent to the Head, the pupil's central file and a copy kept in the informal complaints file.
- Complaints made directly may be referred to the relevant subject teacher or it may be appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally. The person dealing with the complaint will keep a dated, written record of the complaint and action taken to resolve the matter. The pupil's Tutor should be informed and a dated record of the complaint and action taken should be sent to the Head, the pupil's central file and a copy put in the informal complaints file.
- Should the matter not be resolved within 10 working days or in the event that the person dealing with the complaint and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, parents may proceed to the first formal stage of the complaints Procedure/Policy.

Stage 2: First Formal stage of the Complaints Procedure/Policy

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Head will speak to the parents concerned, normally within 7 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head to ask a senior member of staff to carry out further investigations.
- The Head/Deputy Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established and evaluated, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for her decision.
- If parents are not satisfied with the Head's decision, they may proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure/Policy, unless the parent later indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further.

Stage 3: Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to Mrs Rosanna Bryant who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. Stage 3 should be a full-merits hearing of the complaint, not merely a judicial review style check that process was followed. Panels should have clear terms of reference, a clear process, and a direction to reach a final decision within a specified timescale.
- 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. (The ISI Regulatory Requirements 2018 references the DFE guidance)
- "Our general view is that people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to scrutinising evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force might be considered."
- The Chairman of Governors, or a designated Governor on his behalf, will appoint all Panel members. The Board of Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.
- A complainant is allowed to attend the Panel Hearing and be accompanied if they wish. The right to request and attend a Panel is not forfeit because they have threatened or initiated legal proceedings.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

Complaints in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Queen Mary's School will adhere to the DfE Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

There is a written procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents, and a written record will be kept of any complaints, and their outcome. The Junior School Lead will investigate written complaints relating to their fulfilment of the EYFS requirements and will notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint. The record of complaints must be made available to ISI and Ofsted on request.

Queen Mary's will make available to complainants details about how to contact ISI and Ofsted, if they believe the school is not meeting the EYFS requirements. After an inspection by ISI, the school will supply a copy of the report to parents of children in Reception.

(DfE: Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. Published: 3 March 2017 Effective: 3 April 2017, Last updated 20 February 2018)"

Recording complaint progress

The Panel will make its findings and recommendations and ensure that a copy of those findings and recommendations is provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and available for inspection on the school premises by the governors and the Head. The record will also outline the action taken by the School.

Queen Mary's School will aim to issue the above information within 14 days of the hearing.

Under the General Data Protection Regulations (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR), data must not be kept longer than is necessary.

If Queen Mary's School does not resolve a formal complaint in a satisfactory way, the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) may be contacted by email: concerns@isi.net or by telephone 02076000100

You can contact Ofsted at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or 0300 123 4666

Confidentiality

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or the ISI for the purposes of section 108 or 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

The number of formal complaints raised in the school year 2019 – 2020 was 6

Mrs Carole Cameron
Head

Reviewed: April 2021

Next Review: April 2022