

KING EDWARD VII

SCHOOL POLICY



Complaints Panel; Terms of Reference

Document Adopted by Governing Board
<p>Date: June 2023</p> <p></p> <p>Signed (Chair):</p> <p>Print Name: Peter Dickson</p> <p>Leadership Team Responsibility: Linda Gooden, Headteacher</p>

**To be read in conjunction with the School's
Complaints Procedure at Stage 3**

Composition of the Governing Board Complaints Panel (GBCP)

The GBCP should be made of an odd number of Governors but not Governors who are employees of the School.

Competences of Governing Board Complaints Panel

While all parts of the Governing Board Competence Framework are important and should be used at all times, the focused work of the GBCP means that three parts of the Framework have greater significance. These are,

- i. 1b. Culture, values, ethos
- ii. 1c. Decision-making
- iii. 5. Compliance

Culture, values, ethos - The Panel must know about the ethos of the organisation and the code of conduct for the Governing Board and how this embodies the culture, values and ethos of the School. While carrying out its review of a complaint the Panel's members must act in a way that exemplifies and reinforces the School's culture, values and ethos. The Panel must ensure that policy and practice align with the organisation's culture, values and ethos. In practical terms this means checking that School Policies were followed but also looking for possible improvements to School Policy. See Appendix 1

Decision-making - The Panel will be asked to identify viable options and those most likely to achieve the organisation's goals and objectives. In order to do this Panel members must:

- put aside vested or personal interests to make decisions that are in the best interests of all pupils/students
- act with honesty, frankness and objectivity taking decisions impartially, fairly and on merit using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias
- bring integrity, and consider a range of perspectives and diverse ways of thinking to challenge the status quo, reject assumptions and take nothing for granted
- identify when to seek the advice of an independent clerk/governance professional for guidance on statutory and legal responsibilities and ethical aspects of the board's decision-making
- abide by the principle of collective-decision making and stands by the decisions of the Panel, even where their own view differs
- encourage transparency in decision making and is willingly answerable to, and open to challenge from, those with an interest in the decisions made

Compliance - The Panel must know about the importance of adhering to School's policy on parental complaints. This means they have to be able to speak up when concerned about non-compliance where it has not been picked-up by the Governing Board or other parts of the School or where they feel it is not being taken seriously and be able to identify when specialist advice may be required.

Each individual member of the GBCP must also keep in mind the Nolan Principles which are,

Selflessness

Integrity

Objectivity

Accountability

Openness

Honesty

and Leadership

Scope of the work of the GBCP

1. The GBCP has to establish where we are in the process. The GBCP will only investigate a complaint at Stage 3 which is the stage after the Headteacher has carried out their investigation. If a complaint comes to GBCP without first going to Headteacher the Complainant must be asked to redirect their complaint to the Headteacher, unless the complaint is about the Headteacher. If the complaint is about the Headteacher the complaint should be forwarded to the Chair of Governors.
2. The GBCP has to establish does the complaint fall within the scope of the complaints process. The GBCP will NOT deal with any complaint about the following;
 - Admissions to School
 - Exclusions from School
 - Special Educational Needs Provision
 - School re-organisation
 - Matters concerned with the School curriculum
 - Serious complaints against School staff
 - Child Protection issues
 - Public examinations

How the GBCP works.

- i. The GBCP must familiarise itself with the information that has led to this point. This will involve:
 - a) reading the information pack provided showing all correspondence, reports, and decisions taken at Stage 2.

- b) meeting with the complainant, Headteacher and other relevant people
- ii. It is important that the GBCP does not lose sight of the original complaint. It maybe that new issues emerge or extra information comes to light. In cases like this the GBCP has to decide whether to combine the complaints or ask the complainant to make new, separate complaints which can be dealt with in their own right.
- iii. It is important that when reviewing the School's handling of the complaint it does so using the School's Complaints Policy. Any breaches or deviations from the policy plus any examples of how it has been applied correctly must be recorded.
- iv. In reviewing the complaint there is a danger that the process becomes one of establishing right and wrong, with one party winning and another party losing. However, the key focus of the GBCP should be on getting both parties to an agreed resolution. This may shift the role of the GBCP from investigators to mediators and it may increase the time needed to close the case but these should not be reasons for giving up on finding an agreed resolution.
- v. In addition to a review of how the School Complaints Policy has been applied, there should be consideration of whether the spirit of finding an agreed solution has been in evidence. Even if the letter of the law approach to the application of School Complaints Policy has been met has the approach of the School been reasonable, fair and what we would expect for ourselves if we were making a complaint?
- vi. Whether the complaint is resolved or unresolved the GBCP should take time to find out from both parties how they felt they were treated. It maybe the case that the original complaint was upheld but that the complainant felt they had been treated with a lack of respect or dignity. Equally it may be that the complaint wasn't upheld but the Complainant felt that they had been heard and treated with respect. How the complaint was handled is as important as the resolution of the complaint. Members of the School should also be asked about how they felt they were treated during the process by colleagues inside the School, governors and parents/carers.
- vii. A key competence under the heading decision-making is 'transparency'. The GBCP should show how it arrived at its decisions and proposals rather than simply state them. It must be clear how GBCP arrived at its position.

Links to the full Governing Board

Stage 3 complaints are rare and are dealt with either by the Chair of Governors or at Governing Board level. It is important that the Full Governing Board are aware of the complaint and how it was dealt with. A report should be made to the full Governing Board of any Stage 3 complaint. Care should be taken to protect the identities of students and staff when reporting back.

Appendix 1 – School Aims and Values (Ethos)

At King Edward VII School we provide an exciting learning community in which each individual strives for excellence and is enabled to achieve personal fulfilment.

We value and seek to promote

- The equal worth of each individual member of our school community
- Learning and achievement
- The pursuit of excellence
- The acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding
- The cultural heritage of each individual and the rich diversity within our school community
- The personal qualities of self-esteem, self-confidence, self-discipline and tolerance
- A partnership with the wider community outside the school
- Care and respect for people and the environment
- International awareness and partnerships

For our students we aim to:

- Promote a shared understanding of the values of the school
- Provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum which promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Promote their mental, physical and emotional well being
- Prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life, including the world of work and their role as citizens in a democratic society
- Enable them to reach their full potential
- Provide a curriculum which is open and accessible to all students
- Develop a learning culture within which students experience the enjoyment of learning and the motivation that such enjoyment encourages
- Ensure equality of opportunity to all students
- Value and celebrate the positive attitudes and diverse achievements of all students
- Create an environment which ensures that students develop self-management and responsibility
- Provide a healthy and safe working environment

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