



THE REGENT SECONDARY SCHOOL

Complaints Policy

Reviewed by the Principal: October 2024
Previous Review: August 2022
Next Review: October 2025
Approved by the Board: October 2024

GENERAL CONCERNS

Parents may occasionally be concerned about an aspect of their child's education or welfare at school. This could include issues concerning the school's approach to aspects of the curriculum, homework, behavioural problems or any other issue.

The school welcomes enquiries from parents about any matter.

Teachers and staff will explain the school practices and policies, and how they affect the students. The majority of concerns will be handled by subject teachers or form tutors.

If in doubt, keep asking until you are completely satisfied, as all staff are eager to help. You could ask to discuss the matter with a member of the Senior Management Team if you need further information following your discussion with the subject teacher or form tutor.

It is not appropriate for office staff to discuss concerns in detail with you, but they will ensure you get to speak to the right person.

If parents feel they must state their concerns formally, this is not a problem. The school has defined procedures for handling complaints so please don't be embarrassed if you feel an issue warrants more attention.

COMPLAINTS

In the first instance, the procedure is to contact the school office to arrange an appointment to discuss your complaint with your child's subject teacher or form tutor.

The school's policy is to follow the **United Kingdom's Department for Education (D.f.E.)** best practice guidelines when handling concerns and complaints.

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedures>

It would be unusual to deviate from these procedures, but the school always retains discretion in these matters.

All staff are familiar with the guidelines and are duty-bound to help parents needing advice. Please don't feel you are making a fuss. These procedures have been carefully compiled and their reference, however rare, is routine to help students, parents and the school.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Most complaints from parents, carers and others are handled under the following general procedure.

The procedure is divided into three stages:

STAGE 1 aims to resolve the concern through informal contact at the appropriate level in school.

STAGE 2 is the first formal stage at which written complaints are considered by the Principal, or a member of the Senior Management Team responsible for dealing with the complaint.

STAGE 3 is the next stage once Stage 2 has been worked through. It involves a review by the Board.

The way each of these stages operates is explained below:

STAGE 1 – YOUR INITIAL CONTACT WITH THE SCHOOL

- Many concerns will be dealt with informally when you make them known to us.
- The first point of contact should always be your child's form tutor.
- We will see you, or contact you by telephone or in writing by email, as soon as possible after your concern is made known to us. All members of staff know how to refer, if necessary, to the appropriate person with responsibility for particular issues raised by you. He or she will make a clear note of the details and will check later to make sure that the matter has been followed up.
- We will ensure that you are clear about what action or monitoring of the situation, if any, has been agreed.
- We will confirm this in writing to you by email.
- We will ensure that we speak directly to all appropriate persons who may be able to assist us with our enquiries into your concern.
- We will discuss with you (normally within five working days) the progress of our enquiries. You will have the opportunity of asking for the matter to be considered further, once we have responded to your concern.
- If you are still dissatisfied following this informal approach, your concern will become a formal complaint and we will deal with it at the next stage.

STAGE 2 – FORMAL CONSIDERATION OF YOUR COMPLAINT

- This stage in our procedures deals with written complaints. It applies where you are not happy with the informal approach to dealing with your concern, as outlined under Stage 1 above.
- Normally, your written complaint (hard copy or email) should be addressed to the Principal. If, however, your complaint concerns the Principal personally, it should be sent to the school marked "For the attention of the Board".

- We will acknowledge your complaint by email as soon as possible after receiving it. This will be within three working days.
- We will send you a copy of these procedures with the acknowledgement via email.
- Normally we would expect to respond in full within ten working days, but if this is not possible we will email to explain the reason for the delay and let you know when we hope to be able to provide a full response.
- As part of our consideration of your complaint, we may invite you to a meeting to discuss the complaint and fill in any details required. If you wish, you can ask someone to accompany you to help you explain the reasons for your complaint.
- The Principal may also be accompanied by a suitable person if they wish.
- Following the meeting, the Principal will, where necessary, talk to witnesses and take statements from others involved. If the complaint centres on a pupil, we will talk to the pupil concerned and, where appropriate, others present at the time of the incident in question.
- We will normally talk to pupils with a parent or carer present unless this would delay the investigation of a serious or urgent complaint, or where a pupil has specifically said that he or she would prefer the parent or carer not to be involved. In such circumstances, we will ensure that another member of staff, with whom the pupil feels comfortable, is present.
- If the complaint is against a member of staff, it will be dealt with under the school's internal confidential procedures, as required by U.K. law and D.f.E. best practice guidelines.
- The Principal will keep written/typed, signed and dated records of all meetings, telephone conversations, and other related documentation.
- Once we have established all the relevant facts, we will send you a written response to your complaint. This will give a full explanation of the Principal's decision and the reasons for it. If follow-up action is needed, we will indicate what we are proposing to do.
- We may invite you to a meeting to discuss the outcome as part of our commitment to building and maintaining good relations with you.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation and the school's findings, you may wish to proceed to Stage 3, as described below.

STAGE 3 – CONSIDERATION BY THE BOARD

- If your concern has already been through Stages 1 and 2 and you are unsatisfied with the outcome, the Board will review the complaint and undertake an investigation.
- This is a formal process and your ultimate recourse at the school level.
- The purpose of this arrangement is to give your complaint a hearing in front of The Board who have no prior knowledge of the details of the complaint and who can, therefore, consider it without prejudice.
- A complaints review panel will aim to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the parent.
- We recognise, however, that it may sometimes only be possible to establish facts and make recommendations which will reassure you that we have taken your complaint seriously.

During the meeting, you can expect there to be opportunities for:

- you to explain your complaint
- you to hear the school's response from the Principal
- you to question the Principal about the complaint
- you to be questioned by the Principal about the complaint
- the Board to be able to question you and the Principal
- any party to have the right to call witnesses (subject to the Board's approval) and all parties to have the right to question all witnesses
- you and the Principal to make a final statement

In closing the meeting, the Board will explain that they will now consider their decision and that written notice of the decision will be sent to the Principal and yourself within two weeks.

The Board will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented in order to:

- reach a decision on the complaint
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- recommend, where appropriate, changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that similar problems do not happen again

The clerk will send you and the Principal a written statement outlining the decision of the panel within two weeks.

We will keep a copy of all correspondence and notes on file in the school's records but separate from students' personal records.

CLOSURE OF COMPLAINTS

- Very occasionally, a school will feel that it needs, regretfully, to close a complaint where the complainant is still dissatisfied.
- We will do all we can to help to resolve a complaint against the school but sometimes it is simply not feasible to meet all of the complainant's wishes. Sometimes it is ultimately a case of "agreeing to disagree".
- If a complainant persists in making representations to the school – to the Principal, Board or anyone else – this can be extremely time-consuming and can detract from our responsibility to look after the interests of all the children in our care.
- For this reason, we are entitled to close correspondence (including personal approaches, as well as letters and telephone calls) on a complaint where we feel that we have taken all reasonable action to resolve the complaint.