



Unreasonable Complaints Policy

The King's (The Cathedral) School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the School. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and we will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

The School defines unreasonable complaints as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the School, for example if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to identify themselves or give sufficient detail about the issue;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaint's procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, to unreasonable timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- takes any unreasonable delay in submitting a complaint;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome; and/or
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the complainant behaves in any of the following ways, either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- uses threats, intimidation or violence;
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowingly provides falsified information; it to be false;
- published unacceptable information on social media, websites, newspapers, or on other public forums.

Complainants should limit their communication with the School that relates to their complaint while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher, or Chair of Governors, will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before designating the complaint as 'unreasonable'.

If the behaviour continues, the Headteacher will inform the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be subject to review by the School at reasonable intervals. This may include, but is not limited to:

- a single point of contact in school;
- limited contact, at the School's discretion;
- the appointment of an advocate.

In certain circumstances, the School may decide to stop responding to a serial and persistent complainant. Such a decision to stop responding will never be taken lightly but is likely to occur when:

- the School has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs;
- the complainant has been given a clear statement of the School's position and their options (if any); and
- the complainant contacts the School repeatedly making substantially the same points each time.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the School.