COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Date to be reviewed	September 2027
Date of last review	September 2026
Governors Committee for Review	Education
Senior Leadership Team member accountable for review	HM

Introduction

This document sets out Royal Grammar School's Procedure for addressing formal complaints. The policy is designed to ensure that a concern or a complaint is managed fairly, efficiently and at the appropriate level. We aim to do so sympathetically and to resolve the matter as soon as possible. Any complaint must be made within 3 months of the area of concern to fall within the scope of the Procedure.

If you have any concerns about the school or your child's education, please contact us to discuss

the matter at the earliest opportunity. It is preferable for the school to receive a concern or complaint directly rather than to hear about it on the rumour mill. If we do not know what your concerns are, we will not be able to do anything about them. The school fully understands that concerns which are not quickly resolved can cause resentment. The school's intention is that parents and their child should never feel that a complaint will not be taken seriously or will adversely affect their child or their opportunities whilst at RGS.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

The school defines a concern as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'. A complaint is defined as 'as expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or a lack of action'.

Stage 1: Internal

Concerns: We expect that most concerns, where a parent seeks intervention, reconsideration or some other action to be taken, can be resolved informally. Please raise the concern initially as follows:

1. **Teaching and Learning** – if the matter relates to the classroom, the curriculum or special educational needs, please speak or write to the Subject Leader or Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator as appropriate.

2. **Pastoral care** – for concerns relating to matters outside the classroom, please speak or write to the relevant Head of Year or Assistant Head (Student Development) as appropriate.

3. **Disciplinary matters** – a problem over any disciplinary action taken or a sanction imposed should be raised first of all with the member of staff who imposed it then, if not resolved, with the relevant Head of Year or Assistant Head (Student Development).

4. **Financial and administrative matters** – a query relating to charges or to other administrative matters should be raised either with the Finance Office or with the Finance Director.

5. **Other** - Should an informal concern or complaint be raised with a member of staff other than those designated at item 1 to 4 above, they are asked to redirect it to the appropriate individual under this policy.

Unresolved concerns: A concern which has not been resolved by informal means within ten working days from the receipt of the concern or complaint can be notified as a formal complaint in accordance with Stage 2 below.

Record of concerns: In the case of concerns raised under Stage 1 of this procedure, the only record of the concern and its resolution will be file notes by the person dealing with the concern or complaint and/or file correspondence between the person raising the concern and the respondent.

It is a precondition to the operation of this policy that the complainant shall have made reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution and shall have acted in relation to the matter in a reasonable and measured way.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution (Investigation by a member of the Senior Leadership Team)

1. The complainant must put the complaint in writing, addressed to the Headmaster, setting out briefly the facts and stating what it is that the complainant considers should have been done or where this has not met reasonable expectations.

2. An investigation will be carried out by a member of the Senior Leadership Team - made up of the Deputy Headmaster, Finance Director and the Assistant Heads - who may offer the complainant a meeting and speak to others involved. Whenever reasonably possible, any meeting with the complainant will take place within 15 school days* of the written complaint being received.

3. The investigator will put their findings in writing and will indicate what, if any, steps should be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 15 school days* of the meeting with the complainant and if no meeting is to take place within 15 school days* of the complaint being received.

Any complaint relating to the Headmaster must be sent to the Clerk to the Governing Body, who will organise for a Governor to carry out the investigation and if a satisfactory outcome is not reached then a Panel of Governors will hear the complaint.

Any complaint against a Governor must be sent to the Clerk to the Governing Body, who will organise for a Governor to carry out the investigation and if a satisfactory outcome is not reached then a Panel of Governors will hear the complaint.

Any complaint against the whole Governing Body must be sent to the Clerk to the Governing Body who will determine the most appropriate course of action.

Stage 3 – Formal Resolution (Panel Hearing)

1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the investigator, they may request that the complaint be considered by the Complaints Panel of the Governing Body which will comprise at least three people who have not previously been directly involved in the matter including one person who is independent of the management and running of the Royal Grammar School. That request must be in writing, addressed to the Clerk to the Governors at the Royal Grammar School, within ten school days* of the response being sent to the complainant and must set out briefly the reasons why the complainant is dissatisfied with the response.

2. The Clerk will invite the Royal Grammar School to put in writing its response to the complainant's reasons. The Royal Grammar School will, unless not reasonably practicable, do this within 15 school days* and at the end of that period (whether or not the Royal Grammar School has responded) the Clerk will convene a meeting of the Complaints Panel of the Governing Body. That meeting will be held as quickly as practicable given the need to find a date that is reasonably convenient for the complainant, the Royal Grammar School and the members of the Panel. Whenever possible, the meeting will be held within 15 school days* of the end of the Royal Grammar School's response time. At any meeting, the complainant will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend but legal representation will not be allowed.

3. The meeting is not a court case and will be as informal as circumstances allow. The complainant will have the opportunity to put forward their reasons for dissatisfaction and to elaborate them but may not introduce reasons that were not previously put in writing. The Royal Grammar School will have the opportunity to put its side of things and each side, as well as the Panel members, will be able to ask questions. The complainant will have the opportunity to make final comments to the Panel.

4. The Panel may make findings and recommendations and a copy of those findings and recommendations will be:
   - sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
   - available for inspection on the Royal Grammar School premises by the Royal Grammar School Trust and the Headmaster.

5. The Panel will formulate its response as quickly as reasonably possible, aiming to do so within 10 school days*, and the Clerk to the Governors will notify all concerned.

Attendance at a Complaints Panel Hearing

The Complaints Panel will only proceed if the complainant and/or their representative attend. The Clerk will contact the complainant to ask if they would like another date for the hearing scheduled. If the complainant does not confirm attendance or fails to attend on the day without compelling reasons, the Complaints Panel will not proceed and the complainant will lose their right to the complaint being heard. Any further attempt to re-open the matter will be considered as falling under the serial/persistent complainant section as below.

Serial or persistent complainants

If a complainant attempts to reopen an issue or a closely related issue that has already been dealt with under this Complaints Procedure, the Chairman of Governors may write to the complainant to inform him/her that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter closed, and that continued correspondence is vexatious and that the Royal Grammar School will not respond to any further correspondence on this issue or a closely related issue.

Unreasonable complainants

The Royal Grammar School is committed to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and we have adopted the DfE model policy for unreasonable complainants to employ, if necessary.

Record Keeping

A written record will be kept of all complaints that were resolved at the formal stage of the Complaints Procedure. Records will contain details of whether the complaint was resolved at stage 2, or whether it proceeded to a stage 3 panel hearing. The action taken by the school as a result of a complaint (regardless of whether they are upheld) will also be recorded.

Confidentiality

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 or otherwise as required by law.

** School days - School days are Monday to Friday when the school is open in term time. Any*

complaint case which falls partially during school holidays will be dealt with as soon as is practicable.