

Parents Complaint Policy

Effective from: August 2025

Next review due: August 2026



KING'S COLLEGE SCHOOL

PANAMA

1. Purpose

King's College School Panama is committed to providing an outstanding standard of education, pastoral care and service to families. We value open communication and constructive feedback.

This policy sets out the procedure for parents and guardians to raise concerns or complaints in a clear, fair and timely manner. It is written in accordance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Part 7 and reflects the governance framework of Inspired Education.

Our aim is to resolve concerns at the earliest possible stage while ensuring procedural fairness, confidentiality and impartiality throughout the process.

2. Scope

This policy applies to complaints made by parents or guardians of current or former pupils. It does not apply to:

- Safeguarding allegations against staff, which are handled under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Pupil disciplinary matters where a separate appeal process exists
- Employment matters.

Where a complaint raises safeguarding concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed immediately and procedures under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will take precedence.

3. Guiding Principles

All complaints will be handled in accordance with the following principles:

- Fairness and impartiality
- Prompt and proportionate investigation
- Respectful and professional communication
- Confidential handling of information
- No detriment or retaliation against a complainant

Making a complaint will not adversely affect a pupil's education, progress or standing within the school.

4. Accessibility

The school will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that parents or guardians are able to access the complaints procedure effectively. This may include support with written submissions, translation assistance or alternative formats where appropriate.

5. Definition of a Complaint

A concern is an expression of dissatisfaction that can usually be resolved informally.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the school's actions, decisions, policies or failure to act that requires formal investigation.

6. Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Most concerns can be resolved quickly and informally.

Parents are asked to raise concerns in the first instance with:

- The class teacher or Form Tutor
- The relevant Head of Phase
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team

The member of staff will listen carefully, clarify the issue and seek to resolve it promptly and professionally.

Concerns will normally be acknowledged within two working days and resolved within ten working days where possible. If the matter is not resolved to the parent's satisfaction, the complaint may move to Stage 2.

7. Stage 2 – Formal Written Complaint to the Head of School

If informal resolution is unsuccessful, the parent should submit a formal complaint in writing to the Head of School.

The complaint should clearly state:

- The nature of the complaint
- The relevant facts
- The outcome being sought

The complaint will be acknowledged within three working days.

The Head of School will either investigate directly or appoint a senior leader who has had no prior involvement in the matter to ensure impartiality.

The investigation may include:

- Meetings with the complainant
- Interviews with relevant staff or witnesses
- Review of documentation

Parents may be accompanied to meetings by one adult advisor.

A written outcome will normally be issued within ten working days of acknowledgement. Where additional time is required due to complexity or availability of relevant parties, parents will be informed of the revised timeframe.

If the complaint is upheld, appropriate and proportionate action will be taken.

If the parent remains dissatisfied, the complaint may proceed to Stage 3.

8. Stage 3 – Complaints Panel Hearing

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Stage 2 outcome, they may appeal in writing to the Chief Executive Officer for LATAM within five working days of receiving the decision.

The appeal must state the grounds for appeal and the outcome sought.

A Complaints Panel will be convened as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within fifteen working days of receipt of the appeal.

Panel Composition:

- At least three members
- No prior involvement in the complaint
- At least one member independent of the management and running of the school

For the purposes of this policy, independent means a person who is not employed at King's College School Panama and who has had no prior involvement in the matters raised. This may include a senior leader or Head from another Inspired Education school within the region or group who has no managerial oversight of King's College School Panama, no connection to the complaint and who is able to act impartially.

Panel members will be appointed by Inspired Americas governance to ensure objectivity, independence and procedural fairness.

The complainant may attend and may be accompanied by one adult advisor.

The Panel will:

- Review the complaint documentation
- Consider whether the Stage 2 process was conducted fairly and in accordance with this policy
- Determine whether the decision reached was reasonable based on the evidence

The Panel will make clear findings and, where appropriate, recommendations.

The Panel's decision will be issued in writing within seven working days of the hearing. The written decision will include the Panel's findings and the reasons for those findings. A copy will be provided to the complainant and made available to the proprietor and governance body. The decision of the Panel is final.

9. Safeguarding Complaints

If a complaint involves an allegation against a member of staff that meets the threshold of a safeguarding concern, the matter will be managed under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

In such cases:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed immediately
- External agencies may be involved where required
- Timelines under this complaints policy may be suspended.

The welfare of the child will be paramount.

10. Early Years Foundation Stage

Where a complaint relates to a child in the Early Years Foundation Stage:

- The school will investigate and provide a written response within 28 days
- A written record of the complaint and its outcome will be kept
- Parents will be informed of their right to contact relevant regulatory authorities where applicable

11. Record Keeping and Confidentiality

The school will maintain a written record of all formal complaints, including:

- Whether resolved at Stage 2 or Stage 3
- The action taken
- The outcome

Only complaints that proceed to Stage 2 or Stage 3 are recorded as formal complaints for the purpose of annual reporting. Records will be retained securely for a minimum of three years.

All correspondence, statements and records will be treated as confidential, except where disclosure is required by law, regulatory authorities or inspectors.

12. Governance Oversight

Inspired Education Americas governance will:

- Receive anonymised annual data on formal complaints

- Monitor patterns and themes
- Review the effectiveness of the complaints process

This ensures accountability and supports continuous improvement.

13. Publication of Complaint Numbers

In accordance with regulatory requirements, the school will provide, upon request, the number of complaints registered under Stage 2 or Stage 3 of the formal procedure during the preceding school year. Complaints resolved at Stage 1 are not recorded as formal complaints for this purpose.

14. Timeframe Summary

Stage 1 Informal resolution

Acknowledgement within 2 working days

Resolution target within 10 working days

Stage 2 Formal complaint

Acknowledgement within 3 working days

Written outcome normally within 10 working days

Stage 3 Panel appeal

Appeal lodged within 5 working days

Panel hearing normally within 15 working days

Decision issued within 7 working days

15. Definition of Working Days

For the purposes of this policy, working days are defined as Monday to Friday during term time, excluding public holidays. Where a complaint is received during a school holiday period, timelines will commence from the first official day of the following term unless safeguarding or welfare considerations require immediate action.

16. Conduct of Parents

All complaints should be raised respectfully and in accordance with the Inspired Parent Code of Conduct, which forms part of the enrolment agreement.

The school will not tolerate abusive, threatening or defamatory behaviour. Where behaviour breaches the Parent Code of Conduct, the school reserves the right to take appropriate and proportionate action.

17. Document Control

Effective from: August 2025

Review date: August 2026

Policy Owner: Head of School

Approved by: Inspired Education LATAM