

Wellington School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents. The school has a well-established complaints procedure that is explained below. A complaint is regarded as any serious expression of dissatisfaction that needs a response. We wish to ensure that parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so and also understand that:

- we listen and take complaints seriously
- we respond within a reasonable time
- we respond in a courteous, efficient way
- we take action where appropriate

These procedures can be broken down into 4 stages that should be followed sequentially, starting either at Stage 1, or for more serious issues at Stage 2.

Stage 1 Concerns/Complaints referred to and resolved by the Head of Year

Stage 2 Concerns/Complaints referred to and resolved by the Deputy Head/Head of Junior School/Assistant Head

Stage 3 Concerns/Complaints escalated to and resolved by the Head

Stage 4 Concerns/Complaints referred to the Board of Governors

Stage 1

Should I complain or not?

If as parents you have concerns, you are entitled to raise issues. If in doubt, you should contact the school as we are here to help. Where possible, we will always strive to resolve concerns before they become complaints.

“How should I express concerns?”

The best way to express a concern in the Senior School is to contact the appropriate Head of Year, either by sending an email or by telephone. In the Junior School, your child’s Class Teacher is usually the first point of contact. Be as clear as possible about your concerns. The Head of Year or Class Teacher will often be able to liaise with colleagues and resolve matters quickly, with the minimum of fuss.

Parents should not contact subject teachers directly in the Senior School.

Stage 2

“What if my concern is more serious?”

You may prefer to raise more serious concerns directly with a member of the Senior Management Team, which includes the Assistant Heads, the Head of the Junior School and the Deputy Head. Parents are always welcome to contact the Head directly, but most issues will be referred initially to the appropriate member of the Senior Management Team for further investigation and resolution. Disciplinary matters of a serious nature are dealt with in the first instance by the Deputy Head and issues relating to Pupil Welfare by the Assistant Head (Pastoral).

“When does a concern become a complaint?”

Some concerns are complaints from the start due to their nature. In most situations, however, a concern becomes a complaint when initial attempts to resolve the matter in a way that is acceptable to the person with the concern have not been successful. In this case, further steps will be taken to resolve the issue and where necessary, the matter will be passed to a more senior member of staff. The Deputy Head and the Head will always be aware of and involved in attempts to resolve issues that have become intractable.

“How should I write my complaint?”

Given the sensitive nature of complaints, the content of any written complaint should be restricted to the matter at hand. The content should be factual and relevant. References to past events, resolved or otherwise, and the repetition of hearsay should be avoided. The school relates to pupils and their parents on an individual basis and it will not enter into correspondence or discussion with groups of parents.

The basic principles of courtesy apply at all times and any approach that may cause staff to feel threatened or under pressure to act or respond in a particular way is not acceptable.

“What will happen next?”

If you raise something by telephone or in a short email, relatively minor matters can often be resolved immediately. For more serious concerns, you may be asked to provide further details so that steps can be taken to investigate the matter and decide how to proceed. If you have expressed your concern more formally by email or letter, we will acknowledge receipt and provide an initial response as soon as possible for urgent matters, and within three working days for issues that do not require immediate action.

For more serious concerns, the person you contact will need to discuss the matter with appropriate colleagues and consider it further before providing a full response. They may decide that the issue should be dealt with by another member of staff and you will be informed that the matter has been passed on. If the issue needs to be investigated, a full response will be sent to you when the investigations are complete. This will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

“What happens about confidentiality?”

The school will always adhere to the legal requirements of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and other appropriate legislation.

Your complaint or concern will always be treated with discretion and in a respectful manner. Knowledge of it will be limited to those who are involved in investigating and responding to it. When concerns or complaints relate to a particular individual or individuals, however, they will need to be aware of the nature of the concern so that they have an opportunity to respond. Anonymity will be kept where possible, but the identity of a person expressing concern or complaining will often be apparent from the context.

Complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children and your child should know that he/she will not be adversely affected or unfairly treated, if you make a complaint. We cannot rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police. In such cases, you would be informed.

Action taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints will be handled confidentially within the school. Where a complaint is made against a member of staff or another pupil, specific details of any subsequent action, disciplinary or otherwise, will not be shared with the complainant.

“Can I make an anonymous complaint?”

Complaints made anonymously will only be pursued if sufficient specific information is provided to enable the school to investigate further. The school will give consideration to the issue raised, however, even if the matter cannot be pursued in detail. Any complaint containing serious allegations will be referred to the Head.

Stage 3

“What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?”

If you are not satisfied, you should write an email or letter to the Head and provide an explanation of the reasons for your continued dissatisfaction. The Head will endeavour to conduct further investigations and consider the matter again, with a view to bringing the matter to a satisfactory conclusion. The following are examples of what may be offered in order to resolve a complaint:

- A remedy that is satisfactory to you and to the school
- An explanation of the school’s decisions and actions
- An apology or admission that the situation could have been handled differently
- An undertaking that steps will be taken to prevent recurrence, and that relevant policies and procedures will be revised to reflect the lessons learnt

Stage 4

“Can I take my concern or complaint to the Board of Governors”

If you have been through the procedures described above in full and you are still not satisfied, you may appeal to the Board of Governors by writing an email or letter directly to the Chair explaining the reason for the appeal. The Chair will acknowledge receipt of the request and ask the Head to provide whatever information is required for the appeal to be considered. The outcome of an appeal is final.

In some situations, the Chair may invite you to attend a meeting before the outcome of the appeal can be determined. You will be provided with details of those attending the meeting and you may wish to be supported by a companion, who must have no direct or indirect connection to the matter of concern. Legal representation would not be appropriate.

We hope that we shall be able to satisfy your concerns. If we are unable to do so, you may wish to seek legal advice. Serious complaints can also be addressed to your MSP or to the Registrar of Independent Schools in the Scottish Executive.

Additionally, parents of Nursery children may wish to contact the Care Inspectorate (South West Region) at 1st Floor, Rivergate House, Rivergate, Irvine KA12 8EH (Telephone: 01294 323920).

“How long will it take to respond to my concern or complaint?”

The majority of concerns and complaints are dealt with within a few days. The timescales documented below, however, given an indication of the likely times that may be required to deal with more complex issues.

The school will acknowledge your concern or complaint within 3 working days, or as soon as possible for urgent matters. You may also receive an initial response and an explanation of how the school intends to proceed.

Thereafter, we will aim to complete any investigation and provide a full response to you within 7 working days of our acknowledgement. If a concern or complaint escalates to Stage 3, you will receive a resolution or concluding response within 10 working days. Any Stage 4 referral to the Board of Governors will be concluded within a further 10 working days where possible. If the school requires more time at stage, you will be provided with a revised timetable.

Wellington School recognises and acknowledges your entitlements to complain and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care.



CONTACTS:

Wellington School
Carleton Turrets
Craigweil Road
AYR
KA7 2XH
Tel: 01292 269321
Fax: 01292 272161
E: info@wellingtonschool.org
www.wellingtonschool.org

Additional contact for parents of Nursery pupils:

Care Inspectorate
South West Region
1st Floor
Rivergate House
Rivergate
Irvine KA12 8EH
Tel.: 01294 323920

Headmaster:
Mr S Johnson headmaster@wellingtonschool.org

Finance Manager:
Mrs L Peters finance@wellingtonschool.org

Deputy Head:
Mrs M Windows mwindows@wellingtonschool.org

Head of Junior School (and Nursery):
Mr J Cox jcox@wellingtonschool.org

Assistant Head (Pastoral) & Child Protection Coordinator
Mr A McDougall amcdougall@wellingtonschool.org

Assistant Head (Academic)
Ms G Johnston gjohnston@wellingtonschool.org

SPJ
January 2023