



POLICY ON UNREASONABLE COMPLAINANTS

School update	
Responsible for review of policy	Deputy Head Academic
Last school update	March 2021
Governor Sub-Committee review	
Sub Committee to review	Academic/Board
Review Period	3 years
Last Sub- Committee review date	3 rd March 2021
Scheduled review	March 2024
Reviewed and referred to Board by Sub Committee – <i>meeting date</i>	3 rd March 2021
Board Approval	
Approved by Board of Governors (Meeting date)	No amendments made by Academic committee. Board approval not required.
Version number	4
Next Sub-Committee/Board Review	March 2024
Related policies	Complaints procedure -Boarders Complaints Policy
Uploaded to Staff Shared	March 2021
Uploaded to Website	March 2021

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 The Royal Masonic School for Girls is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain.
- 1.2 The School will not normally limit contact with complainants but staff will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour and the School will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive offensive or threatening.

2. DEFINITION

2.1 RMS defines unreasonable complainants as *'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the School, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'*.

2.1.1 A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- 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 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 a complaints 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, often immediately and to their own 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;
- 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;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- 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.

2.1.2 A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;

- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers

2.1.3 Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with the School while a complaint is being processed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

3. PROCEDURES

3.1 Whenever possible, the Head of RMS or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

3.1.2 If the behaviour continues, the Head of RMS will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it.

3.1.3 For complainants who contact RMS excessively causing a significant level of disruption, the Head of RMS may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

3.1.4 In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence by a complainant, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from RMS.

4. BARRING FROM THE SCHOOL PREMISES

4.1 If a parent's behaviour is a cause for concern the School will ask him/her to leave school premises. In serious cases, the Head of RMS will notify the parent in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent may wish to make. The School will always give the parent the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing.

4.1.1 The decision to bar should then be reviewed, taking into account any representations made by the parent, and either confirmed or lifted. If the decision is confirmed, the parent should be notified in writing, explaining how long the bar will be in place.

4.1.2 Anyone wishing to complain about being barred can do so, by letter or email, to the Chair of Governors.