	Title 47-Complaints policy	Area Administration	Compiled by Education Team	Validity Sept 2022-Jun 2023
	Ratified by Education Team	Review date Sept 2023	Edition 01	Changes for previous edition in bold lettering

Purpose of the Complaints Procedure

This procedure aims to reassure parents and others with an interest in the school that:

- any complaint against the school will be dealt with in a fair, open and responsive way, with the aim of achieving a speedy and satisfactory resolution; and
- the school recognises that a willingness to listen to questions and criticism and to respond positively, can lead to improvements in school practices and provision for pupils.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Concerns or complaints should be managed sympathetically, discretely, efficiently and with due dignity to all parties.

Safeguarding and the promotion of pupil welfare will always be the priority in addressing any concerns or complaints.

Matters raised will be dealt with at the appropriate level and resolved as swiftly as possible, but without undue haste. We recognise that matters that are unresolved risk becoming a cause of resentment, which can erode relationships and confidence in the School.

The School will try to resolve every concern or complaint in a positive way, with the aim of putting right that which may have gone wrong and, where necessary, reviewing our systems and procedures in light of the circumstances.

Complainants should never be made to feel that their concerns are trivial, will be taken amiss or will adversely affect any pupil at School.

The policy distinguishes between a concern or difficulty which can be resolved informally and a formal complaint which will require investigation. Care will be taken not to escalate issues too quickly, making them unnecessarily formal. Initial resolution of issues will be directed to the most appropriate person, to avoid undermining the School's management responsibility hierarchy.

This policy has regard to other School policies, some of which may take precedence in certain situations. Examples include, but are not limited to: Safeguarding Children Policy, Behaviour Policy, Parent Contract (including Terms & Conditions), Code of Conduct.

Scope of the Procedure

A complaint is defined as a clear statement of dissatisfaction about any specified aspect of the school's work.

This procedure deals with specified day-to-day complaints against the management and/or operation of the school which fall outside the scope of the following procedures:

- Complaints which have an alternative statutory avenue of appeal or complaint, i.e. admissions, exclusions, SEN assessments, external assessment procedures.
- Serious complaints which must be dealt with by specific employment procedures e.g. allegations of professional abuse, criminal offences or those that are potentially staff disciplinary issues.

Complainants may be anyone e.g. parents, guardians, grandparents, neighbours of the school or anyone with an interest in the work of the school. However, it is expected that it will be mainly parents or guardians who will make use of this procedure. The term 'parent' is therefore used throughout the procedure as a generic term but the procedure also applies in relation to any other type of complainant.

Complaints may be made by telephone, e-mail, in person or be written.

Formal complaints should be made in writing on our Formal School Complaint Form, available in the office and which parents are invited to fill in when they raise a concern.

Informal complaints, suggestions and comments if communicated verbally are noted in the Complaints and Suggestions Register stored in the office.

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Stage 1 : Informal Stage

On occasions, a parent may raise a concern directly with school staff without any formality. At this stage, it may be unclear whether the parent is making a complaint, seeking information or has misunderstood a situation. In any effect, the school aims to resolve the concern at this point in a speedy and effective way.

Examples might include dissatisfaction about some aspect of teaching or pastoral care, or about allocation of privileges or responsibilities, or about a timetable clash or some other aspect of the School's systems or equipment, or a billing error.

Notification: Concerns should be raised initially as follows:

Academic issues: if the matter relates to the classroom, the curriculum or special educational needs, it should be raised with the form tutor (Senior School) or Class Teacher (Junior School) as appropriate.

Pastoral care: concerns relating to matters outside the classroom should be raised with the form tutor (Senior School) or Class Teacher (Junior School) as appropriate.

Disciplinary matters: a problem over any disciplinary action taken or a sanction imposed should be raised with the form tutor (Senior School) or Class Teacher (Junior School).

Financial matters: a query relating to fees or extras should be stated in writing to the financial manager.

However, if the concern is not resolved immediately and a complaint is confirmed by the parent, the opportunity to discuss the matter with an appropriate member of staff will be given e.g.

Headteacher, Key Stage Leader, Head of Junior or Senior School, PSHE coordinator.

In the case of complaint against the Headteacher, this stage will always be heard directly by the Assistant Head or school owner.

The member of staff will discuss the issue with the parent and those involved in school, with the aim of resolving the complaint as soon as possible. The parent will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and what action, if any, the school proposes to take.


If the informal process has been exhausted and no satisfactory solution has been found, the parent will be asked by the member of staff dealing with the complaint whether (s)he wishes the complaint to be considered formally at stage two of this procedure.

If wishing to proceed with the complaint, the parent will be invited to put the complaint in writing to the Headteacher using the form attached at Appendix 1.

Stage 2 : Referral to the SLT or Headteacher for further investigation

Where the complaint has been addressed by the Headteacher at stage one, this stage will be heard by the SLT. Where another staff member has addressed the complaint at stage one, this stage will be heard by the Headteacher.

The SLT or Headteacher will acknowledge the written complaint within three days of receipt and provide an opportunity to meet the parent to discuss the complaint. The SLT or Headteacher will investigate the complaint and a written response will normally be made within ten school days of receipt of the complaint. If this is not possible, a letter will be sent explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised target date.

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The written response will include full reasons for the conclusions reached by the SLT or Headteacher and what action, if any, the school proposes to take to resolve the matter.

Complaints related to external assessment/examinations

The School will refer to section 7 of the Cambridge International Handbook with regard to appeals made in relation to general qualifications.

Any concerns that a parent or candidate may have should be addressed to the exams officer or Head teacher. If a parent or candidate suspect that malpractice may have occurred, they can address this directly to the exam board. info@cambridgeinternational.org and put ‘allegation’ in the subject.

Any exam rechecks or appeals are managed by the exams officer.

The School will refer to the IBO Complaints Policy, 2018 for matters related to IB Diploma programme. Decisions made by the School will be dealt with by the School according to the complaints policy outlined above.

Any exam result EURs or appeals are dealt with by the Diploma Programme Coordinator.

Whistleblowing is a term used when an individual raises a genuine concern about suspected malpractice or wrongdoing and/or the covering up of malpractice or wrongdoing. Whistleblowing is different from raising a grievance. If malpractice is suspected a parent/candidate/staff member may email to whistleblowing@ibo.org (IBO 2018)

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Form to notify formal School Complaint (Stage 2) (sample)

Child's Name (to whom issue relates) _____

Class group _____

Parent/Guardian _____

Contact details (including mobile) _____

Details of Complaint:

(Please be as specific as possible e.g. giving dates, who was involved and where etc.)

Please attach a continuation sheet/additional information if you wish

What would you like to see done to resolve your complaint and bring the matter to an acceptable closure for yourself and the school?

Signed _____ Date _____

(Parent/Guardian)

Please return the completed form to the **Senior Leadership Team** at the school.