



## The International School of London- Complaints policy

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos, enables consistency and quality across the school and is related to the following legislation:

- Local Government Act 1974
- Local Government Act 1988
- Education Act 1996
- Data Protection Act 1998
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Education Act 2002
- Education Act 2005
- Education and Skills Act 2008
- Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009
- Children, Schools and Families Act 2010
- Education (Admissions Appeals Arrangements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008
- Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2010
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (non-maintained Special Schools) Regulations 2011
- School Admissions ( Appeals Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Complaints About Ofsted: Raising Concerns and Making a Complaint about Ofsted (Ofsted)
- School Admission Appeals Code ( DfE)
- Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (DfE)
- Race Disparity Audit - Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures Website (Cabinet Office)

We believe that this school provides an excellent education and that the Principals and school personnel work very hard to build positive relationships and have in place clear lines of communication with all parents and others. In so doing complaints are kept to a minimum.

However, we are aware that under section 29 of the Education Act 2002 we must have in place clear procedures to deal with any complaint made against the school or individuals connected with it. We take any complaint seriously and we deal with them professionally following set procedures.

We believe complaints need to be resolved as quickly as possible but in some cases we need to establish whether the issue brought to our attention is a complaint or an actual concern. In such cases 'many issues can be resolved informally without the need to invoke formal procedures'.

We agree with the definition that a concern is 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.' While a complaint is best defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'. By making this distinction between a concern and a complaint and taking all informal concerns seriously the number of concerns should be reduced before developing into formal complaints.

We must be aware that besides parents/carers of children who are registered at this school any member of the general public can make a complaint about 'any provision of facilities or services' that we provide at this school.

We are aware that under the Education Act 1996 parents have the right to complain directly to the local authority about any matter relating to the school's curriculum, any issue relating to the general education that we provide.

We have a duty to inform parents and the general public who may wish to make a complaint against an organisation using school facilities that they must lodge their complaint with that organisation and not the school.

We have a duty to publish the complaints policy in the school handbook and on the school website with hard copies available from the school office.

We understand that a complaint may be made in writing, by telephone or in person. However, we will endeavour to accommodate those complainants who may be disabled or have learning difficulties by having in place alternative methods of registering a complaint.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

## Aims

- To deal with any complaint against the school or any individual connected with it by following the correct procedures.
- To deal with all complaints thoroughly and by being open, honest and fair when dealing with the complainant.
- To differentiate between a concern and a complaint.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation connected to this policy.
- To work with other schools and the local authority to share good practice in order to improve this policy.



## Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

### Role of the Head of School

The Head of School has:

- a duty to have in place a complaints procedure;
- responsibility to ensure that the complaints procedure complies with their obligation under the Equality Act 2010;
- delegated powers and responsibilities to the Principals to ensure all school personnel and visitors to the school are aware of and comply with this policy;
- responsibility to deal with any complaint made against the Principals;
- responsibility not to share complaints with the whole Director in case an appeals panel has to convene;
- responsibility to arrange for an independent panel to hear a complaint if the Director has been 'contaminated' by having full knowledge of the complaint;
- responsibility of annually discussing the concerns/complaints log with the Principals;
- in place a self-evaluation process to monitor the way complaints are dealt with and to consider what improvements can be made to the complaints procedures;
- responsibility of taking into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and will make any modifications necessary to this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring that the complaints procedure is publicised on the school website and in the school handbook, is concise, simple to understand and impartial;
- responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation;
- nominated a designated Equalities governor to ensure that appropriate action will be taken to deal with all prejudice related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly;
- responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents;
- nominated a link governor to:
  - visit the school regularly;
  - work closely with the Principals and the HR manager;
  - ensure this policy and other linked policies are up to date;
  - ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy;
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy.

### Role of the Principals

The Principals will:

- deal with all complaints impartially and in a non-adversarial manner;
- keep the complainant fully updated at all stages of the complaints procedure;



- keep records;
- not share third party information;
- seek an interpreter if the need arises;
- refer any complaint made against him/her to the Chair of Governors;
- ensure full and fair investigations are undertaken by an independent person where necessary;
- ensure confidentiality at all times;
- ensure all complaints are resolved as quickly as possible within realistic time limits;
- log all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved;
- discuss the complaints log every year with the Director;
- monitor and review complaints to see how they can contribute to school improvement;
- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- work closely with the link governor and coordinator;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff;
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by speaking with school personnel, parents and the Director;
- annually report to the Director on the success and development of this policy.

### Role of the Complainant

We ask the complainant to:

- cooperate with school to find a solution to the complaint as quickly as possible;
- provide enough information as possible;
- be respectful to everyone involved in the complaint procedure.

### Complaints Procedure

#### Stage 1 (Informal Stage)

- The International School of London hopes and expects that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally and usually within five working days. If parents have a complaint they should, in the first instance, contact their son's/daughter's teacher. In most cases, the matter will be resolved at this point. If the teacher/parent cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to contact the Principal of their section.
- If the complainant is not a parent, he or she should address the complaint to the Head of School.
- A complaint made directly to a Principal will normally be referred to the relevant teacher unless the Principal deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- The Principal/Teacher dealing with the complaint will document the outcome in a letter or e-mail to the parent.

- Most complaints will be resolved informally. In the case(s) when this does not happen, complainants will be advised that they may follow a formal procedure. The International School of London will provide for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with this Policy.

### **Stage 2 (Formal Stage)**

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, the complainants should put their complaint in writing to the Head of School. The Head of School will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. If the complaint is about the Head of School, the complainants should raise their concern with the Managing Director.
- In the event that the informal resolution of a complaint is not moving to conclusion, the Head of School may determine that the formal stage should be used to seek a resolution. In this case, the Head of School will speak to the complainants and advise that this stage is now to be used to resolve the complaint.
- In most cases the Head of School will speak to the complainants concerned, normally within three working days of receiving the complaint, and will discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- The Head of School may need to carry out further investigations.
- The Head of School will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head of School is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and complainants will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head of School will also give reasons for the decision.
- The investigation and feedback will, as far as is practicable, be provided within 10 working days after the first meeting between the Head of School and the complainant.
- If the complainant(s) is/are still not satisfied with the decision, they may request a formal Panel Hearing (Stage 3).

### **Stage 3 (Formal Stage)**

- If complainants seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Managing Director or his designee who has been appointed by the Board to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons: a Board member, the Managing Director or his designee, and another person independent of the management and running of the school. Members of the Panel will not have been directly involved in either the complaint or in previous investigations. The Panel members will be appointed by the Managing Director and will meet normally within ten working days of receiving the request to review the outcome of Stage 2.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than two working days prior to the hearing.



- Complainants will be entitled to be accompanied to the Panel hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Complainants must notify the school of the identity of their proposed companion at least two working days prior to the hearing.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately, without the need for further investigation.
- Where a further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations which it shall complete normally within five working days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the complainant informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and any recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head of School, the Chairman, Managing Director and where relevant, the person(s) about whom the complaint was made.

### **Complaints regarding the Curriculum and General Educational Provision**

All curriculum and general educational provision complaints will be dealt with by the Local Authority in line with their set complaints procedures.

### **Raising Awareness of this Policy**

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- the School Handbook/Prospectus
- the school website
- the Staff Handbook
- meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
- school events
- meetings with school personnel
- communications with home such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters
- reports such annual report to parents and Principals reports to the Director
- information displays in the main school entrance

### **Training All school personnel:**

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion
- receive training on induction which specifically covers:
  - All aspects of this policy
  - Communication
  - Community Links
  - Community Cohesion
  - School Prospectus
  - School Website
  - Home-School Agreement
  - Equal opportunities
  - Inclusion

- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

### **Monitoring the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Policy**

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the coordinator, the Principals and the nominated governor.

A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Director for further discussion and endorsement.

See Appendices Documents section on Policies for Schools Website

- Frequency of Policy Monitoring
- Monitoring Implementation and Policy Effectiveness Action Plan
- Initial Equality Impact Assessment
- Policy Evaluation
- Policy Approval Form