

TITLE OF POLICY	Complaints
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OWNER	Principal
REVIEWER	Chair of the Board

Complaints Policy

1. Aim

One of the main aims of ICS is to ensure that our students receive the highest standard of international education available, and remain safe and happy at our school. We recognise that the home-school relationship is crucial in this endeavour; therefore, the school makes every effort to maintain effective communication with our community.

2. Statement of intent

At ICS, we value positive relationships with all members of the community. It is in everyone's interest that complaints about the school are resolved at the earliest possible stage, without the need for formal procedures. ICS is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to all stakeholders. However, whilst we always aim to do our very best to guarantee stakeholder satisfaction, we also recognise there may be times when things do not go as well as we would like and that people may, from time to time, have complaints related to their children that need to be addressed by the school. The intention of this policy is to outline clear procedures to enable complaints to be dealt with swiftly and efficiently, thereby ensuring that student learning is not disrupted and to maintain confidence and trust in the relationships.

3. Scope

This policy provides information and context for all members of the ICS community as to how the school receives, processes and actions a complaint.

4. Unique definitions

A concern

Is defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought', and concerns are not covered by this policy.

A complaint

Is defined in this policy as 'an expression of dissatisfaction', however made, about actions taken or a lack of action;

A grievance

Is defined in this policy as 'a complaint for which normal remedy has not been achieved', and is accelerated beyond the level of the Principal to the Board of Governors;

In addition, please note that, for the purposes of this policy, the following are not considered as complaints: general enquiries; request for services, request for information or explanation of a policy or practice; any matter for which there is a right of appeal or a legal remedy; matters appropriate to be dealt with under other procedures.

5. Processes and Practice

5.1 Complaints and Grievance Process- a staged approach

Our complaints process is a staged approach and in the vast majority of cases we would expect a complaint to be resolved at the first stage.

Type	Stage	Description
Concern	0	An expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.
Complaint	1	Communication between complainant and member of staff directly. This can take any form and could be via email, face to face or telephone/video conference.
	2	Communication between complainant and a senior member of staff about an issue which has not been resolved at stage 1. Correspondence at this stage must be in writing to a member of the Primary or Secondary Leadership Team (for example, an Assistant Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or Head of School).
	3	Direct Communication with the School Principal
Grievance	4	Communication with a member(s) of the Board of Governors
	5	Further representation to the full Board of Governors with a final request for recourse.

5.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is vital to securing the confidence of all concerned and to ensure equity and impartiality. Therefore, all conversations and correspondence will be treated in the strictest confidence and those involved in any investigation related to a complaint will be sensitive to the concerns of all parties involved. If legal entities require information

related to the complaint, this shall be shared in a sensitive manner and all involved parties will be involved in writing. Any correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential and stored in the principal's safe. Should the complaint become a grievance against the principal, any information will be kept confidential and stored in the safe of the Chair of the Board.

5.3 Practice

In dealing with a complaint or grievance the school or Board will:

- Establish what has happened so far and who has been involved;
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- Meet with the complainant, or contact them, if further information is required;
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right;
- Conduct any interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- Complete all necessary notes;
- Summarise the investigation and make a response.

The school or board will aim to:

- Acknowledge any complaint in writing within 24 hours of receipt;
- Provide a detailed response in writing within 3 working days of receipt;
- Provide guidance on further courses of action available if the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome within 7 days;
- Keep a record of each complaint, and the school's response.

5.4 Dissatisfaction with complaint handling

Where the complainant is not satisfied with the response to a written complaint a hearing will be established and the complaint will be heard before a panel appointed on behalf of the board, and consisting of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. A legal representative will act as the independent member of the panel in such circumstances. This procedure allows complaints to attend the hearing and may request to be accompanied should they wish.

5.5 Findings and recommendations

The assembled panel will make findings and recommendations and a copy of these will be given to the complainant, the Chair of the Board, the Principal, and, where appropriate, other relevant parties.

5.6 Anonymous complaints

In normal circumstances, the school will take action regarding any anonymous complaints received - either in writing or via another student or parent. Where an anonymous complaint relates to Child Protection or Safeguarding, the school will investigate and also consider contacting external agencies.

5.7 Vexatious complaints or grievances

If, despite all stages of this policy being followed, a complainant remains dissatisfied, they are not entitled to reopen the same issue. In such cases, the Chair of the Board will inform each party in writing that the process has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed. If a dissatisfied party continues to raise the same complaint, it will be treated as a vexatious complaint. In such circumstances, ICS reserves the right to take any action deemed necessary.

6. Associated forms and documents

Parent Handbook

Grievance Policy

7. Responsibilities

The Principal and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that all employees at the school understand and follow the complaints procedure. The Board and the Chair specifically are responsible for ensuring that the grievance process is understood and followed when required.

8. Related information

None.