

COMPLAINTS POLICY & GUIDELINES



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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
RAISING A CONCERN.....	2
MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT	3
APPEALING THE RESOLUTION OF A COMPLAINT	4
Notice of Intent to Appeal	4
Investigation and/or Hearing	4
Hearing Procedures	5
Submissions to the Panel.....	5
Confidentiality	5
Decision of the Panel	5
Written Complaints and Notices	5
Contact Details.....	5

INTRODUCTION

Harrow School Beijing considers parents to be partners in the education and development of the students, and firmly believes that communication is essential to the success of this partnership. The School is committed to keeping parents fully informed of both general and specific matters relating to their children. In return, the School asks that parents share their thoughts and views as early as possible to allow the School to address any concerns before they become problems.

With regard to dealing with concerns and complaints, the School believes that:

- the needs of the students come first
- all parties have the right to express a view
- all views should be heard and valued
- concerns should be raised and addressed with courtesy and consideration
- confidentiality and communication are key

Raising a concern or complaint will not reflect adversely on a student or his or her opportunities at the School.

RAISING A CONCERN

If parents have any concerns about their children, they should speak to someone. In the first instance this will usually be the Class Teacher or Form Tutor, Subject Teacher or School Counsellor, according to the nature of the concern. Depending upon the gravity of the issue, or where parents are not satisfied with the initial response, they may wish to speak to a more senior member of staff, such as the Head of Lower School or Head of Upper School. In particularly grave cases, or where parents are dissatisfied with the response of a senior member of staff, they may wish to arrange an appointment with the Head Master. The table below provides guidance.

Please note that complaints can be submitted in English or Chinese. In order to ensure clarity we ask though that the relevant student's name and year level are mentioned in the subject line.

Type of Concern		Contact
Teaching and Learning	Class Work or Homework	Upper School Head of Department and House Master Lower School Year Group Leader
	Curriculum/ Programme Content	Upper School Head of Department and House Master Lower School Key Stage Leader
	Quality of Teaching and Learning	Upper School Head of Department and House Master Lower School Director of Studies
	Activities, Trips and Events	Upper School House Master Lower School Head of Pre-Prep
Pastoral	Behaviour and Personal Wellbeing	Upper School House Master Lower School Year Group Leader
	Child Protection and Safeguarding	Upper School House Master Lower School Child Protection Officer
General	Admissions	Academic Registrar
	School Fees	Finance Department Officer Financial Controller
	Matters of School Policy	House Master
	Concerns about a member of Staff	House Master
	Concerns over school buses and Transport	Transport Officer Director of Operations
	Concerns over Catering Issues	Campus Manger Director of Operations
	Concerns over health related Issues	Deputy Head

Whilst the School recognises that the source of a concern may be emotive and stressful, the School does not tolerate threatening or abusive behaviour towards staff. The School will handle concerns with courtesy and consideration, and asks that they be raised in the same way.

On matters related to the specific cultural and regulatory framework in which we work the Assistant Head Government Affairs and Public Relations may be consulted.

MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT

The process of registering and investigating a written complaint is more formal than expressing a concern. Most issues can be resolved without resort to this process.

If, however, parents decide to make a formal complaint, after remaining unhappy that the concern that they have raised has not been resolved satisfactorily they should submit their complaint in writing by letter or email to the Head Master.

The School will acknowledge receipt within three 3 working days and will state the action to be taken and the likely timescales for investigation and resolution. If appropriate, the Head Master may ask another member of staff to investigate the complaint, in which case that staff member will communicate directly with the parents.

All complaints received will be recorded and monitored to help ensure that the procedure is efficient and appropriate.

The School will try to resolve all complaints quickly; unless the matter is particularly complex, the aim is to reach a resolution within twenty working days. The resolution of the complaint shall be set forth in writing and provided to the complaining party.

The School does not respond to anonymous complaints.

APPEALING THE RESOLUTION OF A COMPLAINT

Parents who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint may appeal to a formally constituted panel in accordance with the procedures set out below.

Notice of Intent to Appeal

Parents who wish to appeal the resolution of a complaint must notify the Head Master in writing of their intent to appeal within two weeks of receipt of the written description of the resolution of the complaint. This period may be extended by written agreement of the parents and the School.

Upon receipt of the notice of appeal, the Head Master shall notify the Board of Governors as soon as practicable. On receipt of written communication from the complainant the Board with HIMS shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 10 working days. They will investigate and implement any changes and agreement with outcomes confirmed in writing within 25 working days. No further action may be required

If the Complainant remains unresolved, stage five is the Appointment and Constitution of the Appeals Sub-Committee

Following a written request to the Chair of the Board of Governors to hear the case the Chair shall appoint a panel of members to hear the appeal and the panel will be charged with deciding the appeal of the resolution of the complaint. At least one member of the Panel shall be independent of the management of the School, and none may have been directly involved in the matters related to the complaint.

The Panel shall be appointed within ten working days of the Head Master's receipt of the notice of appeal, and sooner where practicable.

Investigation and/or Hearing

The Chair of Governing Body will acknowledge receipt of letter (within 10 working days) and meet with the complainant (within 30 working days). The panel will consider the complaint and implement any agreements/changes. They will confirm outcomes in writing (by the 40th working day).

The Panel may proceed by conducting a fresh investigation, or a hearing, or both.

Hearing Procedures

Should the Panel decide to conduct a hearing, it shall do so pursuant to the following procedures.

- **Notice:** The Panel shall give the parents and the School at least two weeks' notice of any hearing. The notice shall indicate the time, date and venue of the hearing.
- **Attendance:** Parents shall be permitted to attend the hearing, and to be accompanied by one other person, provided that person is not acting as their legal counsel.
- **Minutes:** The Panel may appoint someone outside the Panel to take minutes of the hearing. Minutes shall be reviewed and approved by the Panel as soon as practicable after the hearing, and distributed to the School and the parents within one week of approval.
- **Witnesses:** The parents and School may suggest the names of witnesses for the Panel to interview, but the Panel is not obligated by these suggestions. Whether or not a particular witness is interviewed rests entirely within the discretion of the Panel.

Parents and the School are responsible for ensuring that their suggested witnesses are available for interview at the hearing; the Panel is not required to make any accommodation for absent witnesses but has discretion to do so.

The child of the complaining parents may be interviewed at the hearing only with the express written permission of the parents. No other student at the School, and no one under the age of 18, may be interviewed in a hearing. This provision does not prevent the Panel from interviewing these students in the course of an investigation.

Witnesses shall be interviewed one by one, when one witness is being interviewed no other witness may be present, apart from the parents. Parents shall not interrupt the process of interviewing the witness or apply any undue pressure on the witness.

Submissions to the Panel

The School and the parents may submit a written statement, with supporting documents, to the Panel regardless of whether a hearing is to take place. In the event of a hearing, the submissions must be made no later than one week before the hearing.

Confidentiality

Panel members, the minute taker, parents, persons accompanying the parents, witnesses and all other persons present at the hearing (if a hearing takes place) are required to keep confidential all information obtained in the course of the appeal, unless that information is already in the public domain.

Decision of the Panel

- **Vote:** The decision to either uphold or change the resolution of a complaint must be supported by a majority of the Panel.
- **Notification:** The Panel shall notify the Head of School and the parents of their decision, with findings and recommendations, as soon as practicable.
- **Finality of Decision:** The decision of the Panel shall be final.

Written Complaints and Notices

For purposes of this policy, any notice or complaint required to be in writing may be made by post or by email.

Contact Details

Email

To contact a member of staff by email, or post please use the protocol:

First name initial followed by last name @harrowbeijing.cn

E.g. Joe Bloggs email: jbloggs@harrowbeijing.cn

Should you wish to make a formal complaint by email, please send it to the Head Master by school email.

Postal Address:

HARROW School Beijing
No.287 Hegezhuang Village

Cuigezhuang County
Chaoyang District, Beijing, China 100102

Telephone: (+86 10) 6444 8900

The monitoring of Parental Concerns and Formal Complaints

The School will continue to keep records of all concerns raised by parents on the School Management Information System which records all contact with parents.

Formal Complaints made against the School will remain confidential and will be maintained in a separate data base maintained only by the Deputy Head of School. Complaints will be organised into the categories shown in this policy. This will enable the Senior Leadership Management of the School to monitor the nature of complaints made to the school and to report on these at the Governors' Termly Board Meetings. Every effort will therefore be made to ensure that it works to promote excellent relationships with the parent body regarding the provision of education at Harrow School Beijing.