

Complaints Procedure for Parents

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This policy will be reviewed in full by the Advisory Board and the Head of School on an annual basis, or more frequently if there are changes in policy.

Introduction

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction where the complainant requires a way of having their concern heard, investigated, and resolved.

All complaints will be recorded and treated by the School Leadership at all Globeducate schools in accordance with this procedure.

The procedure applies only to complaints raised by parents of current students, unless the complaint is already under investigation at the time of a student leaving a school.

- Parents, and prospective parents, may request details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.
- Working weeks / days refer to Monday to Friday during school term-time.
- If a student has been “permanently excluded”, any appeal must be conducted under the terms set out in the Exclusion Policy.

Documentation associated with complaints will remain confidential except where an official body requests access to them.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

- If parents have a complaint they should contact their child's tutor. Depending on the scale of the problem, the complaint may be passed to a more senior member of staff.
- The relevant staff member dealing with the complaint will keep a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within two working weeks from receipt or in the event that the tutor and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, parents should write to the Head of School and should receive a response within one working week of receiving the complaint.
- If the Head of School has to gather further information, regular updates will be provided. The Head of School will keep written records of all meetings and interviews. When a decision based on the relevant facts has been established, this will be communicated to the parents.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure by contacting the Head of School within seven days of being notified of the Stage 2 decision. The complaint will then be referred to the Chair of Directors within three working days.

Stage 3 – Complaints Panel Hearing

- At Stage 3, the complaint is passed on to the Globeducate Executive Committee. An acknowledgement of the complaint will be given within 5 working days of receipt. Cases will be heard by the Complaints Panel within 14 working days.
- The Globeducate Executive Committee will appoint a Complaints Panel of three people who are not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and a Clerk. One member of the Panel shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Clerk may be a member of the school staff. The Chair of Directors will pass particulars of the complaint to the Panel, who will meet independently in advance of the hearing. The Panel members will decide upon a Chair for the Panel.

Procedures for Preparation for a Complaints Panel Hearing

- The Clerk should convene an initial meeting of the Complaints Panel and arrange a date and time for the hearing. The Clerk will provide all relevant documentation and evidence. The Panel may request additional information or evidence in advance of the hearing.
- The Clerk should then write to the Complainant, the Head of School and any other relevant staff witnesses to inform them of the essential information for the hearing, including the date, time and venue, and the objective of the hearing. The Panel will have access to the documentation no later than three working days before the hearing takes place. The complainant may bring along one other person to provide support, for example, a relative, teacher or friend. However, legal representation will not be permitted. The letter will also explain how and when the Panel will reach and communicate their decision in writing.
- It is the Clerk's responsibility to ensure that all parties receive relevant documents at least three working days before the date of the hearing to allow individuals to familiarise themselves with the evidence.

Format of a Complaints Panel Hearing

- The Chair of the Panel will introduce all parties to one another and explain the principles, objectives, and format of the hearing. The Clerk will take minutes, which will be made available at the same time as the Panel's decision.
- The Complainant will be given the opportunity to explain the complaint. Following this, the Head of School and the Panel members may ask the complainant questions.
- The Head of School will then be given an opportunity to explain the school's official response, interpretation or view about the complaint. Following this, the complainant and panel members will be allowed to question the Head of School.
- Each party will be given the opportunity to call any witnesses and question witnesses called by the other parties.
- The Head of School and Complainant will be given the opportunity to give final statements in relation to the matter.
- The Chair of the Panel should bring the hearing to a conclusion.

The Complaints Panel members will reach a majority decision on the complaint findings; decide together whether the complaint outcomes sought are upheld in full, partially upheld, or not upheld; decide upon the appropriate action (if any) to be taken; and suggest changes to, or request review of, the School's existing policy or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again.

Within five working days of the hearing, the Chair of the Panel should write to the



complainant, directors and, where relevant, the person complained about, setting out the panel's findings and recommendations.