

# TASIS



THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN ENGLAND

## Complaint Procedure for Parents of Students

This policy applies to the whole school including Boarding and the Early Years.

The current version of any policy, procedure, protocol or guideline is the version held on the TASIS website. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that they are following the current version.

### Document

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### Agreed by:

<b>Head of School</b>	<b>Chair of the Board</b>
Bryan Nixon	David King
01 September 2021	01 September 2021

TASIS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students and expects all staff and volunteers to share this

### **Our Mission**

**TASIS England nurtures intellectual curiosity and emboldens each learner to flourish as a principled, open-minded, and compassionate member of a global community.**

In the 2017 – 2018 School year, TASIS England received 6 formal Stage 2 complaints. In the 2018 - 2019 School year, TASIS England received 1 formal Stage 2 complaint. In the 2019 – 2020 School year, TASIS England received 1 formal Stage 2 complaint. In the 2020 – 2021 School year, TASIS England received 1 formal Stage 2 complaint. All of these complaints were resolved successfully, and none progressed to the level of a Stage 3 complaint

## **1. Introduction**

1.1. TASIS, The American School in England prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to all of its students. The Schools aims are concerned with meeting the needs of the students, parents and other stakeholders.

1.2. Constant communication and feedback are crucial in monitoring standards and improving provision. Those who have complaints should feel these can be voiced and that they will be taken seriously.

1.3. There is little distinction in practice between a concern and a complaint; both terms reflect an expression of dissatisfaction that requires a response from the School - either to explain its position or to put right what may be wrong. We will seek to resolve concerns & complaints by informal means wherever possible.

1.4. A complaint is likely to arise when there are issues of well-being and security at stake, or when the Schools stated mission, aims, values or policies are not being followed. A breach of the law will always constitute a complaint.

1.5. If parents and students do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this procedure. Investigations will be thorough, fair and completed within a reasonable time-frame. The complainant may not be entitled to all information regarding the investigation but will be kept informed of the process and of the decisions reached.

1.6. Where a complaint is made by a student (whether a boarder or a day student), particular attention will be paid to ensuring that the complaint is either resolved to the complainants' satisfaction, or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of students, without unreasonable delay. Students will never be penalised for making a complaint in good faith ('whistleblowing').

1.7. The timescales indicated in the procedures below should allow for the swiftest resolution of complaints possible. There may be some circumstances in which the usual timescales are affected by issues that delay resolution.

1.8. Please note that any complaint received within one month of the end of term or half term is likely to take longer to resolve owing to school holidays and the unavailability of personnel. If any complaint is received outside of term-time, it may not be practical for the School to adhere to the timescales stated below.

## **2. Availability**

2.1 This procedure is part of the Schools admission pack and is made available to parents and students prior to their child being admitted to the School. This procedure is publicly available on the Schools website. A copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office upon request.

TASIS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all students fulfil their potential. Page 2 of 8

### 3. Legal Status

3.1 This policy incorporates the manner in which complaints are to be managed in accordance with Part 7, paragraph 33 (a) to (k) inclusive, along with the provision of information being made available in Part 6 Paragraph 32 (3) (f) of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations currently in force.

### 4. Related documents, procedures and processes

- a. [Safeguarding Policy](#) and Procedures;
- b. [Behaviour Management, Discipline and Sanctions Policy](#);
- c. [Whistleblowing Policy](#);
- d. Student Handbooks and Codes of Conduct.
- e. [Data Protection Policy](#)

### 5. Application relates to:

- 5.1 The parents of current students and current students at TASIS, The American School in England;
- 5.2 The parents of past students and past students of TASIS, the American School in England if a complaint was raised when the student was still registered, but does not cover exclusions.

### 6. Timescale

6.1 TASIS England aims to deal with all Stage 1 & 2 complaints within 28 calendar days of the complaint being received by the School. However, there may be circumstances in which this timescale is affected by issues that delay resolution. Complaints regarding Early Years will also be dealt within 28 calendar days.

### 7. Monitoring and Review

7.1 Action by the Head of School:

- a. The Head of School maintains a log of all complaints received by the School and records at which stage and how they were resolved. The record includes, at least: the name of the person making the complaint, the date of the complaint, the nature of the complaint, any action taken and the outcome of the complaint. The logging of complaints for management purposes enables patterns of concern to be monitored.
- b. The Head of School in consultation with the Head of Lower School, Head of Middle School, Head of Upper School and the Director of Boarding monitor the complaints procedure, to ensure that all complaints are handled properly, making any modifications necessary to this procedure. The Head of School also retains details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.
- c. The Board of Directors will undertake a full annual review of this policy and procedures, inclusive of its implementation and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. Any deficiencies or weaknesses recognised in arrangements or procedures will be remedied immediately and without delay. All staff will be informed of the updated/reviewed policy and it is made available to them in either a hard copy or electronic format.
- d. This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Board of Directors of the School in September 2021 and will next be reviewed no later than September 2022 or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

**8. Stage 1 - Informal Resolution (Who should you contact?)**

- 8.1 Complaints made directly to a Head of Lower School, Head of Middle School, Head of Upper School or the Director of Boarding will usually be referred back to the relevant grade-level teacher, tutor or House Parent unless the more senior member of staff deems it appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally without it going through those channels.
- 8.2 The member of staff who is dealing with the matter will make a written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 5 calendar days or in the event that the member of staff and the complainant fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then the complainant will be advised that they can proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure. A note should be kept of the date a resolution was reached and the agreed nature of this, to help prevent the process from drifting into a longer timeframe.
- 8.3 Sometimes, a parent will informally raise a concern with the Head of School directly. As above, they may feel that this should be referred to the relevant grade-level teacher, tutor, Head of Section or the Director of Boarding. There will certainly be occasions when the Head of School feels it is appropriate to resolve the issue informally themselves without the need for referral to any of the named above. This will still be under the Stage 1 process of informal resolution. It is only if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome that they should proceed to Stage 2 of this procedure.

**9. Stage 2 – Formal Resolution (What to do if you remain dissatisfied?)**

- 9.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the complainant should put their complaint in writing to the Head of School, at the end of this document you will find the Stage 2 Complaint Form. The Head of School will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- 9.2 The Head of School will meet or speak to the complainant concerned to discuss the matter within 5 calendar days of receiving the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- 9.3 It may be necessary for the Head of School to carry out further investigations and an Investigating Officer will be appointed. The Head of School will inform the complainant of this. These investigations should take no longer than 10 calendar days to complete.
- 9.4 The Head of School will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Written records will identify those complaints that relate to boarding provision.
- 9.5 Once the Head of School is satisfied that, so far as is reasonably practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the complainant will be informed of the decision in writing. The Head of School will also give reasons for their decision. A note will also be kept of when, if, a final outcome was reached.
- 9.6 If the complainant is still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

**10. Stage 3 – Complaints Panel Hearing**

- 10.1 If the complainant seeks to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Chair of the Complaints Panel, who will be appointed by the Board of Directors.
- 10.2 The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. The other two Panel members will be members of the Board of Directors. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Directors. The Chair of the Complaints Panel will then acknowledge the

complaint in writing and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as is reasonably practicable and within 14 calendar days in term time, or 28 calendar days during the school holidays.

10.3 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 5 calendar days prior to the hearing.

10.4 The complainant(s) may be accompanied to the panel hearing if they wish, legal representation is not usually appropriate.

10.5 If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

10.6 Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out, these investigations should be completed within 5 calendar days of the Panel meeting.

10.7 After due consideration of all facts considered relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and make their findings and recommendations known.

10.8 A copy of those findings and recommendations will be:

- sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about;
- made available for inspection on the School premises by the Chairman of the Board of Directors and the Head of School.
- The complainant(s) will have the right of appeal to a higher authority, namely Ofsted, whose contact details are given at the end of this policy.

## **11. Confidentiality**

11.1 Parents and students can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

## **12. Record Keeping**

12.1 A record should be kept of all complaints. Staff should note:

- a. the name and address of the person making the complaint;
- b. a description of the complaint;
- c. the time and date of the complaint;
- d. the stage to which the complaint rose;
- e. the resolution or outcome of the complaint;
- f. any action taken as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld);
- g. The record of complaints should be kept for at least three years before being archived.

### **13. Child Protection**

13.1 For any complaint that involves a potential child protection or safeguarding issue, this must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or a Deputy DSL and/or the Head of School if the DSL is unavailable (See our [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#) for details).

### **14. Further Complaints**

14.1 Complainant(s) may also appeal the decision made by the School to the Independent School Inspectorate (ISI) and/or OFSTED. This includes complaints regarding boarding provision or the Early Years if they believe the School is not providing an appropriate provision for their child or children.

The contact details for ISI are:

**Independent Schools Inspectorate,**

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA

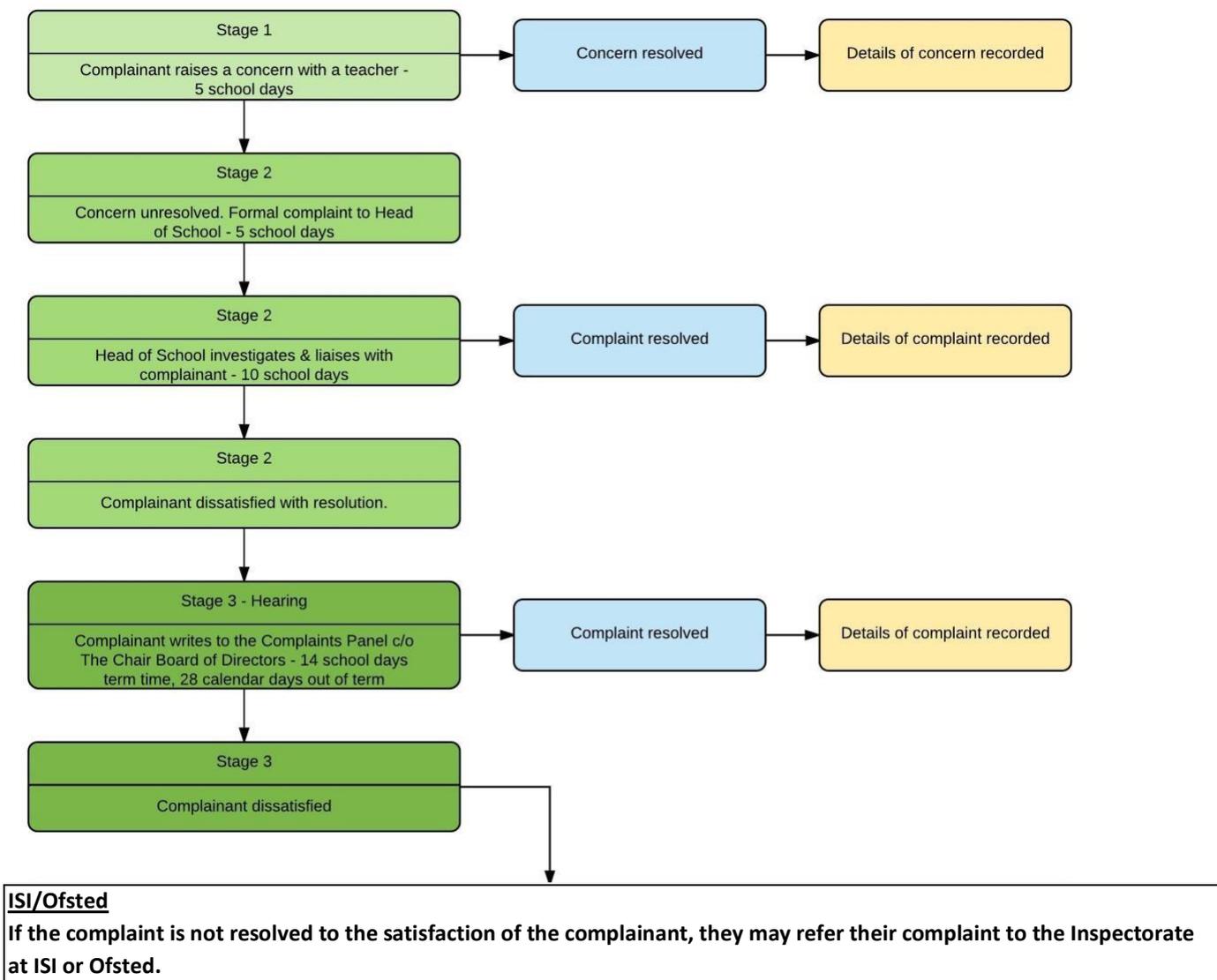
**Telephone:** 020 7600 0100, ask to talk to an appropriate member of staff. Email: [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net) Web: [www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)

The contact details for Ofsted are:

**Ofsted**

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD, Telephone: 0301231231, Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk) Web: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

15 **Figure 1 - Concerns & Complaints Process with Timescales**



16 **TASIS Complaint Form for Stage 2 complaints**

If you have tried to resolve your complaint and wish to take the matter further, please complete the form below and send it to the Head of School.

(If your complaint is against the Head of School you will need to send the form to the Chair of the Proprietary Board of Directors)

Your Name:	
Address:	

