



THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN ENGLAND

Complaints Policy

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

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

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Agreed by:

Head of School	Chair of the Board
Bryan Nixon	David King
25 September 2023	25 September 2023

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

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 2020 – 2021 school year, TASIS England received 1 formal Stage 2 complaint. This complaint was resolved successfully at this stage. In the 2021 – 2022 school year, TASIS England received 2 formal Stage 2 complaints. One was resolved at Stage 2 and one progressed to a Stage 3 process prior to resolution. In the 2022 - 2023 school year, TASIS England received 1 formal Stage 2 complaint. This complaint was resolved.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. At TASIS England, we are committed to providing exceptional teaching and pastoral care to all our students. Our primary goal is to ensure that the needs of our students, parents, and other stakeholders are met by delivering the highest standards of education, support, and guidance.
- 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. A complaint is likely to arise when there are issues of well-being and security at stake, or when the school's stated mission, aims, values or policies are not being followed. A breach of the law will always constitute a complaint.
- 1.4. 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 timeframe. 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.
- 1.5. 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.
- 1.6. 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.
- 1.7. Please note that any complaint received within one month of the end of term or half term is likely to take longer to resolve due to school holidays and the unavailability of personnel. If any complaint is received outside of term-time, we will consider the complaint as having been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

2. Availability

- 2.1 This procedure is part of the school's 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 school 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.

3. Legal Status

3.1 This document meets the requirements set out in part 7 of the schedule to [the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which states that we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents of students at the school.

4. Related Documents, Procedures and Processes – [available on the school website policy page](#)

- 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 This policy is written with reference to parents of current registered students (i.e., those students on the current school roll), and parents of past students if the complaint was initially raised when the student was still registered. The policy does not include parents of prospective students (i.e., those who have yet to join the school.)

5.2 Complaints must be raised within three months (in the absence of mitigating reasons) of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. Complaints made outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

6. Timescale

6.1 TASIS England aim 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 with in 28 calendar days.

7. Monitoring and Review

7.1 Action by the Head of School:

- a. The Head of School supported by the Head of Lower School, Head of Middle School, Head of Upper School, the Director of Boarding, the Director of Pastoral Care and the Director of inclusion, Wellbeing and Compliance 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, the Director of Boarding, the Director of Pastoral Care and the Director of inclusion, Wellbeing and Compliance monitors 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 recognized 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 via the school website.
- d. This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Board of Directors of the school in May 2023 and will next be reviewed no later than May 2025 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?)

It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.

- 8.1 Complaints (Academic or Pastoral) made directly to a Head of Lower School, Head of Middle School, Head of Upper School, the Director of Boarding, the Director of Pastoral Care or the Director of inclusion, Wellbeing and Compliance 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. A concern should normally be raised within thirty working days of the event taking place, or of the matter first coming to the attention of the parents, to facilitate an effective investigation and a speedy resolution
- 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. The school will acknowledge receipt of the concern or complaint usually within two working days, if the matter is not resolved within 5 working days or if 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 logged of the date and nature of any resolution that was reached, to help prevent the process from drifting into a longer timeframe.
- 8.3 Parents are welcome to informally raise a concern with the Head of School directly on all matters. As above, they may feel that this should be referred to the relevant grade-level teacher, tutor, House Parent, Head of Section, the Director of Boarding, the Director of Pastoral Care or the Director of inclusion, Wellbeing and Compliance. 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 Stage 1 of this procedure, informal resolution. It is only if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome that they should proceed to Stage 2 of this procedure.

8.4 Parents making a complaint should be aware that they cannot be guaranteed confidentiality as members of staff receiving a complaint are expected to notify the Head of Section or relevant line manager, wherever possible, prior to taking action. The Head of School will share serious complaints with the Chair of the Board. If, however, the complaint is against the Head of School, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of the Board.

8.5 Should the matter not be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant within 10 working days, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with **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 acknowledge in writing, receipt of the complaint, usually within two working days and 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 15 calendar days to complete.

9.4 The Head of School (or their appointed representative) 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 logged of when, if, a final outcome was reached.

9.6 The school will usually deal with a formal complaint within twenty-eight working days of receipt of the complaint. Formal complaints received at or after the end of the school day will be deemed to have been received on the next working day.

9.7 If the Chair of the Board is handling the complaint, the Chair of the Board or the appointed representative will handle the complaint according to the same procedure as the Head of School.

9.8 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 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 no 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. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.
- 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 14 calendar days of the Panel Hearing meeting.
- 10.7 It is not the Panel's purpose to re-investigate the complaint, but to consider the matters raised by the complainant(s), and the report from the school, and to decide whether the determination reached at stage 2 was reasonable and fair.
- 10.8 After due consideration of all facts considered relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and make their findings and recommendations known.
- 10.9 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 decision and findings of the Panel are final and are not subject to any further right of appeal to the school. If the complainant(s) is dissatisfied with the decision of the Panel, they may contact the Independent Schools Inspectorate – ISI (or OFSTED for any complaints for the Early Years Program) 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 school will keep records of formal complaints and panel hearings, as required by regulation. It will do so in accordance with its Privacy Notice held within our Data Protection Policy. Complaints which do not have safeguarding implications will be retained for at least 7 years after the relevant cohort's leaving date. In line with the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, records concerning allegations of abuse will be preserved for 75 years; retention of such records will be subject to regular review.

13. Safeguarding and Child Protection

- 13.1 For any complaint that involves a potential safeguarding and/or child protection 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](#) on our school website policy page for details).

14 Early Years Program

- 14.1 TASIS England will investigate all written complaints relating to the school's fulfilment of the Early Years Program and notify the complainant of the outcome within 28 calendar days of receiving the complaint. The school will keep a record of the complaint and make this available to OFSTED and ISI on request.
- 14.2 We will notify parents of students in the Early Years Program about any inspection once notification about the inspection is received. Copies of final inspection reports will be made available to parents of students who regularly attend classes in the Early Years Program.

15 Further Complaints

- 15.1 Complainant(s) may appeal the final decision made by the Complaints Panel to ISI or OFSTED for the Early Years Program. This includes complaints regarding boarding provision if they believe the school is not providing an appropriate provision for their child or children. Information about how to contact ISI and OFSTED can be found below:

Independent Schools Inspectorate: CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA

Telephone: 020 7600 0100; Email: concerns@isi.net; Web: www.isi.net

OFSTED: Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Telephone: 0301231231; Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk; Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk

TASIS England Complaint Form for Stage 2 complaints

If you have tried to resolve your complaint and wish to take the matter further, you may complete the form below and send it to the Head of School – bnixon@tasisengland.org. (If your complaint is against the Head of School, you should send the form to the Chair of the Board of Directors – dking@tasisengland.org)

Your Name:			
Address:			
		Post Code	
Telephone Number (Home):			
Telephone Number (Mobile):			
Name of student:	→	→	
Date of Birth of student:			
What is your complaint about and what would you like the Head of school to do? → →			
<i>Continue on a separate sheet as necessary</i>			
When did you discuss your concern/complaint with the appropriate member of staff? → →			
<i>Continue on a separate sheet as necessary</i>			
What was the result of the discussion? → →			
<i>Continue on a separate sheet as necessary</i>			

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____