

<b>Policy Name</b>	Complaints Procedure for Parents				
<b>Effective Date</b>	January 2023	<b>Date of last revision</b>	September 2024	<b>Version No.</b>	1
<b>Author</b>	Head of School				

Version History				
Version	Approved by	Revision Date	Details of Changes	Author
1	AB	Sept 2024	Updated domains on email addresses	MT
1	AB	Sept 2024	Updated to reference the Deputy Head of School and Primary Principal	MT
1.	AB	Sept 2024	Added sections: unreasonable complaints and written records and retention	MT

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**

ICS London prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School with care and in accordance with this procedure.

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

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.

This policy is made available on the school's website.

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 Behaviour Policy.

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

This policy applies to the whole school, including the Early Years and Foundation Stage.

Parents can be assured that all levels of concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Parents should feel reassured that their child will not be penalised for a complaint raised in good faith.

It is a requirement by ISI that all complaints and actions taken to resolve a complaint are logged. The Complaints Log is confidential with restricted access. It is maintained by the Head of School, Primary Principal and Deputy Head of School. Records are retained and destroyed in line with GDPR requirements.

There is a Three-Stage Complaint Procedure:

- Stage 1 - Informal Resolution
- Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

- Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

### **Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

It is the school's aim and hope to resolve all complaints and concerns quickly and informally. However, depending on the scale of the matter raised, the complaint may be passed to a more senior member of staff (Primary Principal, and Deputy Head of School).

If parents have a complaint or concern, they should contact their class teacher or form tutor in the first instance. However, depending on the scale of the problem, the complaint may be passed to a more senior member of staff (Primary Principal, and Deputy Head of School).

If the complaint is about the class or form teacher, the matter will be dealt with by the Deputy Head of School (Secondary) and Primary Principal (Primary). If the complaint is about the Primary Principal and/or Deputy Head of School, parents should make their complaint directly to the Head of School. If the complaint is about the Head of school, parents should contact The Representative of the Proprietary Board. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway and to the satisfaction of the parent.

We will aim to acknowledge initial complaints within forty-eight hours and look to resolve matters within two working weeks.

The relevant staff member dealing with the complaint or concern will keep a record of any notifications of concerns and complaints.

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 at the informal stage (Stage 1), the matter should be escalated to Stage 2 - Formal Resolution.

Parents should write to the Head of School directly ([Head@icslondon.co.uk](mailto:Head@icslondon.co.uk)), stating that they wish to escalate their complaint to Stage 2.

Parents will receive a response to their complaint within five working days.

In most cases, the Head Teacher will meet or speak to the parents concerned to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the Head Teacher to carry out further investigations.

The Head Teacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint for inclusion in the complaints log.

Once the Head Teacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing, normally within 5 working days of the initial meeting. The Head Teacher will give reasons for their decision.

If the complaint is against the Head Teacher, the Representative of the Proprietary Board will call for a full report from the Head Teacher and for all the relevant documents. The Representative may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Representative of the Proprietary Board is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Representative of the Proprietary Board will give reasons for his decision.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

A written record is held of all complaints made to the school under the formal part of the complaint's procedure. In relation to these complaints, the school will record whether they are resolved at Stage 2 or proceed to a panel, and the action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (whether or not it is upheld).

### **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. A copy will also be made available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and the Head of School.

### **Timescales for Dealing with Complaints**

ICS London believes that it is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible. The school aims to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 15 working days. Stage 3, the Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 19 days.

Parents should be aware that events beyond the school's control (e.g. Covid Pandemic) may lead to reasonable extensions to the timescales stated. In these situations, we will always endeavour to complete the complaints process in a timely manner.

### **Complaints related to the IB**

Parents should follow the procedures for complaints about IB (PYP, MYP, iGCSE and DP) related matters as set out in this policy. The process for dealing with complaints remains the same.

### Unreasonable Complaints

There may be some complaints where, after following the above procedure, the school may deem it reasonable to refuse any further consideration of the complaint. Unreasonable complaints are those where, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school hinder consideration of theirs or other people's complaints. Factors which may be indicative of unreasonable conduct include:

- Refusing to articulate a complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought, despite offers of assistance
- Raising a large number of detailed but unimportant questions
- Making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues
- Changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- Complaints which cannot be understood, despite offers of assistance from the school
- Complaints made maliciously, aggressively and/or using threats, intimidation or violence
- Complaints manifestly unjustified, inappropriate, or an improper use of formal procedure

Complaints that are an attempt to re-open a concluded procedure.

### Other Relevant Details and Contact Addresses

All matters 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 2008 Act requests access to them. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least seven years.

Name	Position	Email
Simon Jacobs	Primary Principal	simon.jacobs@icslondon.co.uk
Charlotte Nichol	Deputy Head of School	charlotte.nichol@icslondon.co.uk
Mona Taybi	Head of School	head@icslondon.co.uk
Daniel Jones	Proprietary Board	daniel.jones@globeducate.com

	Member	
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**Written records and retention**

A written record is kept of all complaints that reach the formal stage (Stage 2 above), and of whether they are resolved at that stage or proceed to a panel. A record will also be kept of what action is taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld) and the date on which a final outcome was reached.

All records of complaints will be kept for a minimum of seven years. Those involving safeguarding issues will be retained until the accused has reached normal pension age or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if it is longer. The school will provide on request to Ofsted and ISI, a written record of all complaints made during a specified period and the action that was taken as a result of each complaint..

Parents may ask the Head for the number of complaints received at the formal and panel stage during the preceding academic year. In addition to the Complaints Procedure detailed above, parents may also make a complaint to either the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) or, for complaints concerning boarding provision or the Early Years Foundation Stage, to Ofsted. This includes parents appealing against a decision made by the school about their complaint.

Contact details:

Independent Schools Inspectorate, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA  
Telephone: 020 7600 0100 Email: see Website: [www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD Telephone: 03001231231  
Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)