



Academy

INTERNATIONAL BOARDING SCHOOLS

EF International Academy – Torbay

Complaints Policy

Persons involved in the development of the Policy:

Governing Body

Headteacher

Date of Commencement of the Policy: November 2010

Date Reviewed: January 2016

Frequency of Review: 2 Years



COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy makes use of the procedures set out in the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014 which came into force on 5th January 2015.

This policy will be made available in various formats and will be published on the school's website.

School: EF International Academy, Torbay

GENERAL

The school is required under the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, revised in January 2015, to adopt, make available, and apply a complaints procedure. In order to comply with the Standards against which Independent School Inspections will be carried out, 'complaints' are not defined in the Independent School Standards Regulations, but the guidance suggests that there is a difference between 'concerns' which should be dealt with informally and 'complaints', which should be subject to a formal procedure i.e. it cannot be easily resolved by the intervention of a Senior Manager.

This policy concerns complaints from **parents** of current students regardless of whether the students is a boarder or not. .

At EF International Academy, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be appointed as the Complaints Co-ordinator.

The policy does not cover the following complaints:

- Complaints from members of staff as these are covered by the school's grievance procedures, or
- Financial concerns as these are covered by the home office of the student

TYPE OF CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS:

The majority of concerns/complaints received by the school fall into the following categories:

- **Academic** course programme, unsatisfactory teaching, too much/too little homework, progress in a particular subject etc;
- **Pastoral care** bullying, overall progress of the child, unhappiness of the child, accommodation etc; or
- **Child protection** allegations against staff, handling of sensitive issues.



PROCEDURES

General

There are three possible stages to the school's complaints procedure.

Stage 1 Informal Resolution

Concerns expressed by parents to any member of staff should be dealt with by that member of staff if he/she is able to do so. If the member of staff considers the issue to be beyond his/her competence, the concern should be passed to the Assistant Head (Pastoral or Academic) who will either attempt to resolve the matter or identify another member of the school SLT who will attempt to resolve the matter.

Concerns/complaints which come to a member of staff from other sources should be passed immediately to the Assistant Head (Pastoral or Academic), who will inform the complainant of the action he/she proposes to take.

All concerns will be followed up by a courtesy call by the Assistant Head Pastoral or Academic within 72 hours, whenever possible and the outcome recorded. At this stage it is important to establish if the concern has been resolved or if it should be progressed to stage 2. The outcome of this decision must be recorded.

Stage 2 Formal Procedure

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the complainant can choose to escalate the complaint to a formal stage. The complaint will be received by the Assistant Head Pastoral or Academic or Headteacher and must be received in writing. When a written formal complaint is received, the Headteacher or Assistant Head Pastoral or Academic will decide on the appropriate action and deploy a relevant member of senior staff to make appropriate investigations. The investigating officer will prepare a report that will include recommendations on whether the complaint can be resolved or should be rejected. The School will, in normal circumstances, respond to the complaint within 5 working days of receiving the written complaint.

When responding to the complaint, the school must inform the complainant of his/her right of appeal to an independent panel.

Stage 3 Independent Panel Hearing

Complainants who are not satisfied by the school's decision regarding the complaint can request a hearing by a panel of three members. The complainant must be advised by the Head/Assistant Head (Pastoral or Academic) to write to the Chair of the Governing Body outlining the reasons for requesting the panel hearing. Notification of the request for a panel hearing must be made within 10 working days of the complainant receiving the outcome of the school's decision from stage 2 of the process.

The panel will be appointed by the Schools Governing Body and will consist of one panel member, who will be independent of the school and two other members of school staff who have not previously been involved in the complaint..



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The hearing must be held within 10 working days of the Chair receiving notice of the complaint.



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The complainant must be told of his/her right to be accompanied by a friend, and where relevant, translations/interpreters must be arranged in consultation with the parties.



The panel will hear the appeal(s), consider all the views expressed and decide the outcome. The panel can make such findings and recommendations to the Governing Body as it wishes. It must send its report to the Governing Body, the Head and the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about, within three working days of the hearing. Details of the complaint and panel hearing must be available for inspection on the school premises by the Governing Body and the Headteacher.

Governing Body Action

In general, the Governing Body will take one of the following courses of action:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- Decide on appropriate action to resolve the complaint; or
- Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures.

The Governing Body's decision is final.

Reporting and Recording

In all cases it is important for staff to use the school's Complaints Form so that records of the complaint and the action taken can be recorded and traced. Supporting documents should be attached to the form. A written record will be kept of all complaints and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or panel hearing. A record will be kept of actions taken by the school as a result of the complaint(s) whether upheld or not. All correspondence, statements and records pertaining to individual complaints to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection requests access to them.

Note: for the purposes of the complaints procedure, 'working days' means term time days. If a complaint is received at the end of a term, a resolution will be reached within a maximum of 10 weeks from the date of the complaint being lodged.

Complaints registered in the preceding school year:

One complaint was registered under the formal procedure during 2014/2015.