

1. Introduction

At Cambridge English Schools, we work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. Our aim is to deal with issues and problems before they become a 'complaint'. However there is a clear protocol to follow if necessary and the steps to follow and their outcomes are outlined in this document.

If any parents are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the school, we invite them to talk to the child's class teacher immediately. There is no doubt that if a concern is shared with the class teacher they can either reassure worried parents or together devise steps to take to address the concern. Parents must never worry about sharing their concerns with the class teacher. They will always be taken seriously and due consideration given to a mutually agreeable resolution.

We promise we will always be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint and to deal with them as swiftly as possible. Our focus will always be on the children and what is best for them.

2. The Complaints Process

Stage 1 Informal expression of concern made to the school	In the first instance, the matter should be discussed with the child's class teacher, the school office can make an appointment for you, in most circumstances you should receive this appointment within 3 working days. In our experience most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. Members of the school's senior leadership may be involved at this stage.
Stage 2 Discussion with the year group leader	We expect most complaints to be resolved by this stage. However, if the matter has not been resolved and needs further investigation parents must make an appointment with the year group leader or Head of Faculty, if neither is available then the Deputy Head. Again you should expect to have this appointment within 3 working days.
Stage 3 Appointment with Deputy Head Teacher or Head Teacher	If your complaint is not resolved at this point, please contact the school and make an appointment with the Deputy Head Teacher or Head Teacher.

<p><u>Stage 4</u> Appointment with Principal</p>	<p>In the unlikely event that the matter is not resolved by the Head Teacher or Deputy, a parent may make an appointment to discuss the matter with the Principal. An appointment can be made by contacting either school office who will pass your contact details to the Principal. Alternatively, there is an online booking form on the school website.</p>
<p><u>Stage 5</u> Formal Complaint Complaints rarely reach this formal level but should you need to, you should make a formal complaint to the Principal</p>	<p>If the parent has met and discussed the matter with the Principal and still feels the complaint is not resolved then they can make a formal complaint. Complaints at this stage should be sent within 10 working days of the Principal's feedback. Your message must be sent via email to leighhovey@cambridge-kw.com to ensure its receipt. The message should say why you remain unhappy and what you wish to see happen. The Principal will respond in writing within 3 working days to let you know when your complaint is to be considered and to present a timeline. If a meeting with you is considered necessary you will be given adequate notice to prepare. You will be informed of the outcome of the Principal's investigation* and decision on what further action will be taken. The Principal will inform the company's legal department that a formal complaint has been received.</p> <p>*At this stage, as a detailed and forensic investigation, where cross examination, multiple interviews and scrutiny of considerable evidence may be necessary, we allow up to 10 working days from the date of the complaint to present findings. Although we will always aim to conclude earlier where possible.</p>

At each of the above stages, the staff will confirm that the parent has followed the procedure and refer them back to the correct stage if necessary and appropriate.

If parents have a complaint about one of the Head Teachers, they should first make an informal approach to the Principal (as at stage 4 above) who is obliged to investigate it. The Principal will do all they can to resolve the issue, but if parents are unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined above.

Similarly, if a parent has a complaint regarding the Principal then they should request an appoint to discuss it (informally in the first instance) with the Academic Director.

If, despite all stages of this policy being followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied they are not entitled to reopen the same issue. In such cases the Principal is able to inform them in writing that the process has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

If an anonymous complaint is received it will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances or serious concerns, such as child protection/safeguarding issues or bullying allegations, where the school might consider it appropriate to contact outside agencies.

School staff reserve the right not to meet with large groups of parents, or parents claiming to represent others. Equally, petitions are not an appropriate way to deal with an issue and will not be considered.

Staff are always happy to meet parents to discuss matters pertaining to their own individual children.

Staff will always aim to meet you within a maximum of 3 school days from the date of the appointment request. Staff will only ever discuss your child or children with you, they will not comment about other children.

3. Investigating Complaints

The person investigating the complaint will:

- Establish what has happened so far and who has been involved
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- Meet with the complainant or contact them if further information is required
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- Conduct any interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- Complete all necessary notes

4. Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the complaint, schools and complainant will want to keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology;
- *An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- Assurance that the event that was the basis of the complaint will not recur;
- Explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure it does not happen again. Details of any disciplinary procedures that have taken place as a result of the complaint will not be shared.

- An undertaking to review school policy or procedure in light of the complaint;
- An explanation that there is insufficient evidence and thus the complaint cannot be upheld;
- An explanation that, following investigation, the evidence does not substantiate the concern.

**An admission that the school could have handled things better is not the same as an admission of negligence*

5. Monitoring and Review

The Principal will monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Head Teachers will log all stage 3 complaints received by the school and record how they were resolved. These will be reported as part of the Head Teacher's report to the Principal. The Principal will review this policy as necessary.

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