

## **Collège Français Bilingue de Londres (The “School”)**

### **Complaints Policy**

#### **Introduction**

The Headteacher and School staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the School has put in place procedures in case there are complaints by parents. The following policy sets out the procedure that the School follows in such cases.

If any parent is unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or has any concern relating to the School, we encourage that person to talk to the child's teacher immediately.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), CFBL will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector or the Secretary of State, details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

#### **1. What constitute a complaint**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the school is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

**All complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.**

#### **2. Use of this procedure**

This procedure is to be used for all complaints, except where:

- the alleged conduct is covered by CFBL Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; or
- the complaint concerns a disciplinary matter including a suspension or an expulsion (see CFBL Behaviour and Discipline Policy); or
- the complaint is by a member of staff ("Grievance Procedures"); or
- the complaint relates to the School's Admission Policy.

#### **3. The complaint process**

The three stage process is as follows

##### **Stage 1: Informal resolution**

Parents should whenever possible seek an early and informal resolution of their concerns.

- **Making contact**

Parents with a concern about anything to do with the education that we are providing should first approach the child's teacher. The teacher will ascertain the nature and seriousness of the concern or potential complaint.

- **Record keeping**

Unless the concern or complaint is minor and /or can be instantly dealt with, the teacher will make a written note of the details, including the date and time the complaint was made. Pupils and parents are encouraged to give their names if making a complaint. Anonymous complaints are extremely difficult (sometimes impossible) to pursue, because of difficulties in collecting or clarifying evidence. Such complaints will be investigated so far as reasonable in all the circumstances.

- **Informal resolution by the Deputy to Head for Primary School or the Deputy to Head for Secondary School**

Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it (in person or by phone call) with the Deputy to Head for Primary School or the Deputy to Head for Secondary School (as appropriate). They will consider any such complaint seriously and, if required, investigate each case. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage. In all cases, the School aims to do all it reasonably can to ensure that no complaint rebounds unfairly on any pupil.

A complaint about the Deputy to Head for Primary School or the Deputy to Head for Secondary School should be made to the Headteacher and a complaint about the Headteacher should be made to the Chair of the Governors.

### **Stage 2: Formal resolution**

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Headteacher will meet or speak to the parents concerned, within 5 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Headteacher to carry out further investigations.
- The Headteacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headteacher 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. The Headteacher will also give reasons for his decision.
- If the complaint is against the Head, the Chair of Governors will call for a full report from the Head and for all the relevant documents. The Chair 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 Chair 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 Chair will give reasons for his decision.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

### **Stage 3: Panel hearing**

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Clerk to the Governors (as Convenor) who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.

- **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 and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school.** The Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place within 10 working days.
- 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 working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it, within 5 working days of the hearing (although additional time may be required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the hearing). The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, the person complained about as well as the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher.

#### **4. Timing, Records and Confidentiality**

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within 5 working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods.

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the School's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 20 working days. Stage 3, the Appeal Panel Hearing, will be completed within a further 20 working days.

Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, 'working days' refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time.

The Headteacher shall keep written records of all formal complaints whether they are resolved at the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing and any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld).

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State, a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 or the French Inspectorate requests access to them.

The Board of Governors, the Headteacher, the party raising the complaint and all parties involved in the complaint will be copied in all documents.

**Parents may complain directly to Ofsted if they believe the provider is not meeting requirements. Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 123 1231 or by email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**

## 5. Monitoring and review

The Board monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher logs all formal complaints (stage 2 and 3) received by the School and records how they were resolved. The Board examines this log on an annual basis.

This document has been drawn up under **Part 7 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014**

The Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes (Competent Authorities and Information) Regulations 2015 require the School to provide you on conclusion of the final stage of the School's complaints procedure with the name and address of an alternative dispute resolution provider who has been certified by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute as competent to resolve consumer disputes. These details are available at <https://www.tradingstandards.uk/consumers> . However, please note that the School is not obliged to enter into alternative dispute resolution, and nor is it willing to do so in this instance.

Last review 09/2018