

Collège Français Bilingue de Londres
("CFBL" or the "School")

Complaints Policy

Introduction

The Headteacher and School staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. 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. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School with care and in accordance with this Complaints Policy.

CFBL makes its Complaints Policy available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the School's website and in the School's reception office during the school day. CFBL will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it are made aware that this document is published or available and of the form in which it is published or available, and of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. Although this policy is made available to parents of prospective pupils, it is not available for use by them; it may only be used by parents of current pupils.

Complaints by parents of former pupils will be dealt with under this Complaints Policy only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil to which the complaint relates was still registered as a pupil at the School.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 2014, CFBL will also make available, on request, to Ofsted and the Department for Education (DfE), details of this Complaints Policy and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

"Parent(s)" means the holder(s) of parental responsibility for a pupil about whom the complaint relates.

All complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The School is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you raised in good faith.

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 (except as set out in 2. below).

A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the School has done something wrong, or failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

2. Use of this procedure

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

- the alleged conduct is covered by CFBL's Child Protection Policy; or
- the complaint concerns a disciplinary matter including a suspension or an expulsion (see CFBL's 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 three-stage complaints procedure

The three stage procedure is as follows

Stage 1: Informal resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally and Parents should whenever possible seek an early and informal resolution of their concerns.

- **Making contact**

Parents with a complaint should normally first contact the child's teacher in the primary school or form teacher (*professeur principal*) in the secondary school.

In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the (form) teacher cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Deputy Head.

Complaints made directly to a Deputy Head or the Headteacher will usually be referred to the relevant (form) teacher unless the Deputy Head/the Headteacher deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.

- **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. Should the matter not be resolved within 5 working days or in the event that no mutually satisfactory resolution has been found, then Parents may proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

A complaint about the Deputy to Head for Primary School or the Deputy to Head for Secondary School should be made directly to the Headteacher and a complaint about the Headteacher should be made directly to the Chair of the Governors whose contact details are available from the Clerk to the board on request.

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. In most cases, the Headteacher will make his decision and provide the Parents with reasons within 15 working days of the complaint being received in writing.

If the complaint is against the Head, the complaint should be made to the chair of Governors. 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 should do so in writing to the Clerk to the Governors (as Convenor) who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. The writing should set out the grounds of appeal and contain supporting evidence which the Parents wish to rely on.

The Clerk will then refer the appeal 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 Clerk, on behalf of the Panel, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place within 20 days. The Chair of governors will appoint one of the panel members to act as Chair of the panel.

The hearing may take place physically or by video conference.

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 or further investigation be carried out. 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. The Panel will decide whether it would be helpful for witnesses to attend.

The manner in which the hearing is conducted will be at the discretion of the Panel.

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 as to whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and accordingly decide whether to dismiss the complaint in whole or in part, uphold the complaint in whole or in part, 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, sensitively and within clear and reasonable timescales. 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, excluding bank holidays. This means that during School holidays it may take longer to resolve a complaint although the School will do what is reasonably practicable to avoid undue delay.

5. Recording complaints and use of personal data

The Headteacher shall keep a written record 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).

The School processes data in accordance with its Privacy Notice. When dealing with complaints the School (including any Panel member appointed under the Stage 3 process) may process a range of information, which is likely to include the following:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name and contact details of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)
- Notes and minutes of the hearing, and
- The Panel's written decision.

This may include 'special category personal data' (as further detailed in the School's Privacy Notice, potentially including, for instance, information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint. This data will be processed in accordance with the School's Privacy Notice.

The School will keep records of formal complaints and Complaints Panel hearings, as required by regulation. It will do so in accordance with its Privacy Notice and Retention of Records Policy.

For the academic year 2018/2019 the School received 1 formal complaint. The School did not receive any formal complaint for the academic year 2019/2020.

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 or the Department for Education (Independent Education and Boarding Team) if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements. Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 123 1231 or by email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk. The Department for Education (Independent Education and Boarding Team) may be contacted on 0370 000 2288 or by email: registration.enquiries@education.gov.uk.

6. Monitoring and review

The Board monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Board examines the Head teacher's formal complaints 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 by the Management: June 2020
Last approval by the Governors: July 2020