



September 2023

## **Aims**

This complaints procedure is for parents of pupils at the School who wish to make a complaint. The School's complaints procedure is provided to parents of current and prospective pupils, and to all staff. It can be downloaded from the School's website.

## **Requirements of this policy**

This policy complies with Part 7 of the [Education \(Independent Schools Standards\) Regulations 2014, as amended](#).

## **Complaints and external bodies**

The chain of complaint is:

1. Teachers/ SLT/ Headteacher
2. Proprietor
3. Department for Education

(There is a possibility that Local Authorities may be involved in the chain of complaint - for example, when the complaint concerns child safeguarding).

Guidance on school issues can be obtained from DfE public enquiries. Tel 0370 000 2288

## **School inspections**

Parents are notified of forthcoming inspections. The inspection team cannot investigate or comment on individual complaints, but will look for examples of the School's compliance with its own policies and with regulatory requirements.

## **Policy Statement**

The school believes that children and parents are entitled to expect care, courtesy, respect and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give prompt and serious attention to



any concerns about the running of the setting. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, this procedure offers a formal structure, the stages of which are outlined below. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

It is stressed that parents should not in any way feel awkward about raising concerns or complaints. It is a necessary part of parent/teacher communication and will under no circumstances affect the position of the child. Any complaint will be treated in complete confidence. Parents must feel that they are welcome to discuss the progress of their complaint at any stage.

## PROCEDURES

The procedures set out may be adapted as appropriate to meet the policy aims and circumstances of each case. Certain parts of the procedures can only be carried out during term time.

### 1. The three stage complaint procedure

#### a. Stage 1 – informal resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally through sensitive and supportive consultation with the parents concerned, ensuring that their complaint has been fully aired and understood and a satisfactory resolution has been achieved.

- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's teacher in the first instance. It is best to make an appointment either before or after school. In many cases the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parent's satisfaction. If the teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT). If the complaint does not relate to the class teacher, the matter will be referred to the relevant member of staff and an opportunity to meet with this member of staff will be provided.
- Teachers are requested to pass on complaints to a member of the SMT, who will lead the investigation. The evidence gathering may well include conversations with the teacher who passed on the complaint, and other staff members as required.



- A query/complaint relating to financial matters such as fees should be raised in the first instance with the Office Manager.
- In certain cases, parents may wish to go straight to the Head. However, the Head might not be able to respond until she has consulted the member of staff concerned.
- If the complaint is against the Headteacher, parents should make their complaint directly to the Proprietor c/o La Petite Ecole Bilingue and marked 'private and confidential'. The Proprietor will agree the process for investigation in accordance with this policy and the time scales therein.
- The complaint has to be acknowledged within 2 working days during term time or 5 days during the holidays. Should the matter not be resolved within 14 days, or in the event that the teacher or other appropriate member of staff 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.

b. Stage 2 – formal resolution

If a complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher within seven days. The complaint has to be acknowledged within 2 working days during term time or 5 days during the holidays.

- The Headteacher will then decide the appropriate course of action to take.
- The Headteacher will make the person against whom the complaint has been made aware that a formal complaint has been received as soon as reasonably practicable.
- In the case of complaints which raise issues of safeguarding children or vulnerable adults, the School's safeguarding procedures will be followed.
- In most cases the Headteacher will meet with the parents concerned within seven 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.
- A written record will be kept of all formal complaints, and of how, and at what stage, they were resolved. 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 practicable, all 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.
- Stage 2 of the process will be completed within 28 days (unless holidays dictate that it is not practicable to do so).
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to stage 3 of this procedure.

c. Stage 3 – Panel hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following failure to reach an earlier resolution) they should write to the Office Manager within 15 school days of receiving the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation, as presented by the Head. The Office Manager has been appointed by the Headteacher to call hearings of the complaints panel.

The matter will then be referred to the complaints panel for consideration. The panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. Each of the panel members shall be appointed by the Headteacher. The Office Manager, on behalf of the panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen days, unless the parent later indicates that they are satisfied and do not wish to proceed further.

If the panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied to all parties not later than seven days prior to the hearing.

If a parent does not exercise the right to attend a panel hearing, this does not remove the school's obligation to hold the hearing in conformity with this policy. The school's arrangements for the panel hearing should be reasonable in order to facilitate the parents exercising the right of attendance.

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation is not appropriate.

If possible, the panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately 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 the facts they consider relevant, the panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within fourteen days of the hearing. The panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for

it. The decision of the panel will be final. The panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headteacher, the Proprietor and, where relevant, the person about whom the complaint has been made and will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and headteacher. The School will record any findings and recommendations, whether or not the complaint is upheld.

### **Record Keeping**

A written record is kept of all complaints at Stage 2 and Stage 3 of this procedure including details of the complaints, the steps that were taken and whether or not they were resolved following a formal procedure, including whether or not they proceeded to a panel hearing, and the action that was taken by the School as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year will be supplied to parents on request.

### **Confidentiality**

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where access is requested by the *Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008*. In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will normally be kept for a minimum of 7 years. In exceptional circumstances (eg. if the complaint has safeguarding implications), some details will be retained for a further period as necessary.

### **See record keeping policy**

If parents or carers have concerns about the school's ability to meet EYFS requirements, they should contact Ofsted (see paragraph below).

## EYFS

Written complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements must be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 school days. If parents are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint concerning our Early Years provision, they are entitled to make a complaint directly to Ofsted (see paragraph below). They can download the Ofsted leaflet: "Complaints to Ofsted about Schools: Guidance for Parents" reference 080113 from [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). Written records of complaints made are retained for three years and must be provided to Ofsted and ISI on request. These records will include the actions taken by the school as a result of the complaint.

## ISI/ OFSTED

Parents may approach ISI/Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the setting's registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.

- The number to call Ofsted with regard to a complaint is: 03000 123 4666

**ADDRESS:** Ofsted, National Complaints Team

Ofsted Early Years, The National Business Unit Piccadilly Gate,  
Store Street  
Manchester M1 2WD

**EMAIL:** [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

- The number to call ISI is 03076000100

**ADDRESS:** *Independent School Inspectorate, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA*

**EMAIL:** [info@isi.net](mailto:info@isi.net)

- If a child appears to be at risk, our school follows the procedures of the Local **Safeguarding Children Board in our local authority.**
- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the headteacher works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

### Policy status

The policy has been approved by the Headteacher. It provides guidelines for handling concerns and complaints. It takes account of paragraph 25 of schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 (SI 2010/1997), and the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework. The policy applies to all sections of the school including Early Years.

### Number of formal complaints in preceding school years

2021-2022 - 0 complaints

2022-2023 - 0 complaints

<b>Date of adoption of this policy</b>	2 September 2023
<b>Date of last review of this policy</b>	28 August 2023
<b>Date for next review of this policy</b>	28 August 2024
<b>Policy owner (SLT)</b>	Headteacher and DSL
<b>Authorised by</b>	Headteacher, DSL and Proprietor