

The American School in London

Parent/Guardian Complaints Policy

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When parents/guardians wish to raise a concern with or inform the School of a specific complaint, the School follows these procedures:

1. Informal resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally; indeed, the overwhelming majority of parents/guardians' concerns are well addressed through informal resolution.
- If you have a complaint or concern, in the first instance, please contact your child's homeroom teacher, advisor or class dean. In most cases, this will lead to a satisfactory resolution. In some cases, it may be necessary for the teacher, advisor or dean to consult with another teacher or administrator such as a department head, a guidance counselor, a member of the Student Support Services Team, or a principal. In these instances, the responsibility for dealing with the concern may be assumed by this member of the ASL faculty or staff.
- Complaints or concerns brought directly to a senior administrator, e.g., the Head of School or divisional principals, will usually be referred to the relevant faculty or staff member in the appropriate division. In some instances, the senior administrator may decide that it is appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- An administrator who receives a complaint will make a written record of it and the date on which it was received. If the matter has not been addressed and/or resolved within 10 school days, or if you and the school official approached fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then you should proceed with your complaint using Step 2 of this procedure.

2. Formal resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then you should put your complaint in writing to the Head of School. The Head of School will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action.
- In most cases, the Head will communicate with you, normally within five school days of receiving the complaint, to acknowledge receipt. Often, this communication will be to inform you to whom in the School the matter has been referred. In some cases, the Head's communication itself will lead to a resolution to the complaint.
- Upon receiving a written complaint, the Head of School may feel it necessary to carry out further investigations.
- The Head of School will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head of School is satisfied that all relevant facts have been established as best they can, a decision will be made regarding the complaint and you will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head of School will also give reasons for his/her decision.
- parents/guardians who are still not satisfied with the decision should proceed to Step 3 of this procedure.

3. Panel hearing

- parents/guardians who seek to invoke Step 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution through Steps 1 and 2) will be referred to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, who has been appointed by the Board of Trustees to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- In this instance, the Board Chair will decide how s/he wishes to proceed with the complaint. If appropriate, s/he will refer the parents/guardians' complaint to the Complaints Panel for its consideration. The Panel will consist of members of the Board of Trustees who have been selected by the Board Chair, plus one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school. The Board Chair, on behalf of the Panel, will formally acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as time allows (normally within 30 school days).
- If the Panel feels it is important, it may require that additional details connected to the complaint or related matters be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of material outlining these details should be given to all involved parties at least four school days prior to the hearing.

- Involved parents/guardians may bring one other person (such as a relative, teacher or friend) to the hearing. Legal representation at this hearing is not considered to be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents/guardians' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- If the Panel feels it necessary for further investigation to take place, they will explain how it is to be carried out. Once the information from the investigation is available, and once the Panel has had time to consider this new information, it will make a decision about the complaint and make recommendations within seven school days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the parents/guardians informing them of the decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and recommendations (where stated) will be sent in writing to the parents/guardians, the Head of School, the Board of Trustees, and, where relevant, the person about whom the complaint was made. A written record will be kept of the complaints made in accordance with this procedure, whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing and action taken by the school as a result of those complaints.

The School pledges to treat all concerns and complaints seriously and confidentially. All documents relevant to a complaint will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

A log of the number of parent/guardian complaints filed within the last school year is held by the Head of School's office.