



IBIS Complaints Policy and Procedure

This policy applies to the whole school including the EYFS. It is available to parents, pupils and staff. It is on display in the entrance hall and a copy may be received from the office. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about a real or perceived problem. It may be about the school as a whole or about a group or about an individual. You can make a complaint in person or in writing.

Principles informing our complaints procedure

This procedure is designed to:

- be well publicised and easily accessible
- be simple to understand and use
- be impartial
- be non-adversarial
- allow swift handling with established time limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- allow a mediation process if agreed by the complainant
- allow for a hearing of a Panel of Governors, where appropriate
- respect people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible
- address all points of issue, provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- provide information to the school's Senior Management Team so that services can be improved

1. Informal Resolution - Dealing with concerns at the earliest opportunity

If parents, staff or pupils have concerns they should:

- Discuss their concerns with the member of staff most directly involved.
- If not satisfied, they can approach the Headteacher. It may be the case that the complainants do not want to speak to the member of staff involved and wish to approach the Headteacher directly. The Headteacher is responsible for making decisions on a daily basis about the school's internal management and organisation.

Please note:

- If the complaint is about the Headteacher then the Deputy Head should be approached first then the Board
- If the complaint is between two adults who represent school bodies (the Förderverein, Schulverein, Room Mums or VIP's) the procedure remains the same until Stage 3 when a panel must be formed by the Chair of the Board. No resolution can be found until a panel (with no experience of the problem or any sort of possible bias) has reached a conclusion as to the best way to move forward. The procedure for the panel is detailed in section three of this policy.
- A meeting on an informal basis should be encouraged.

At each stage in the procedure there are various ways in which a concern or complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the concern or 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 explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint

Complainants should be encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage. A written record will be kept of each complaint and the date upon which it is received. Should the matter not be resolved within 2 school working weeks, then parents are advised to move to the next stage of the procedure.

2. Formal Resolution

- The first step of stage 2 is the formal recording of the complaint in writing to the Headteacher.
- The envelope should be marked 'FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION' and the Headteacher will consider the complaint and decide an appropriate course of action. In most cases the Headteacher will meet with the pupil's parents within 2 working days of receiving the written complaint and will discuss and review the way in which it has been handled so far. If possible a resolution will be reached during this discussion.
- It may be necessary for the Headteacher to investigate the detail of the complaint more fully within the school or externally. The detail of a complaint about a member of staff may not be shared in its entirety with that member of staff unless, in the Headteacher's discretion, it is necessary to properly ascertain all the relevant facts of the case.
- The Headteacher will keep a written record of all meetings held in connection with the complaint.
- Once the Headteacher is satisfied that, as far as is possible, all of the relevant facts have been established and accepted, a decision concerning the manner in which the school proposes to resolve the complaint will be sent in writing to the pupil's parents.
- Reasons for the decision will always be provided.
- If parents remain dissatisfied with the Headteacher's decision, they should invoke stage three of the procedure.

3. Chair of Governors Complaints Panel

- Where the complainant is still not satisfied that their complaint has been dealt with fully and properly, they may choose to take it to a panel of Governors. The written complaint should be submitted to the Board through their official school email address: board@ibis-school.com.
- The Chair (or acting Chair) is responsible for convening a Complaints Panel to which the complaint will be referred for consideration.
- The governing body are advised to agree the names of 4 or 5 possible governors from whom a panel of three may be drawn. The decision about the membership of a particular panel will depend on factors such as availability, whether any governors have prior knowledge etc. and the decision will be made by the Chair. The members of the panel cannot be directly involved in the matter.
- One of the Panel of three suitably qualified people must be a person who is completely independent of the school and the complainant.
- The Panel should decide upon an appropriate process through which the complaint should be considered and resolved. It will usually involve listening to the complaint with the pupil's parent(s) at which parents may be assisted by a friend. Legal representation at any hearing will not normally be appropriate. The hearing will be held at the school and the Panel may ask the Headteacher and any relevant members of staff to attend to provide information about the school's position in this matter.

- The hearing will usually be convened within 14 school working days of the date upon which the Panel has been appointed or as soon as practicable in the circumstances. The Panel chair should arrange a convenient date directly with the parents concerned.
- The Panel may require further particulars of the complaint to be provided by parents or by the school in advance of the hearing. Copies of any such material will be provided to the parent(s) and to the Headteacher at least 7 working days prior to the hearing.
- If possible the complaint will be resolved at or immediately following the hearing without any need for further consideration or investigation. If further investigation and consideration are necessary the Panel will decide on how this should proceed and inform the parent(s) of the progress.
- After considering all the relevant facts, the Panel will reach a decision which, together with any relevant recommendations, it will usually expect to complete within 21 school working days of the hearing and provide in writing to the Chair of Governors. The Chair will then write to the Governors, parents, Headteacher and any relevant member of staff informing them of the Panel's findings of fact, its decision and the reason for it.
- The decision of the Panel will be final.
- The school will retain all related documents confidentially for three years. Disclosure of facts may be necessary during the course of an inspection or where any other legal obligation to disclose arises.

P. Wharton- Headteacher

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