

PARENTS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

August 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

EIFA International School (“EIFA”, “School”, “we”, “us” or “our”) has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. It is very important for us that children and their parents are happy with the School, and they can rest assured that we treat all complaints with the utmost of care, seriousness and confidentiality.

This Parents Complaints Procedure (the “Procedure”) is meant to outline the formal process available to Parents who wish to make a complaint, though we always aim and prefer for matters to be resolved swiftly, informally and amicably.

The School is here for your child, and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you or your child raise(s) in good faith.

In this Procedure, “Parent(s)”, “you”, “your” and “yours” refer to the legal guardian(s) with parental responsibility, as registered with the School, and the “School”, “us”, “we”, “our” and “ours” to EIFA International School.

This Procedure is available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the School’s website. The Procedure applies to all pupils of the School, including Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

2. WHAT CONSTITUTES 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. Any matter about which Parents are unhappy and seeks action by the School is within the scope of this Procedure.

The following exceptions apply:

- a) Complaints relating to Child Protection where a separate procedure applies.
- b) Appeals relating to internal assessment decisions for external qualifications where separate appeals procedures apply.

3. WHO SHOULD A COMPLAINT BE DIRECTED TO?

Complaints should be addressed to the appropriate person(s), as follows:

Initial complaint	Discussion with teacher
Complaint about teachers	Head of Early Years/Director of Studies
Complaint about administrative/support staff	Head of Administration and Compliance
Complaints about the Head of Early Years/Director of Studies	Head of School
Complaints about the Head of School or Head of Administration and Compliance	School’s Board of Directors

4. THE THREE-STAGE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. Should an informal resolution not be found, then the following three stages are available for a formal process.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- If you have a complaint or are unhappy about a matter, it would be advisable to initially contact your child's teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway. If the teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for [him/her] to consult the relevant Director of Studies or Head of Early Years.
- A written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received will be made.
- Should the matter not be resolved within 10 working days, then you will be advised to proceed with your complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the matter cannot be resolved on an informal basis, you will be advised to put your complaint in writing to the Head of School.
- The Head of School will meet with you, within 5 working days of receiving your complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head of School to carry out further investigations.
- It may also be necessary for the Head of School to delegate responsibility at this stage to another senior member of staff.
- Once the Head of School or senior member of staff is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and you will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head of School or senior member of staff will also give you the basis of their decision.
- Written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint will be made and kept within the Schools complaints log
- If you are still not satisfied with the decision, you may proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.
- If the complaint is about the Head of School or Head of Administration and Compliance, it will be dealt with using the same procedure and timeframe as set out in this procedure but the complaint should be directed to the Board of Directors (the "Board").

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- At this stage, the School's Board of Directors would be involved
- The Board will appoint a Complaints Panel, consisting of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint
- A hearing will be scheduled 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
- When attending the hearing you may be accompanied by one other person if you wish. This may be a relative, a teacher or a friend. Legal representation will not be appropriate
- The manner in which the hearing is conducted shall be at the discretion of the Panel
- If possible, the Panel will consider the 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 presented, the Panel will reach a decision and will write to you confirming its decision and the reasons for it. This should be within 5 working days of the hearing (unless further investigations following the hearing have been deemed necessary)
- A copy of the Panel's decision and recommendations (if any) will also be sent to the person complained about, as well as to the Board and the Head of School
- The decision of the Panel will be final

5. TIMEFRAME FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

All complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. The first two stages of the procedure will be completed **within 20 working days**. Stage 3, the Complaints 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.

If it becomes necessary to alter the time limits and deadlines set out within this Procedure, you will be advised accordingly and will be provided with revised timescales.

6. RECORDING COMPLAINTS AND USE OF PERSONAL DATA

The School will keep a written record of all formal complaints at any of the stages outlined above 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, available on our website. 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 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 of the hearing
- The Panel's written decision.

This may include 'special category personal data' (as further detailed in the School's Privacy Notice, but potentially including sensitive data such as information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing to the nature of the complaint. For more information about Data Protection at EIFA International School, please contact the Data Protection Officer on DPO@eifaschool.com.

EIFA International School will provide Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period, and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept for at least 3 years.

Parents may complain directly to Ofsted if they believe the provider is not meeting the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements. Ofsted may be contacted on 0300 1234 234 or by email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.