



EF ACADEMY

International
Boarding Schools

OXFORD COMPLAINTS POLICY 2020-21

Origins of Policy	EF Academy Torbay and Oxford
Modified by:	Paul Ellis (Head of School); Mark Fletcher-Single (Deputy Head Pastoral); update of record of complaints May 2019
Related policies:	Academic Policy Anti-Bullying Policy Concerns Policy E-Safety Policy Health & Safety Medical Provision for Students Policy Safeguarding Policy
Next review date:	June 2021

Review log:	June 2020 P. Ellis – minor nomenclature changes (e.g. ‘Safeguarding’ for ‘Child Protection’)
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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This policy makes use of the procedures set out in the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014, which came into force on 5th January 2015.

This policy will be made available in various formats and will be available on the school’s website.

School: EF International Academy Oxford

GENERAL

Guidance suggests that there is a difference between ‘concerns’ which we take to be low-level and easily dealt with informally, and ‘complaints’, which should be subject to a formal procedure i.e. it cannot be easily resolved by the intervention of a Senior Manager. However, EF Academy understands that any matter about which a parent of a student is unhappy and seeks action by the school can be considered a complaint and thus subject to the scope of this policy.

This policy concerns complaints from **parents** of current students regardless of whether the student is a boarder or not.

At EF Academy, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be appointed as the Complaints Co-ordinator; this will usually be the Deputy Head but could be another member of SLT at the discretion of the Head or if the complaint relates to the Deputy Head.

The policy does not cover the following complaints:

- Complaints from members of staff as these are covered by the school’s grievance procedures, or
- Financial concerns as these are covered by the home admissions office of the student

TYPE OF CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS:

The majority of concerns/complaints received by the school fall into the following categories:

- **Academic:** course programme, unsatisfactory teaching, too much/too little homework, progress in a particular subject etc;
- **Pastoral care:** bullying, overall progress of the child, unhappiness of the child, accommodation etc; or
- **Safeguarding:** allegations against staff, handling of sensitive issues.

PROCEDURES

General

There are three possible stages to the school's complaints procedure.

Stage 1 Informal Resolution

Complaints expressed by parents to any member of staff should be dealt with by that member of staff if he/she is able to do so. If the member of staff considers the issue to be beyond his/her competence, the concern should be passed to the Deputy Head who will either attempt to resolve the matter or identify another member of the school SLT who will attempt to resolve the matter.

Complaints which come to a member of staff from other sources should be passed immediately to the Deputy Head who will inform the complainant of the action he/she proposes to take.

All complaints will be followed up by a courtesy call by the Deputy Head within 72 hours, whenever possible and the outcome recorded. At this stage it is important to establish if the concern has been resolved or if it should be progressed to stage 2. The outcome of this decision must be recorded.

Stage 2 Formal Procedure

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the complainant can choose to escalate the complaint to a formal stage. The complaint will be received by the Head of School or Deputy Head and must be received in writing. When a written formal complaint is received, the Head of School or Deputy Head will decide on the appropriate action and deploy a relevant member of senior staff to make appropriate investigations. The investigation lead will prepare a report that will include recommendations on whether the complaint can be resolved or should be rejected. The School will, in normal circumstances, respond to the complaint within 5 working days of receiving the written complaint. See note at close of document for explanation of expected timescales outside term time.

When responding to the complaint, the school must inform the complainant of his/her right of appeal to an independent panel.

Stage 3 Independent Panel Hearing

Complainants who are not satisfied by the school's decision regarding the complaint can request a hearing by a panel of three members. The complainant must be advised by the Head/Deputy Head to write to the Director or Operations outlining the reasons for requesting the panel hearing. Notification of the request for a panel hearing must be made within 10 working days of the complainant receiving the outcome of the school's decision from stage 2 of the process.

The panel will be appointed by the Director of Operations and will consist of one panel member who will be independent of the school and two other members of school staff who have not previously been involved in the complaint.

The hearing will be held within 10 working days of the Chair receiving notice of the complaint, unless the parent requests a date that reasonably close to, but outside of, the ten day period, or the parent insists upon bringing legal representation, in which case the school may require sufficient time to seek legal advice itself.

The complainant must be told of his or her right to be accompanied by a friend, and where relevant, translations/interpreters must be made available for and arranged for in consultation with parents.

The panel will hear the appeal(s), consider all the views expressed and decide the outcome. The panel can make such findings and recommendations to the Director of Operations as it wishes. It must send its report to the Director of Operations, the Head and the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about, within three working days of the hearing. Details of the complaint and panel hearing must be available for inspection on the school premises by the Director of Operations and the Head Teacher.

Director of Operations Action

In general, the Director of Operations will take one of the following courses of action:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- Decide on appropriate action to resolve the complaint; or
- Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures.

The Director of Operations decision is final.

Reporting and Recording

In all cases it is important for staff to maintain accurate records so that the nature of the complaint and the action taken can be recorded and traced. Supporting documents should be attached to the records. A written record will be kept of all complaints and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or panel hearing. A record will be kept of actions taken by the school as a result of the complaint(s) whether upheld or not. All correspondence, statements and records pertaining to individual complaints to be kept confidential except where a body conducting an inspection requests access to them.

Note: for the purposes of the complaints procedure, 'working days' means term time days. If a complaint is received at the end of a term, a resolution will be reached within a maximum of 10 weeks from the date of the complaint being lodged.

Complaints registered in the preceding school year:

Zero complaints were registered under the formal procedure during 2019-20.