



**EF ACADEMY**

International  
Boarding Schools

**EF Academy – Torbay**

# **Complaints Procedure**



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<b>Author:</b>	Chair Executive Committee
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<b>Document Purpose:</b>	Sets out the basis on which formal complaints can be heard
<b>Related Documents:</b>	Complaints Form
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## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



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

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

**School: EF International Academy, Torbay**

## GENERAL

The school is required under the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, revised in January 2015, to adopt, make available, and apply a complaints procedure. In order to comply with the Standards against which Independent School Inspections will be carried out, 'complaints' are not defined in the Independent School Standards Regulations, but the 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 pupil 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
- **Child protection** allegations against staff, handling of sensitive issues.



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## 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 respond to the complainant of the action he/she proposes to take.

All complaints will be acknowledged within 2 working days during term time by a courtesy call from the Deputy Head. Should the matter not be resolved within 10 working days or in the event that the School and the complainant fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then complainants will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure. **See note at close of document for explanation of expected timescales outside of term time.**

#### 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 Deputy Head or Head Teacher and must be received in writing. When a written formal complaint is received, the Deputy Head or Head Teacher will acknowledge the escalated complaint within 2 working days, 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, resolve the complaint within 20 working days of receiving the written complaint. When responding to the complaint, the school must inform the complainant of his/her right of appeal to an independent panel.

Please note that any complaint received within two weeks of the end of term is likely to take longer to resolve owing to the presence of school holidays and the unavailability of personnel required for the investigation to be properly undertaken. **See note at close of document for explanation of expected timescales outside of term time.**



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If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

## **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 Chair of the Executive Committee 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 Schools Executive Committee 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 Executive Committee as it wishes. It must send its report to the Executive Committee, 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 Executive Committee and the Head Teacher.

## **Executive Committee Action**

In general, the Executive Committee 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 Executive Committee's decision is final.

## **Reporting and Recording**



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In all cases it is important for staff to use the school's Complaints Form so that records of the complaint and the action taken can be recorded and traced. Supporting documents should be attached to the form. 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 the Secretary of State or 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:**

One formal complaint was registered under the formal procedure during 2014/2015.

Zero formal complaints were registered under the formal procedure during 2015/2016.

Zero complaints formal were registered under the formal procedure during 2016/2017.

Zero complaints formal were registered under the formal procedure during 2017/2018.

Zero complaints formal were registered under the formal procedure during 2018/2019.