

Complaints Procedure

(for Parents and Legal Guardians of enrolled students)

This policy is available from our website (halcyonschool.com) and in hard copy on request.

Introduction

Halcyon London International School recognises the importance of regular interaction between staff and parents so that student learning and development can be supported consistently. This is also embedded in the ethos of the International Baccalaureate Programmes. In the event that parents have a complaint, the school will treat it in accordance with its procedure.

The school aims to resolve any complaints in a timely manner. Timescales for each stage are set out below in the relevant paragraphs. When we refer to “school days”, we mean Monday to Friday, when the school is open during term time. The dates of terms are published on www.halcyonschool.com.

Halcyon London International School will maintain a written record of all complaints whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.

At all stages, the participants are asked to consider, model and be guided by the International Baccalaureate Learner Profile¹.

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- If parents have a complaint or concern they should, in the first instance, contact their son's/daughter's advisor or the staff member involved. In most cases, the matter will be resolved.
- If the staff member/parent cannot resolve the matter alone, they should contact the relevant IB Coordinator for academic matters and the Student Wellbeing Leader for wellbeing issues.
- If the matter remains unresolved, the staff member/parent should contact the Director.
- Any complaint made directly to the Director will normally be referred to the relevant advisor or staff member, IB Coordinator or Student Wellbeing Leader unless the Director deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- Every effort will be made to find a satisfactory resolution, usually within 15 school days.
- Staff members and the Director will keep records of concerns and complaints on the date when they were received and reviewed. The staff member or Director will document the outcome in writing by email or otherwise and send this to the parent/guardian.

Most complaints will be resolved informally. In the case(s) when this does not happen, parents will be advised that they may follow a formal procedure.

¹ (10 attributes which IB learners strive to be: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, reflective)

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Director. The Director will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. If the complaint is about the Director, the written complaint will be re-directed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- In most cases the Director will speak to the parents concerned, normally within three school days of receiving the complaint, and will discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- The Director may need to carry out further investigations.
- The Director will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Director is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Director will also give reasons for the decision.
- The Director's aim is to inform any complainant of the outcome of an investigation and the resolution to the complaint within 28 working days from the receipt of the complaint. However, any written complaint received within one month of the end of term or half term is likely to take longer to resolve owing to the school holidays and the unavailability of personnel.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to address the issue to the designated representative of the Board of Trustees who will review the situation using the same procedure as the Director. Alternatively the parents may request a formal panel hearing (Stage 3).

Stage 3: Complaints Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they should put their request in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees within five school days of the decision complained of, enclosing all relevant documents, grounds of the complaint and a statement outlining their desired outcome. This request will usually only be considered if the procedures at Stages 1 and 2 have been completed.
- Every effort will be made for the panel hearing to take place within 25 school days of receipt of the request, but the panel will not normally sit during half terms or school holidays. Written notification will be sent to parents of the date, time and location of the hearing as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event at least seven school days before the hearing.
- The complaints panel's task is to establish the facts surrounding the complaint(s) that has/have been made by considering the documents provided by both parties and any representations made by parents, the Director and, where appropriate, relevant additional information supplied by the Chair of the Board of Trustees. After evaluating the evidence, the panel will either uphold or dismiss the complaint.
- It is not within the powers of the panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, students or parents. The panel may make recommendations on these or any other issues to the Director or to the full Board of Trustees as appropriate.
- The Chair of the Board of Trustees will acknowledge a request for a panel hearing within two school days and will then convene the panel as soon as reasonably practicable. The panel will consist of three persons who have not

been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One of these persons will be independent of the management and running of the school. The members of the panel will appoint a chair.

- 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 two school days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, staff member or friend. The hearing is not a legal proceeding and so legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- The chair will conduct the hearing in such a way as to ensure that all those present have the opportunity of asking questions and making comments in an appropriate manner. All those attending the hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint and respectfulness or, after due warning, the hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the chair. If terminated, the original decision will stand. Any person who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way the hearing is conducted must say so before the proceedings go any further and his/her comment will be minuted.
- If possible, the panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately, without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it should be carried out and, at the chair's discretion, the hearing may be adjourned.
- After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the panel will reach a decision and make recommendations which it shall complete within five school days of the hearing. The panel will notify the parents in writing by email or otherwise of its findings, the reasons for the decision and any recommendations. The decision of the panel will be final. The panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be also be sent in writing to the Director, the Chair of Board of Trustees and where relevant, the person complained of. The decisions, findings and any recommendations will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Board of Trustees and the Director.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 25(k) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010: where access is requested by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure outlined in Stage 3 during the preceding year will be published on www.halcyonschool.com for parents and other interested parties to view.

*Created October 2012. Current version approved by Board of Trustees, January 2013.
Reviewed and re-approved July 2013. Revised October 2015.*

This policy will be reviewed annually, or more regularly in light of any significant changes in statutory requirements and legislation.