

Complaints Policy and Procedure

The Japanese School



Approved by: The School Management Committee

Date: September 2023

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Next review due by: August 2024

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| 2.0 | K. OKAMOTO | OVERALL REVISION | 26/09/2023 |
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1.0 AIMS OF THE SCHOOL

Children of any age are more likely to be happy at school, and to achieve their best, if their parents take an active interest in their education and welfare during the time the child is in school.

We value the involvement of parents and care persons in the operations of our school and offer many opportunities for you to take part in your child's education here, for example:

- Demonstration Lessons in April and January.
- Parent-Teacher Consultations in May and November.
- Sports Day in July.
- Cultural Festival Day in September.
- Parents' Help (Swimming and School Trips).
- Sunday Open Lessons in October.
- English Open Lessons throughout the year.

It is natural that parents may, from time to time, be concerned about some aspect of their child's education or welfare at school. This may, for example, be due to a misunderstanding about the school's approach to aspects of the curriculum, or about the way we deal with behavioural problems. We, therefore, welcome enquiries from parents about these and other matters, and are confident that in most cases, we can reassure you by explaining our policies and practices, and how they subsequently affect your child.

With a commitment from all concerned to resolving any such concerns calmly and rationally, we can work with you to try to achieve the most appropriate solution in your child's interests. You are welcome to see our school policies on our homepage. We can also provide you with the school prospectus if you wish. Please enquire at the school office.

The school's policy is to ensure that the highest possible standards exist. The school aims to achieve this by:

- Continually seeking to raise standards of achievement.
- Having high expectations.
- Promoting effective teaching and learning.
- Promoting effective communication between the school with parents and the wider community.

When problems occur or difficulties arise, the school will seek to deal promptly, effectively, and fairly with any complaints.

2.0 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The complaints policy and procedures will allow the school to:

- Improve communications by listening to the views of pupils, parents, staff, the local and wider community.
- Strengthen the partnership between pupils, parents, staff, and Governing Body (the school management committee SMC).
- Identify opportunities to improve on standards and to meet expectations.

- Provide redress where a complaint is found to have substance.
- Our policy and that of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in Japan is that complainant/parental concerns and complaints should be dealt with locally, that is at the school level, wherever possible.

3.0 GUIDELINES

3.1 HOW A COMPLAINT CAN BE MADE

Complaints may be made in person, by telephone, or in writing. A person with a complaint should normally seek to contact the member of staff responsible for the relevant issue. However, all staff will endeavour to seek to help, even when the issue is not that individual's area of responsibility.

Care will be taken to:

- Clarify the nature of the complaint.
- Clarify the outcomes sought.
- Check whether the person making a complaint requires the support of any kind, for example with language difficulties.
- Explain the complaints procedure.
- The school does not wish to receive anonymous complaints and will not undertake to act on any information received in this way.

3.2 CODE OF CONDUCT

There is an expectation that all school staff dealing with a person making a complaint will act in a courteous and respectful manner. All complaints will be taken as a matter of serious concern. The school also expects that the person making the complaint will also conduct themselves in a courteous and respectful manner. All the correspondence, statements, and records of the complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them (available on the school premises) or the SMC. Written records of all complaints will be kept stating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing and action taken by the school because of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). If the complaint is against a member of staff, it will be dealt with under the school's staff code of conduct procedures, as required by DfE guidance and MEXT.

3.3 STAGE ONE - INFORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

An informal complaint is usually an initial approach by an individual to the school expressing dissatisfaction. Informal complaints may be resolved quickly and simply and often do not involve detailed or lengthy investigations.

A person with an informal complaint will normally resolve the complaint directly with the staff concerned. If these informal discussions do not resolve the situation, then a meeting may be called by the Head Teacher. This meeting will aim to resolve the issue and involve all parties involved in

the complaint within five working days. When the complaints cannot be resolved informally, a formal “written” complaint should be made.

3.4 STAGE TWO - FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

A complaint becomes formal when it is put in writing to the Headteacher. The complaint form attached to this policy can be used or the complainant may write a letter. An acknowledgment will be sent within 5 school days. The Headteacher (with support from the school secretary) will investigate the circumstances thoroughly and impartially. If, however, your complaint concerns the Headteacher personally, it should be sent to the school marked “For the attention of the Chairman of the SMC” (the School Management Committee). A written response will be issued within 10 school days of the complaint being received.

3.5 STAGE THREE - FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

If the person making the complaint is not satisfied with either the outcome or the progress being made, then an appeal may be made, in writing, to the Chair of SMC, who can be contacted via the school, see information below. The school will acknowledge your complaint in writing within five school days of receiving it.

The Chair of SMC will act impartially to ensure that all parties involved in the complaint can present their case to a panel consisting of three people who are independent of the complaint, and at least one person in that panel is independent of the management and running of the school. Parents can bring a relative or a friend for the panel hearing. The complaints panel hearing will take place within 10 school days of the Chair of SMC being contacted.

3.6 THE REMIT OF THE COMPLAINTS APPEAL PANEL

The panel will:

- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- Recommend changes to the school’s system or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part.
- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

The panel will be clerked.

The panel will follow the Checklist for a Panel Hearing (in appendix)

A decision of the panel will be given in writing to the person making the complaint within 15 school days of the hearing.

The school to provide for the panel to make findings and recommendations:

- (i) Provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
- (ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the SMC and the head teacher;
- (iii) provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made
- (iv) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and

- (v) Action taken by the school because of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld)

Provides that correspondence, statements, and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

3.7 CLOSURE OF COMPLAINTS

Occasionally, a school and/or the School Management Committee will feel that it needs, regretfully, to close a complaint where the complainant is still dissatisfied. We and the School Management Committee will do all we can to help to resolve a complaint against the school but sometimes it is simply not possible to meet all the complainant's requirements. Sometimes it is simply a case of "agreeing to disagree". If a complainant persists in making representations to the school (to the head teacher, the School Management Committee, or anyone else), this can be extremely time-consuming and can detract from our responsibility in looking after the interests of the children in our care. For this reason, we are entitled to close correspondence (including personal approaches, as well as letters and telephone calls) on a complaint where we feel that we have taken all reasonable and relevant action to resolve the complaint.

Please address correspondence to:

The Japanese School in London

87 Creffield Road, Acton, London W3 9PU

ron-nichi@thejapaneseschool.ltd.uk

The Chair of SMC (the School Management Committee)

87 Creffield Road, Acton, London W3 9PU

unei@thejapaneseschool.ltd.uk

If you are not satisfied with the stage 3 outcome you can refer the matter to Ofsted by completing the online form at: <https://complain.ofsted.gov.uk/>

3.8 ANNUAL REVIEW

The secretary will monitor and review annually the nature of formal complaints, and the school's response to them, to ensure that the school is effectively meeting the expectations of parents and the local community.

4.0 APPENDIX

4.1 CHECKLIST FOR A PANEL HEARING

The panel needs to take the following points into account:

- The hearing is as informal as possible.
- Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.
- After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint and be followed by their witnesses.
- The Head Teacher is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The Head Teacher is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- The panel decides on the issues.
- The chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set time scale.

4.2 FORMAL COMPLAINTS FORM

Please complete and return to the School Head Teacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Your Name: _____ | |
| Pupil's Name: _____ | |
| Your relationship to the pupil: _____ | |
| Address: _____ | |
| _____ | |
| Post Code: _____ | |
| Day time telephone number: _____ | |
| Evening telephone number: _____ | |
| Please give details of your complaint: | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response)? | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage? | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details. | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| Signature: _____ Date: _____ | |
| Official Use | |
| Date acknowledgement sent: _____ | By who: _____ |
| Complaint referred to: _____ | Date: _____ |