

Complaints policy and procedure

The Japanese School London



Approved by: The Governing Board

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1.0 AIMS OF THE SCHOOL

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 and 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 running committee).
- 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 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 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 for 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 governing body. 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 as a result 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 internal procedures, as required by law.

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 investigation.

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 Head Teacher. The complaint form attached to this policy can be used or the complainant may write a letter. An acknowledgement will be sent within 5 school days. The Head Teacher (with support from the Secretary) will

investigate the circumstances thoroughly and impartially. If, however, your complaint concerns the Head Teacher personally, it should be sent to the school marked "For the attention of the Chairman of the Governing Board" (the School Running Committee). A written response will be issued within 10 school days of the complaint being received.

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 Governors (the running committee), who can be contacted via the school, see information below. The school will acknowledge your complaint in writing within five school days after receiving it.

The Chair of Governors will act impartially to ensure that all parties involved in the complaint have the opportunity to 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 panel hearing. The complaints panel hearing will take place within 10 school days of the Chair of Governors (the running committee) being contacted.

3.5 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 board 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.

CLOSURE OF COMPLAINTS

Occasionally, a school and/or the School Running Committee will feel that it needs, regretfully, to close a complaint where the complainant is still dissatisfied. We and the School Running 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 of 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 Running 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 Governing Board (the School Running Committee)

87 Creffield Road, Acton, London W3 9PU

unei@thejapaneseschool.ltd.uk

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

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.

