



# Horizon English School

## Complaints Policy

Updated: March 2024

Review date: March 2025

## Rationale

Horizon English School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes very seriously any complaints and concerns that they may arise. Our philosophy towards complaints at Horizon English School recognises and acknowledges the parental entitlement to complain or air a grievance and will endeavour to work with parents in the best interest of the pupils in our care. The culture of the school is open and complaints are received in a positive manner. We want to encourage parental views and ideas. If a parent is in doubt about whether or not to raise a concern, we would encourage them to contact the school, as we are here to help. We would ask, however, that together the school and parents present a united front in order to avoid any child receiving potentially confusing or damaging mixed messages.

## Aims and objectives

We encourage parents to bring these to our attention as early as possible in order that we have the opportunity to rectify a problem or explain the school's position before a concern becomes more serious. A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction, to which we will respond. We will work to ensure that:

- Parents who wish to make a complaint know how to do so
- We respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way  
Parents realise that we will listen and take all complaints seriously
- We take appropriate action where necessary.

## Procedures

Parents who have any concerns or complaints, should normally raise these in the first instance with their child's Class Teacher by letter, email, telephone or by verbally requesting a meeting.

If the parent is not satisfied with the response of the Class Teacher or feel that the matter is sufficiently sensitive or serious, they could contact the Head of Year/Head of Department/Subject Coordinator who will then be able to liaise with relevant staff, put the parent in contact with the appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team or refer the parent directly to the Principal. Parents may feel that they should contact the Principal directly, especially on a matter of great importance or sensitivity, however, matters usually have to be referred back to the appropriate senior or middle leader therefore, it is best to seek his/her advice in the first instance.

## What will happen next?

If a parent raises an issue face to face or by telephone or email, it will hopefully be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to their satisfaction. If the parent has made a complaint or suggestion in writing, they will receive a response within two working days, acknowledging their letter and explaining how they/the school propose to proceed. In many circumstances, the person contacted may need to discuss the issue with one or more colleagues and consider further before a response can be made. The parent will be given a date by which they will receive a further response. If a detailed explanation of the issues is needed, a letter or report will be sent to the

parent as quickly as possible informing them of the outcome of their complaint and will explain any action taken or proposed. Alternatively, the parent may be invited to a meeting at the school.

The Principal's PA will keep a written record of all significant parental complaints and their outcome.

### Confidentiality

Parental complaints or concerns will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of the complaint or concern will be limited to the relevant senior leader and those directly involved. It is the school's policy that complaints made by parents will not rebound adversely on their children in any way. We cannot, however, entirely rule out the need to make relevant third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police. Before this happens, the parent making the complaint would be fully informed.

### Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will not be pursued.

### Staff Disciplinary Procedures

Any action taken under staff disciplinary procedures, following parental complaints would normally be handled confidentially within the school. Parents would be informed that appropriate action had been taken.

### What happens if a parent is dissatisfied with the outcome?

We will endeavour to ensure that all parents feel satisfied with the outcome and feel that their concerns have been fully addressed. If a parent is dissatisfied with the outcome then they should take the following action:

- At Head of Year/Head of Department level, contact the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team
- At Senior Leadership level, refer the matter to the Principal
- At Principal level, write directly to the PA of the CEO of Cognita Education ME. Please contact the Personal Assistant of the CEO at [elaine.burrell@cognita.com](mailto:elaine.burrell@cognita.com)

Complaints to the CEO or his/her delegated representative will request a full report from the Principal along with all relevant documents. On the basis of these, the CEO or his/her representative may decide to call for a briefing from individual members of staff. As the CEO or his/her representative starts to investigate the case he/she will write to the parent to inform them of the action being taken and will ask the parent if they wish to add what they have already said and will give a date by which the parent may expect a full response. The CEO or his/her representative may be able to offer a new approach to the matter which may satisfactorily

conclude the matter for the parent. The CEO's response will be clear and detailed but, if the parent remains dissatisfied the CEO will also offer a meeting.

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### **Student complaints**

The principles which apply to parental complaints also apply to complaints and concerns from pupils. However, there are differences in approach. We believe that it is important that our pupils should be able to raise concerns with any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable. Pupils may also use the members of the school safeguarding team to make a member of staff aware of their concerns. As with parental complaints, anonymous complaints will not be pursued. Pupils may also raise general concerns via School Council meetings. At the start of each year, the Class Teachers will explain these procedures to their pupils and students in a manner appropriate to their age. The school is determined to ensure that all pupils know to whom they can turn to with a problem and to whom they can make a formal or informal complaint.