

British Council School
El Colegio Británico

Complaints Policy

Adopted: July 2023

Review: July 2025

Approved by:		Date:	
Board			
Monitoring Date:	Monitored by:	Full Review Due:	Review By:
July 2023	MarComs Manager	July 2025	Marcoms Manager and Head of School

Introduction

The British Council School is a fully independent coeducational day school. While we trust that our parents, guardians and students are satisfied with the academic and service provision at our School, we do realize that there may be occasions where complaints will be raised.

1. Policy Statement

Our Complaints Policy aims to encourage resolution of complaints raised by parents and guardians by informal means wherever possible, and by formal means where appropriate.

2. Principles

1. The policy applies to issues raised by parents and guardians.
2. Our Complaints Policy is accessible and published on the School website.
3. Our Complaints Policy is simple to understand and use.
4. Complaints will be acknowledged verbally or in writing and addressed within established time limits for action.
5. The school will investigate complaints carefully and promptly.
6. We encourage an informal resolution of complaints wherever possible. It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved to the satisfaction of all parties at the earliest possible stage. At each stage of the complaint's procedure, the designated member of staff will consider the complaint, how the complaint may be addressed, and may offer:
 - a. An explanation
 - b. An apology
 - c. Reassurance that steps have been taken to prevent a recurrence of events that led to the complaint
 - d. Reassurance that the School will undertake a review of its policies and procedures in light of the complaint
7. Where informal attempts have taken place and a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome or where the complainant raises a formal complaint in writing from the outset, formal procedures will be followed (see Stage 2).

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8. Referral to Madrid Inspectorate: Our regulations in our Code of Conduct are guided by the *“materia relativa a la convivencia de sus Centros Docentes de la Comunidad de Madrid”*.
 9. Our complaints policy provides information to the School Senior Leadership Team and School Board so that our academic and service provision can be improved.
 10. Late complaints: The School reserves the right to refuse to investigate a complaint under this Complaints Policy that is submitted more than six months after the incident or event, or series thereof.
 11. Vexatious or Repeated complaints: The School reserves the right to regard a complaint as vexatious and/ or repeated and refuse to investigate it under the procedure in this Complaints Policy when:
 - a. A complaint has previously been raised and considered under all stages
 - b. A complainant raises unreasonable persistent complaints
 - c. A complainant raises complaints about matters that do not affect his or her child.
 - d. Anonymous complaints: The School will not investigate anonymous complaints under the procedure in this Complaints Policy. Anonymous complaints will be referred to the Head of School who will decide what, if any, action should be taken.

3. Stages

STAGE 1- INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

1. Informal complaints should be made in person, at a meeting or by email. Parents should follow the established communication lines according to the nature of the complaint and the Section where the pupil is registered.
 - a. Early Years: Class Teacher → Post of Responsibility → SLT → Head of Section
 - b. Primary: Teacher or Tutor → Teaching and Learning Leader or Year Leader → SLT → Deputy Head → Head of Section
 - c. Secondary: Teacher or Tutor → Teaching and Learning Leader or Year Leader → SLT → Deputy Head → Head of Section
2. The member of staff receiving the complaint should acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 school working days in term time and as soon as possible outside term time and attempt to address the issue as quickly as possible.
3. Once the complaint has been reviewed, the complainant will be informed of the outcome within 15 school working days of receipt of the complaint (in term time).
4. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, the complaint can be raised in writing as a formal complaint.

STAGE 2 - FORMAL

Formal complaint can be:

- an unresolved informal complaint
 - a complaint which requires further investigation
 - a more serious dissatisfaction with some aspect of the School's policies, procedures, management or services
1. A formal complaint should be set out in writing and sent to the attention of a member of SSLT along with all relevant documentation and the complainant's full contact details.
 2. Complaints will be acknowledged by telephone or in writing within five working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable during the holidays. The acknowledgement will indicate the next steps.
 3. A member of the School Senior Leadership Team will ensure an investigation is carried out and contact the complainant. The investigator will request additional information and will wish to speak personally to the complainant and to others who have knowledge of the circumstances.
 4. Following appropriate investigation, the member of SSLT will notify the complainant in person or in writing of the decision and the reasons for it. The outcome of the complaint should be notified within twenty-five school working days.
 5. Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the decision taken by the School, he or she may proceed to Stage 3 of the procedure.

STAGE 3 – PANEL

1. Unresolved formal complaints should be communicated to the Head of School, who will inform the Chair of the School Board and set up a Panel. The Panel will be constituted by a minimum of 3 people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and at least one of the members should be independent of the management and running of the School. The panel will be established within 10 school working days following the adoption of Stage 3.
2. The complainant will be invited to attend a meeting for discussion. The complainant will be able to attend this meeting accompanied if they so wish.
3. During the meeting all relevant documentation will be considered.
4. The panel will analyse the situation and will make its own finding and recommendations.
5. After due consideration, the Panel will reach a decision and communicate this in writing to the Chair of the School Board and to the complainant within 10 working days of the meeting. Any recommendations and findings deemed relevant may be communicated to the complainant, where relevant to the person complained about, and made available for inspection on the school premises by the Board and the Head of the School. .
6. The decision of the Panel will be final.
7. If the complaint involves the Head of School, the complainant will formally ask for the complaint to be sent directly to the Chair of the School Board who will set up a

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- panel and follow the same procedure.
8. There will be a written record of all complaints that reach a formal status whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing. This written record will include action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

4. Confidentiality

Parents can be assured that all complaints will be treated confidentially and only discussed with relevant staff. A written record of formal complaints, as well as correspondence, statements and other records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where Spanish Law permits access.

In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will normally be retained for as long as is considered to be reasonably necessary. Spanish law will be observed in all cases.

Complaints related to staff members' performance or to cases regarding the application of the Code of Conduct will not be dealt with under the procedures above.