



The Hurlingham Academy
The best in everyone™
Part of United Learning

Complaints Policy



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| SLT contact | Leon Wilson | | |

Policy Statement

The Hurlingham Academy prides itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils, however, it recognises that parents will, from time to time, have normal and legitimate concerns about the progress, achievement, behaviour or welfare of their child. Parents are encouraged to make those concerns known to staff so that they can be addressed in partnership with the school.

The Hurlingham Academy recognises the difference between a 'concern', which can be conveyed informally and a 'formal complaint' which takes the form of specific focussed dissatisfaction. The Hurlingham Academy will take all concerns and complaints seriously and will make every effort to deal with complaints informally, at an early stage, in the spirit of continued respect and partnership.

At The Hurlingham Academy we:

- Define 'complaint' as "any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the school"
- Make every effort to deal with concerns informally and at an early stage, in the spirit of partnership
- Ensure that concerns and complaints are dealt with in line with the procedures set out in this document
- Ensure that, where appropriate, a full and fair investigation of the issue is undertaken
- Resolve all complaints within 28 working days of the lodging of the complaint. However, although we make every effort to keep to this timescale in all instances, we may need up to an additional 14 working days where the 28-day period falls across School holidays.
- Ensure that complaints are resolved either to the complainant's satisfaction or with an otherwise appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils
- Ensure that no-one, including pupils, is penalised for making a complaint in good faith
- Keep a written record, for at least three years, of all complaints, the action taken and at what stage they were resolved, regardless of whether they were upheld
- Review regularly at senior leadership level the written record of complaints and their outcomes in order to identify whether a review or change in practice is needed or so that patterns can be identified and appropriate interventions made.

- Keep confidential all records relating to individual complaints except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Education Act, as amended, requests access to them.
- Deal with complaints made by parents of past pupils using this policy provided that the complaint was raised when the pupil was still registered.
- Do not use this policy to cover complaints about exclusions.

A record of formal complaints and their outcomes is kept centrally and is reviewed regularly by the Principal.

Parents are also free to make a complaint to directly to Ofsted if they so wish. Relevant contact details are set out below.

OFSTED: Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M21 2WD
Phone: 0300 123 1231 or e-mail enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

This policy applies to all members of our school community.

The Hurlingham Academy is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this Complaints policy is non-discriminatory, in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's Equal Opportunity policy document.

The Hurlingham Academy seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document.

In line with our Provision of Information policy, this document is available to all interested parties on our website and on request from the main school office and should be read in conjunction with other relevant policy documents, which can be found on the policies section of the website.

Procedures

STAGE ONE - Informal Resolution

At The Hurlingham Academy we recognise that, almost invariably, the sooner concerns are raised the easier it is for an appropriate resolution to be found. In the first instance, you are encouraged to raise your concern or complaint with any member of staff. This would normally be your child's Head of Key Stage or Head of Department.

That person will try to identify areas of agreement and clarify any misunderstandings that might have occurred. They will make a written record of your concern or complaint, the date on which it was received, and then try to resolve the matter themselves or refer you to the appropriate person.

If the matter cannot be resolved within 6 working days, or in the event that you are not satisfied, you may make a formal complaint to the Senior Leadership Team. If the complaint concerns the Principal, the relevant member of SLT would normally refer you to the Chair of the Local Governing Body (LGB).

There are 3 stages to the formal complaints procedure at The Hurlingham Academy:

- Stage 1:** A complaint is dealt with informally
- Stage 2(a):** A complaint is dealt with by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Stage 2(b):** A complaint is dealt with by the Principal.
- Stage 3:** A complaint is dealt with by the Local Governing Body

STAGE TWO (A): Complaint is dealt with by the SLT

Formal complaints should be in writing and sent to the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team. If you have difficulty in putting your complaint in writing, you are asked to make an appointment with a member of the SLT who will help you do so.

The SLT member decides the best person to deal with the complaint, so you are asked to indicate if there is someone with whom you might have difficulty discussing the complaint. The member of staff chosen to deal with the complaint will not necessarily be a senior member of staff.

In most instances, there will need to be an investigation in order to understand the circumstances surrounding the complaint. That investigation will normally be overseen by a member of SLT.

If an investigation is needed, the investigating member of staff will:

- Establish what has happened so far and who has been involved
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- Meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or if further information is necessary)
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or against whom the complaint has been made, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- Conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning.
- Keep notes of any interviews
- Present relevant information and recommendation for resolution to the relevant member of SLT

The member of SLT dealing with the complaint will make a written record of the complaint, the date on which it was received, the date on which the matter was dealt with and the outcome of the procedure. You will receive a copy of this written record within 3 days following this process.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this stage, if you feel that your complaint is sufficiently serious, or if you are dissatisfied with the way in which your complaint has been handled, you may take your complaint to the second stage of this procedure.

STAGE TWO (B): Complaint is dealt with by the Principal

If you wish to take your complaint to this stage you should put your complaint in writing to the Principal. Again, if you have difficulty in doing that, you are asked to seek assistance from the relevant member of SLT.

The Principal may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken. The Principal also decides whether it would be helpful to meet with you to discuss your complaint.

The decision in respect of the resolution of your complaint will normally be made within 6 working days of the Principal receiving the complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this stage or if you are dissatisfied with the way in which your complaint has been handled by the Principal you may take your complaint to the third stage of this procedure.

STAGE THREE: Complaint is dealt with by the Local Governing Body [LGB] Complaints Panel

The third stage of the formal complaints procedure is the LGB Complaints Panel. If you wish to take your complaint to this stage you are required to put your complaint in

writing to the Chair of the LGB. It is important that you set the matter out in sufficient detail.

On receiving a written complaint, a hearing by an the LGB Complaints Panel will be arranged within 10 working days. You may attend the hearing in person and may be accompanied if you so wish; in which case you are required to notify the clerk of the name and occupation of such a person.

The composition of the LGB Complaints Panel

The LGB Complaints Panel would normally consist of no less than three people, at least one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school, and the panel choose their own Chair.

The LGB Complaints Panel hearing is as independent and impartial as possible and no member of the LGB sits on the panel if they were directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, or in the circumstances surrounding it. In deciding the composition of the panel, LGB members try to ensure that there is a cross-section of the members, taking into account the issues of race, gender, religious affiliation and other equality issues. Care is taken not to involve the whole LGB as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.

The process of the LGB Complaints Panel Hearing

A clerk is appointed by the school to be the contact point for the complainant and the LGB members of the Complaints Panel.

The appointed clerk's responsibility is to:

- set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient or acceptable to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- invite both the complainant and the Principal to put their position in writing for the panel to consider
- collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing.
- record the proceedings
- notify all parties of the panel's decision

The Chair of the LGB Complaints Panel's responsibility is to ensure:

- the remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity to put their case without undue interruption
- written material is seen by all parties
- key findings of fact are made and each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions
- the hearing is conducted in as an informal manner as possible with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy
- the panel is open minded and acting independently
- the findings and recommendations are communicated appropriately to those involved (see below)

The hearing is held in private and, acknowledging that many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting, the proceedings are made as welcoming as possible. Care is taken to ensure the setting is not adversarial and is as informal as possible. Extra care in this respect is taken where the complainant is a child.

The role of the LGB Complaints Panel Hearing

The aim of the hearing is always to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it is recognised that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. Therefore, it may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations that will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously.

Communication of the LGB Complaints Panel Findings

After due consideration the panel will decide to do one or more of the following:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- recommend changes to the school's/systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur

The Chair of the panel ensures that the LGB, the Principal, the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about, are notified in writing of the panel's findings and recommendations within 3 working days of the hearing taking place.

A copy of the panel's findings are also made available for inspection at the school by both United Learning and the Principal.

The decision of the LGB Complaints Panel is final.

Appendix 1: Complaint Form

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| Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS and return to a member of SLT who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken. | | | |
| Your name: | | | |
| Pupil's name | | | |
| Your relationship to the pupil | | | |
| Address | | | |
| Postcode | | | |
| Contact telephone number (1) | | | |
| Contact telephone number (2) | | | |
| Please give details of your complaint below | | | |
| | | | |
| What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (To whom 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? | | YES / NO | |
| If so, please give details. | | | |
| Signature: | | Date: | |
| For Official use only | | | |
| Date acknowledgement sent | | Complaint resolved at which stage | |
| Acknowledgement sent by | | Complaint recorded in school records | |
| Complaint referred to | | | |
| Complaint referred on (date) | | | |

