

## Students complaint policy

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## Purpose

1.1 WINS welcomes feedback in respect of the services it provides and believes that students are entitled to have access to effective systems for handling complaints to ensure the school provides the highest possible academic and service standards. Students should feel able to make a complaint, knowing that it will be fairly investigated.

1.2 Detailed below is the three-stage process the School has adopted for dealing with students' complaints, which is intended to provide a clear means of resolution to the satisfaction of all parties.

## Scope

2.1 The School considers a student complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction raised by a student (or group of students) against a service, facility or the academic provision of the School.

## Principles

3.1 The School is committed to making the experience of processes, such as this one, as considerate as possible.

As such, this procedure will:

- Be timely; normally concluded within 60 days (plus 30 days for any appeals) from the receipt of the Student Complaints Form. If it is anticipated that the process will take longer, all parties will be informed in writing and provided with an amended timescale.
- Be independent; persons with a conflict of interest will not investigate or adjudicate. If any party to this procedure has a concern about anyone involved with their complaint, they can raise this with the Class representatives via email directed to the SLT
- Be respectful: All parties will treat each other fairly and with respect throughout this process
- Be transparent; all parties will be clearly communicated with throughout the process, and reasons will be given for decisions made.
- Be empathetic; all parties will be listened to and taken seriously throughout this process



- Be reflective; the School will use complaints and feedback from this process to improve the student experience.
- Be fair and unbiased; All parties will have the right to a fair and unbiased hearing under the School's procedures. This means that excluding special circumstances, the identity of a reporting party and the details of the complaint will need to be disclosed to the Respondent, and where necessary, witnesses, before they are asked to respond. In some circumstances, sensitive and confidential information may be redacted. Students will be able to discuss this with the SMT before the beginning of this formal process.

3.2 We understand that some students may need additional arrangements to fully access this process. This may include reasonable adjustments for disabled students, an interpreter, or other arrangements. You can discuss your needs by emailing the School Counselor .

3.3 If you would like to raise a concern that anyone party to this process, any colleagues involved in overseeing this process or any panel members may have a conflict of interest, you can raise this with the School Counselor.

## Raising a complaint

4.1 WINS encourages students to provide feedback on their experience through Students representatives, evaluation questionnaires and student voice groups.

4.2 Students are encouraged to raise a concern or complaint as soon as possible after the event has taken place, and normally no later than six months from the date the initial issue occurred. We encourage students to report their complaints in a timely manner as this often leads to a more effective investigation and a more immediate remediation for the student.

4.3 A group of students may use this process to make a group complaint where there is a shared complaint against a service, facility or the academic provision of the School. The group may be asked to nominate one student to act as the group representative.

4.4 As far as possible, matters raised as a complaint will remain confidential to those directly involved in the complaint, unless there is a serious risk of harm to the student or to others. However, in the interests of natural justice, the respondent to a complaint has the right to know the full details of the complaint or, in exceptional circumstances, only those details which need to be shared to enable a proper response to be made. Some of the information about the concern raised may need to be shared with witnesses in order to receive their accounts.

4.5 In order to ensure that a thorough investigation of a complaint is made, the School expects to be able to collect appropriate information from all the parties involved.



Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

4.6 It is presumed that students raising a complaint do so in good faith, however, if a complaint is shown to be vexatious, the complaint shall be rejected and disciplinary action may be taken.

## Complaints Procedure

The three stage complaints procedure is as follows:

### Stage 1 - Informal Complaint

a.1 It is expected that most complaints can be resolved at an early stage by discussing the matter informally at a local level. Where possible a student should therefore bring the matter to the attention of an appropriate member of staff, who will aim to resolve the matter by informal discussion. For a confidential, informal discussion about options available prior to submitting a complaint, or support with handling an informal complaint, please discuss with the PYP Coordinator, MYP Coordinator, DP Coordinator (as applicable)

a.2 Recipients of informal student complaints are responsible for addressing them promptly and fairly. The recipient will normally let the student know (or arrange for a colleague to do so) within five working days of receiving the initial complaint what steps (if any) will be taken to address the complaint and the expected timescale and advise to whom they should submit a formal complaint if they are dissatisfied with this outcome.

a.3 It should be noted that this stage will normally be an informal process via conversation or email but where proportionate to do so any agreed action should be confirmed.

a.4 Any staff involved will be encouraged to share the experience where the effectiveness of their Department or Service could benefit. It is expected that most complaints will be resolved in this way.

### Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

b.1 If a student has attempted to resolve matters informally but is not satisfied with the outcome, they may submit a formal complaint within 10 working days of receiving the outcome of their informal complaint. A student may also submit a formal complaint if the issue involved is too



complex or serious for informal resolution. The student should submit their complaint by means of a Student Complaint Form to the Primary Principal and/or Secondary Principal (as applicable).

b.2 The student should receive an acknowledgement of receipt of their complaint, from the within five working days.

b.3 The complaint will be investigated by the PYP Principal and/or the Secondary Principal (as applicable). If they are involved in the matters complained about or it is deemed appropriate to do so, the School Manager and the Academic Dean will nominate another person to carry out the investigation.

b.4 The PYP Principal and/or the Secondary Principal (as applicable) investigating the complaint will normally arrange to meet with the student to discuss their complaint in detail. At this meeting the student will have the right to be accompanied by a friend or advisor. Student Reporting Parties and other parties (Witnesses and Respondents) will attend the meeting separately, unless it is agreed between those involved that it would be more beneficial to have a joint meeting; the final decision will be made by the person investigating the complaint having consulted with those involved. Where a member of staff is the respondent in the complaint, they can be accompanied by a work colleague.

b.5 If a student, or other parties to the complaint are unable to attend the arranged meeting, the school will contact them to reschedule. If a student, or other parties to the complaint fail to attend both meetings, the investigation may be limited and may be concluded in their absence. The meeting can take place in person or via videocall.

b.6 The meeting will follow this format: • The student will be asked to explain their complaint and present any supporting evidence, with the assistance of their representative as necessary, following which they may be asked questions by the PYP Principal and/or Secondary Principal (as applicable) . If the respondent to the complaint is present and would like to ask the student questions about their complaint, they may do so via the Head of Department or Service.

b.7 The PYP Principal and/or Secondary Principal (as applicable) produce a report which outlines the process followed, the information gathered, the conclusions drawn and any recommendations. This report will be sent to the SMT (School Manager and Academic Dean) for quality assurance prior to sending the report onto the student and respondent, along with copies of any information considered.

b.8 If the complaint is upheld, the student will be informed of the action taken to resolve or redress the complaint. If the complaint is not upheld, then the student will receive an explanation of the reason for this decision.



b.9 The student should receive this written response within 60 calendar days following both a submission of a Student Complaints Form and confirmation by the complainant that they wish a formal investigation to begin. If this is not possible, the student will be informed in writing of the progress being made towards the consideration of their complaint and given a timescale for completion.

### Stage 3 - Review by the SMT

c.1 A student can submit an appeal to the School Manager following notification of the outcome of a Stage 2 Student Complaint. An appeal needs to be submitted within 10 working days of the outcome of a Stage 2 complaint.

#### 6. Monitoring

All formal complaints received, decisions made and resulting outcomes will be recorded.

#### 7. Record keeping

All records taken under this policy will be held for the recommended period of time for which records should be retained to comply with legal requirements and meet operational needs.

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