



## COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### 1. Aims

- 1.1. To produce a policy that provides all our stakeholders with a consistent, fair and open process, in which to express their complaints.
- 1.2. To ensure a timely and considered response to these complaints that will prevent problems getting worse, and make us more accountable to our stakeholders.
- 1.3. To comply with all quality assurance and inspection procedures.
- 1.4. To ensure staff know the process and have guidance on the most effective way of handling complaints.

### 2. Policy Statement

- 2.1. Nord Anglia International School, Hong Kong is committed to listening to all our stakeholders who have experienced a problem. If we have made a mistake we will apologise and take action to stop this happening again.

### 3. Principles

- 3.1. We aim to deal with all our stakeholders fairly, courteously, promptly and effectively.
- 3.2. If we do disappoint our stakeholders, we aim to deal with their complaint, where possible, at the point where the problem arises, using a common sense approach, before recording as a formal complaint. If the complaint is not resolved at this point, the appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team will investigate further.
- 3.3. Complaints will be monitored and recorded. The aim of this is to identify when problems arise and ensure that our processes and procedures are adapted to ensure they do not occur again.
- 3.4. The focus of the complaints procedure is the complaint itself, rather than the person making the complaint.

### 4. The Complaints Process

- 4.1. When a stakeholder expresses their dissatisfaction with us, we should attempt to resolve their complaint quickly and informally at the first point of contact.
- 4.2. However, if the stakeholder wishes to take their complaint further, it becomes a complaint and a complaint record must be raised. The staff member should also explain the complaints process to the customer.
- 4.3. Nord Anglia International School, Hong Kong operates a three stage complaints process and we will acknowledge receipt of a complaint within 2 working days. We will then progress through the following stages:



#### 4.4. Stage 1 – Informal resolution

In the first instance, most concerns or complaints can be dealt with informally and should be raised with the class teacher. House tutor or other appropriate members of staff. Any member of staff receiving a complaint must record the details either in writing or electronically. The record must show who was involved, what the subject of the complaint was and when, or if, it was resolved. It must be signed or dated.

If the complaint moves to the second stage, a copy of the record must be passed to the member of staff to whom the complaint has been referred.

The aim is to respond within five working days. If this is not possible, a letter must be sent to the complainant explaining why not and when a response can be expected.

#### 4.5. Stage 2 – Formal resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the complaint should be put in writing to the Principal.

In most cases, the Principal, or other member of the Senior Leadership Team, will meet or speak with the complainant within five days of receiving the complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. Again a record must be kept, signed and dated of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

If a further investigation is required, this will be conducted, a decision will be made and the complainant informed in writing of the outcomes of the investigation, the decision taken and the reasons for the decision. This will be within a further five working days.

If the complainant is still not satisfied, they may appeal the decision and move to Stage 3.

Any complainants in EYFS will be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of receiving the complaints.

#### 4.6. Stage 3 – Appeals Process – Panel Hearing

An appeal against the decision should be submitted in writing to the Independent member of the Board of Management. He will chair and convene a panel of, at least, three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.

A hearing will be convened as soon as practicable within fifteen working days.

The complainant may be accompanied at the hearing by one other person, if they wish.

After due consideration of all the facts considered relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which will be issued in writing to the complainant, informing them of its decision and the reasons for it.



The Panel's findings and recommendations, if any, will be sent in writing to the complainants, the Principal and the person about whom the complaint was made, if relevant. A copy will be held by the Principal and will be provided to inspectors upon request.

The Panel's decision is final.

#### 4.7 Records

All concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to the individual complaints will be kept confidential.

The record will state who is involved, the details of the matter involved and when it was resolved. Access to these records will be provided to inspectors on request.

4.8 There will be a regular review of complaints recorded to analyse causes and any patterns.

### 5. Unacceptable Actions

- 5.1. There are relatively few stakeholders whose actions or behaviour we consider unacceptable. We aim to deal fairly, honestly, consistently and appropriately with all complainants, including those whose actions we consider unacceptable. We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected.
- 5.2. We also consider that the staff of Nord Anglia International School, Hong Kong have these same rights.
- 5.3. Such cases will be dealt with directly by the Principal, who will decide whether the stakeholder's issue can be dealt with under this policy.

**Policy to be reviewed annually**



Appendix A

**COMPLAINT RECORD**

Date:	Class/Department:
Received By:	
What is the nature of the complaint:	
Action taken by members of staff:	
Signature:	Date:



Action taken by Principal (if applicable):

Signature:

Date:

Action taken by Board (if applicable):

Signature:

Date:



## Appendix B

### COMPLAINTS GUIDANCE

On most occasions it is fairly easy for us to recognise that a stakeholder is making a complaint.

However, on other occasions it will not be so easy to recognise what a stakeholder is saying to us. That is why it is very important for us always to empathise with our stakeholders and do our best to pay attention to them. We need to be able to look out for signs of complaints during our conversations or correspondence with our stakeholders.

#### **Responding to a Complaint in writing**

If you are responding to a comment or complaint in writing, remember the following important points:

- Letters responding to complaints must include an apology and explanation.
- Before you get started, decide what message you are trying to get across.
- Make sure you do not ignore any of the points in the original comment or complaint.
- Use clear and straightforward language. Use everyday words, not jargon.
- Make sure the person receiving the letter can tell who it is from and, if necessary, who will be dealing with the complaint.
- Ask yourself, “would I like to receive a letter like this from another organisation?” and “would I understand a letter like this?” If the answer is “No”, then rewrite it.

#### **Responding to a Complaint by telephone or face to face**

It is important that all stakeholders’ complaints are sorted out as quickly as possible. No matter how trivial you think the matter is, it is important to the customer.

#### **You Should:**

- Give your own name. Find out and use the title and the surname of the stakeholder.
- In dealing with sensitive matters, be aware of issues of confidentiality.
- Listen carefully without interruption, to the customer. If they are angry let them get things “off their chest”.
- If you need more information from them, ask some questions.
- Repeat a summary of the complaint to make sure you have fully understood what the stakeholder has said.



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- Do not say, “that’s another person or Department”. Help the stakeholder by making contact with the right people for them.
  - Explain to the stakeholder how you are dealing with the problem and, if you can, agree what the solution will be.
  - Don’t make promises you cannot keep.
  - If you can’t do what you are being asked to do, try and explain why.
  - Go on to suggest what other options might be available.
  - If you are getting a lot of complaints about a decision that the school has taken, find out from your Principal why that decision was taken, and then you can pass on to the stakeholder.
  - Even if you did not cause the problem which has upset the stakeholder, accept the complaint on behalf of the school.
  - Don’t blame people elsewhere in the school – we work for Nord Anglia International School, Hong Kong and any problems between us should be sorted out behind the scenes.