Ashbridge
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL & NURSERIES

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES - ASHBRIDGE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

Approved by: SLT Approved date: November 2025

Review Date November 2026

Availability: On the school website and as a paper copy on request

Scope: Ashbridge Independent School

Linked to: Pupil Complaints, Terms and Conditions

Introduction

Ashbridge Independent School are always striving to provide the highest quality education for children, and we welcome feedback from parents/carers. Whilst we hope that parents/carers are always happy and satisfied with their child's education at Ashbridge, we recognise there may be times when there are concerns, and this Complaints Policy sets out the process should a parent/carer wish to raise a complaint.

Strong relationships with our families depend on honest and direct communication between all parties, therefore if there are any concerns about school we strongly encourage parents/carers to contact us in line with the Complaints Policy. We ensure that complaints are dealt with fairly and within clearly defined time limits. The raising of concerns and complaints is viewed very positively by all staff at Ashbridge Independent School as part of our drive for continuous improvement. This policy may be used by any current parent/carer who has a concern or complain about Ashbridge Independent School. A separate policy is in place for the group's nurseries, and this policy can be found on the website or on request at a Reception desk.

Stages of Complaints

A staged approach is in place and each of the stages will usually occur in order. There will usually be no return to previous stages.

Stage 1 - Informal Stage

Should a parent/carer have a concern about their child's experience at the school, they should discuss it with the relevant members of the team. This would usually be the child's class teacher or Deputy Headteacher, depending on the issue. Concerns are welcomed by email or verbally and we aim to agree to a suitable resolution within 10 working days, unless the concern is particularly complex.

Stage 2 – Formal Stage

Should the issue still be unresolved, or if the parent/carer feels they have not received a satisfactory outcome, a formal complaint may be submitted. All formal complaints must be made in writing, including email, and directed to the Headteacher. The Headteacher, together with an additional member of the School Leadership Team or Senior Leadership Team if deemed necessary, will fully investigate the complaint and feedback to the parent/carer, usually within 28 days of the complaint being received. A full record of the complaint process is held.

The vast majority of complaints are resolved at Stage 1 or Stage 2, however, if the parent/carer is still unsatisfied, they may move to Stage 3.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If the matter is still not resolved satisfactorily, either for the complainant or for the school, the complaint will be referred to the Company Directors of Ashbridge School Ltd. The complainant must indicate a wish to continue with their complaint to stage 3 if they wish to proceed with a Panel Hearing. The complaint will then be heard by a panel appointed by the Directors and a final decision provided to parents/carers within 28 working days of the panel hearing being requested.

The panel is made up of 3 people who are not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint, normally the Company Director, an additional member of the Senior Leadership Team and another person who is independent to the management and running of the school. The complainant will be invited to attend a panel hearing of the complaint and is welcome to bring someone to accompany them but may not bring legal representation unless otherwise agreed. Should the parents/carers request a panel hearing but choose not to attend, the meeting will still go ahead. The decision of the panel is final and if, after a 'period of consideration' by all parties an issue remains unresolved, the company, in line with its terms and conditions, reserves the right to give notice, withdraw the place and terminate the contract.

Complaints Relating to the Fulfilment of the EYFS Requirements

Should a written complaint relate to the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, the complaint will be investigated and an outcome provided to the parents/carers within 28 days of having received the complaint. This excludes Stage 3 of the process.

Persistent Complaints

If a parent/carer makes repeated attempts to raise the same or extremely similar complaints after it has been considered at all three stages, this is likely to be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of the policy.

Records

Written records are kept of all concerns and complaints and kept in line with our Privacy Notice and Retention of Records policy. These records will detail the stage at which the complaint was resolved and any action taken by the school as a result of concern or complaint, regardless of whether they were upheld or not.

All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are logged and kept confidentially in line with GDPR, except where ISI or other relevant bodies requests access to them.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Ashbridge Independent School will make the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year available to relevant parties. This includes parents of pupils and prospective pupils, the Chief Inspector of schools, the Secretary of State or a approved representative of the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

Contacting ISI

We hope that families feel able to direct complaints to the school or nursery in the first instance to give us the opportunity to investigate and address the complaint. However, a complainant may contact ISI for any reason relating to complaints, including if they feel we are not meeting the EYFS of other statutory requirements.

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