

TANGLIN TRUST SCHOOL – COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

If you have comments/concerns please tell us

Tanglin Trust School prides itself on the quality of its teaching, teaching staff and pastoral care for all its students. However, despite the best intentions there may be occasions when parents feel the need to voice a concern or make a complaint. An important aspect of school life at Tanglin is the close partnership we have with parents and other members of the local community. If you think things are not going right for you or your child/children please let us know and we will do all we can to resolve it.

Any concern or complaint will be taken and treated seriously and with appropriate courtesy and confidentiality. It is important that complaints are dealt with promptly and in accordance with our policies and procedures. If it is important to you, it is important to us.

Our guiding principles

Our Complaints Procedure is built around the following principles:

- Complainants know how, and to whom, they should complain
- Is simple to understand and use and enables efficient and effective action
- Deals with problems within established time limits
- Is impartial – ensuring a full and fair investigation
- Is confidential, while addressing all the relevant points

This procedure aims to:

- Encourage the resolution of concerns and complaints rapidly and effectively
- Safeguard existing high standards, improve quality and uphold the good name of the school
- Promote good practice through speedy, open and transparent resolution of complaints
- Provide a staged framework that promotes early resolution and prevent unnecessary escalation
- Secure an unbiased, and fair hearing for the complainant(s) and for those named in the complaint

Definition of a complaint

“A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, actions, or lack of actions, by a school or its staff affecting an individual or a group”.

Concerns and complaints Concerns and complaints usually fall into one of two categories:

- (i) concerns and complaints about teaching and learning, either inside or outside the classroom; and
- (ii) concerns and complaints that are about specific school issues but do not directly concern the quality of teaching and learning or student experiences.

Teaching and Learning Issues:

Concerns and complaints about teaching and learning will normally be dealt with through the individual schools and ultimately through the Director of Education (DoE).

Other Issues:

Concerns and complaints dealt with through this process would include for example, concerns regarding, payment of fees, campus logistics and catering. Such concerns and complaints would normally be dealt with in the first instance through the Chief Operating Officer (COO), this includes informal complaints or concerns. The COO may delegate the investigation of the concern or complaint to other senior members of the Operations Team but ultimately he will make the decisions about outcomes of the issue and subsequent action.

If you are unsure who to address a particular complaint to, you can seek advice from the Director of Education (DoE) office.

INFORMAL PROCEDURES

Although, we have a formal complaints procedure, we firmly believe that the great majority of concerns and/or complaints are most effectively and efficiently resolved in an informal manner. The use of the term 'informal' does not imply that concerns or complaints resolved through these channels are not dealt with rigorously and taken seriously. It does however, usually result in a much more rapid resolution of concerns or complaints.

If any parent, or member of the public, has a concern we would encourage them to resolve it through talking with the staff directly involved. This can be done either by telephone, email or through a meeting involving the key people. In the case of concerns or complaints in respect of issues relating to teaching and learning this would normally be the class Teacher/Tutor. Complainants who feel uncomfortable about raising concerns or complaints directly with the teacher or tutor involved can approach the Head of Year, Head of Department or Head of School.

Complaints made directly to a head of school may be referred to the relevant member of staff unless it is deemed appropriate for him or her to deal with the matter personally.

Following the resolution of the concern, the relevant staff will make a note of the complaint and indicate how it has been resolved. Both parties to the complaint must agree that the matter has been satisfactorily resolved.

If it does not prove possible to satisfactorily resolve the concern through the 'informal channels' please follow the step-by-step stages outlined below

FORMAL PROCEDURES

If the concern or complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally (see above) then complaints can be formalised.

Concerns or complaints in respect of teaching and learning would follow the stages set out below.

Where the initial complaint was in relation to non-teaching and learning matters and was already made to the COO, it may be appropriate to proceed to stage 2 of these procedures.

Stage 1

Complainants should put their complaint/concern in writing – including email - to the Head of School. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within 3 working days. It is important that all elements of the complaint are included with the correspondence. This will enable the complaint to be dealt with more quickly and reduce the need to seek further clarification.

The complaint will be responded to, in writing, within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint. Wherever possible the response will include a clear resolution as to whether the complaint has been upheld or not and what, if any, action has been taken. Where it is not possible to resolve the complaint one way or the other the response will indicate this and give an explanation.

Stage 2

If, following Stage 1, the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, he/she may submit a request for the complaint and the manner in which it was dealt with, for review to the CEO. This request shall be in writing and will go through the office of the CEO. Receipt of the request for a review of the complaint will be acknowledged within 3 working days. At this stage the Director of Education will also have been informed of the complaint.

The CEO will review the evidence of the complaint and how the complaint was dealt with and review the outcomes. This may involve fresh discussions with the key people involved. The results of the review of the complaint will be made clear to the parent(s) in writing within 10 working days of receipt of request.

The CEO may delegate the investigation of the complaint to another member of the senior management team, but not the decision or the action to be taken.

Stage 3

The complaint will only be referred to the Board of Governors as a very last resort, when all else has failed. If, after taking all the steps above, the complainant remains dissatisfied he/she can request a review of the complaint by the Board of Governors. This request must be in writing and addressed to the Chair of the Board of Governors through the Board Secretary within 10 working days of receipt of the decision made by the CEO.

If the CEO is the subject of the complaint, it should be addressed to the Chair of the Board.

It is recognised that where a complaint has reached this stage it is important that it be resolved quickly and the Governors will act as quickly as is practicably possible.

The complaint will be acknowledged by the Chair or Alternate Chair of the Board of Governors through the Board Secretary normally no later than 3 working days after receipt thereof. The Chair of the Governors will nominate a committee of governors to review the complaint and the manner in which it has been dealt with. The Governor's Complaints Committee will comprise the Chair or Alternate Chair of the Board of Governors and two governors who have had no prior involvement with the complaint. The Chair or Alternate Chair will ensure that where practicably possible the committee will meet within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint. Following this meeting, and in any event within 5 working days of it, the committee will inform all parties of the outcome of their investigation. Their decision will be final.

Concerns or complaints relating to issues in respect of breaches of the School's Code of Conduct and the application of sanctions should be taken up by parents in accordance with these procedures through the relevant school. Appeals against a permanent exclusion order will be considered by the Disciplinary Committee of the Board of Governors.

TIME LIMITS FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

Whilst time limits for dealing with complaints have been established every effort will be made to deal with them as quickly as possible and within those limits. Where this is not possible the complainant will be informed and a reason given. Working days refer to term time.