

An exceptional education that draws out the unique potential of each student

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## Complaints Procedure

### (for Parents, Carers and Legal Guardians of enrolled students)

*This policy is available from our website ([halcyonschool.com](http://halcyonschool.com)) and in hard copy on request.*

This policy is based on the following legislation and Department for Education (DfE) guidance:

- Section 29 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which states that schools must have and make available a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.
- Part 7 of the schedule to [the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which states that we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents of students at the school.
- It is also based on [guidance for schools on complaints procedures](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), including the model procedure, and model procedure for dealing with serial and unreasonable complaints.

## Introduction

Halcyon London International School recognises the importance of regular interaction between staff and parents so that student learning and development can be supported consistently. This is also embedded in the ethos of the International Baccalaureate Programmes. In the event that parents have a complaint, the School will treat it in accordance with its procedure.

The School aims to resolve any complaints in a timely manner. Timescales for each stage are set out below in the relevant paragraphs. “School days” means Monday to Friday, when the School is open during term time. The dates of terms are published on [www.halcyonschool.com](http://www.halcyonschool.com).

Halcyon London International School will maintain a written record of all complaints (which may include notes, statements and correspondence) whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.

At all stages, the participants are asked to consider, model and be guided by the [International Baccalaureate Learner Profile](#).

We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed. To support this, we will make sure we

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publicise this policy and make it available on the School website. Throughout the process, we will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

This policy does **not** cover complaints procedures relating to:

- Admissions
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- Safeguarding matters
- Exclusion
- Whistle-blowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline

Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaints.

## 1. Complaints about learning and teaching

### A. Stage One: Informal Resolution

- A. If parents/carers have a complaint or concern they should, in the first instance, contact their child's mentor or the staff member involved. In most cases, the matter will be resolved.
- B. If the parent/carer cannot resolve the matter with the staff member, they should contact the relevant IB Coordinator for academic matters and the Student Wellbeing Leader for wellbeing issues.
- C. If the matter remains unresolved, the parent/carer should contact the Director.
- D. Any complaint made directly to the Director - without steps A-C above - will normally be referred to the relevant mentor, or staff member, or IB Coordinator or the Student Wellbeing Leader, unless the Director deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- E. Every effort will be made to find a satisfactory resolution, usually within 15 school days.
- F. The School will keep records of concerns and complaints on the date when they were received and reviewed. The staff member or Director will document the outcome in writing by email or otherwise and send this to the parent/carer.

### B. Stage Two: Formal Resolution

- A. If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Director. The Director will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. If the complaint is about the Director, the written complaint will be redirected to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

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- B. In most cases the Director will speak to the parents concerned, normally within three School days of receiving the complaint, and will discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- C. The Director may need to carry out further investigations.
- D. The Director will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- E. Once the Director is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Director will also give reasons for the decision.
- F. The Director's aim is to inform any complainant of the outcome of an investigation and the resolution to the complaint within 28 working days from the receipt of the complaint. However, any written complaint received within one month of the end of term or half term is likely to take longer to resolve owing to the school holidays and the unavailability of personnel.
- G. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to address the issue to the designated representative of the Board of Trustees who will review the situation using the same procedure as the Director. Alternatively the parents may request a formal panel hearing (Stage 3).

### C. Stage Three: Complaints Panel Hearing

- A. If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they should put their request in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees within five School days of the decision complained of, enclosing all relevant documents, grounds of the complaint and a statement outlining their desired outcome. This request will usually only be considered if the procedures at Stages 1 and 2 have been completed.
- B. Every effort will be made for the panel hearing to take place within 25 School days of receipt of the request, but the panel will not normally sit during half terms or School holidays. Written notification will be sent to parents of the date, time and location of the hearing as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event at least seven School days before the hearing.
- C. The complaints panel's task is to establish the facts surrounding the complaint(s) that has/have been made by considering the documents provided by both parties and any representations made by parents, the Director and, where appropriate, relevant additional information supplied by the Chair of the Board of Trustees. After evaluating the evidence, the panel will either uphold or dismiss the complaint.
- D. It is not within the powers of the panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, students or parents. The panel may make recommendations on these or any other issues to the Director or to the full Board of Trustees as appropriate.

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- E. The Chair of the Board of Trustees will acknowledge a request for a panel hearing within two School days and will then convene the panel as soon as reasonably practicable. The panel will consist of three persons who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One of these persons will be independent of the management and running of the School. The members of the panel will appoint a chair.
- F. If the panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than two School days prior to the hearing.
- G. For reasons of support and guidance, parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, staff member or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- H. The chair will conduct the hearing in such a way as to ensure that all those present have the opportunity of asking questions and making comments in an appropriate manner. All those attending the hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint and respectfulness or, after due warning, the hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the chair. If terminated, the original decision will stand. Any person who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way the hearing is conducted must say so before the proceedings go any further and his/her comment will be minuted.
- I. If possible, the panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately, without the need for further investigation.
- J. Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it should be carried out and, at the chair's discretion, the hearing may be adjourned.

After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the panel will reach a decision and make recommendations which it shall complete within five School days of the hearing. The panel will notify the parents in writing by email or otherwise of its findings, the reasons for the decision and any recommendations. The decision of the panel will be final. The panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will also be sent in writing to the Director, the Chair of Board of Trustees and where relevant, the person complained of. The decisions, findings and any recommendations will also be available for inspection on the School premises by the Board of Trustees and the Director.

## 2. Complaints about policy

Complaints about any published Halcyon policy - how the School is governed and operates - should be directed first to the Director. Complaints may include suggestions for improvement; for example, asking for greater clarity or explanation, or proposing more inclusive language, or requesting wider access (policies provided in different formats or translations). These suggestions will be reviewed by the School Board's Policy Committee.

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Complaints about the substance or intention of policy, and how this is realised in the School, should be communicated first to the Director. If a concern cannot be resolved informally - through discussion, information-sharing, questions/answers with the Director - then the complaint will be passed-on to the School Board's Policy Committee. At this stage, if not already done so, the complaint should be made in writing. Upon receipt and review of the complaint

- a) the Director will communicate an appropriate time-frame for resolution; and
- b) the Director and Chair of the Board Policy Committee will review the complaint and communicate a written response.

If the response from the School Board's Policy Committee fails to resolve the concern, then the matter, with all attendant communications, will be passed on to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The Chair will make a final decision within 14 days and communicate this to the complainee.

Parents/carers can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School by paragraph 33(k) of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014: where access is requested by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

*This policy will be reviewed annually, or more regularly in light of any significant changes in statutory requirements and legislation.*

*Approved by Board of Trustees October 2012. Approved by Board of Trustees, January 2013.  
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*Peninsula approved, September 2022*

