

# Complaints Policy

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This document relates to Article 28 (*Every Child has the Right to an Education*) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

*This organisation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.*



# Orbis Education and Care

## Complaints Policy

### **Rationale**

Complaints and suggestions are encouraged and welcomed as a way of ensuring that any unhappiness with the quality of service provided by Orbis Education is brought to the attention of the Head of School/Executive Head of Education as quickly as possible. All complaints will be taken seriously, will be fully investigated, handled quickly, sympathetically, confidentially, and, where necessary, improvements made. A child's/young person may require an appropriate representative to raise a concern/make a complaint on their behalf. Staff, parents/carers and associated agencies are made aware of this procedure through the induction process, prospectus or web site and it is included in the admissions information. Electronic records must be kept by the schools leadership team of all complaints received, whether they are informal or formal. The proprietor, in this case the Director of Education, will have oversight of this record, including any lessons learnt and changes made as a result of the complaint. This record must also include whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. This policy will be available to all parents and pupils, even prospective pupils and parents via the school website.

### **Meaning of Terms Used in this Policy Complaint**

A complaint is a statement of dissatisfaction relating to the pupil, the education they are receiving or any other aspect of service delivery. Some verbal concerns will be classed as 'formal complaints' due to the seriousness of their nature or possibly because the complainant may be unable to produce a written complaint, or the complaint is made by telephone. Formal complaints always require a written response.

#### **Informal Complaint:**

Informal Complaints typically arise when:

- A verbal concern is made
- Can be addressed and resolved immediately
- They do not require investigation and do not require a formal written response. Whilst most concerns will be made verbally; it does not follow that all verbal concerns are informal.
- All stakeholders will be given the opportunity to make a complaint on an informal basis

#### **Formal Complaint:**

- Ones that cannot be resolved "on the spot"
- Requires investigation
- Formally written
- A written complaint also distinguishes a formal complaint from an informal complaint

#### **Formal Complaints:**

As and when a formal complaint is raised, it will be dealt with appropriately and effectively, considering severity, timeframe and any immediate action required. All employees of the school are potentially recipients of complaints and upon receipt an employee will:

- Make the schools leadership team aware and seek appropriate advice from Senior Management.
- A member of the schools leadership team will investigate the formal complaint

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- If the complaint is related to, or outside the remit of the Executive Head of Education or Head of School, it will be formally passed onto the proprietor who will assign an appropriate and neutral person from within the organization to investigate

### **Governing Principles for Dealing with Complaints (Informal or Formal)**

- All complaints will be recorded and indicate whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing.
- If someone is unhappy with the management of an informal complaint, they may report this in writing as a formal complaint.
- All formal complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt.
- All formal complaints will be investigated, and a written response given within 10 working days. The written response will address the issues raised in the complaint and provide information about what action (if any) has been taken or is to be taken by way of resolution.
- All records relating to the complaint, including copies of all correspondence, statements etc. will be stored confidentially and maintained by the Head of Education and where the complaint is directly associated to a child/young person, in their confidential file.
- No person who is the subject of a formal complaint may take any responsibility for consideration of
  - a response to that complaint.
- No person will suffer any form of harassment or reprisal for making a complaint.
- Any complaint which concerns child protection issues will be referred immediately to the Head of Education. If the complaint involves the Head of Education, then it must immediately be raised to the Director of Education. Where it is considered, from the outset, that the '10-day response' target is unlikely to be met, then a more realistic assessment will be made, and the complainant informed.

### **Appeals**

It is hoped that the complaint is resolved satisfactorily. However, if the person raising the complaint was not satisfied, they have the right to have a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor. The designated appeals panel which will consist of at least three people who have not been directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint. One panel member will be independent of the management and running of the school. Parents with an unresolved complaint may attend the panel meeting and have the right to be accompanied. This panel will consider appeals and formally respond within 28 days. The complainant, proprietors, head of school, executive head of education and the person complained about will be given a copy of any findings and recommendations. It is hoped that the complaint is resolved satisfactorily. However, if the person raising the complaint was not satisfied, they have the right to take their complaint to the Child/Young Person's Placing Authority and the Chief Executive Office of Orbis Education and Care.

### **Advocacy Services**

There may, on occasion be a need for a complainant to use the services of an Advocate or Social Worker in presenting/preparing their case. In such cases the Advocate should be sufficiently skilled in the child/young person's preferred communication.

### **Disciplinary Action**

The organisation has several employment policies in place, which are designed to deal with allegations of abuse, discrimination etc. If during any investigation into a complaint made by a child/young person it becomes apparent that some form of disciplinary action is to be taken against an employee, then it will be taken in accordance with the most appropriate and relevant policy.

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## **Confidentiality of Records**

All correspondence, statements, and records of complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Welsh Government or a body conducting an inspection on its behalf requests access to any documents relating to the complaint.

## **Fundamental British Values**

As a caring school, and one that challenges discrimination, we actively challenge pupils, staff, parents and stakeholders expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British Values, including 'extremist' views. Incidents of this nature will be dealt with seriously and according to our organisations own policies.

## **Equality Impact Statement**

All relevant persons are required to comply with this policy and must demonstrate sensitivity and competence in relation to Age, Disability Gender reassignment, Marriage and Civil partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation. If you, or any other groups, believe you are disadvantaged by this policy please contact the Regional Manager for the service. Priority will then actively respond to the enquiry.

This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the school's quality assurance process.

**Policy Reviewed Date: September 2025**

Signature:  (Director of Education)

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