

# PORG International School

## Complaints Policy

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## Introduction

PORG International School is committed to providing the best teaching and pastoral care it can for its pupils. We aim to deal with any worries or complaints informally through the pastoral framework, but if required, the school has a formal complaints procedure. Formal complaints are extremely rare, reflecting the good relationships between pupils, parents and the school which enables most matters to be resolved informally.

## Ethos

At PORG International School all staff are dedicated to giving all children the best possible education and caring properly for their health, safety, and welfare at all times. We are committed to working closely with parents and believe that the school and parents must work together in partnership, carrying out their own particular responsibilities to help pupils gain the most from their time in school.

## Publication

This Policy is updated annually and is published to all staff and volunteers. The PORG International School Complaints policy is available to school personnel, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils, and parents on the school website.

## Overview of this policy

- Complaint versus Concern.
- Informal concern.
- Formal complaint.
- Appeals procedure.
- Recording complaints.
- Unreasonable complaints.
- Complaints procedure flowchart.

## Concern versus Complaint

### Concern

- An expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.

### Complaint

- An expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or a lack of action.
- Any person can make a complaint; schools must not limit complaints to parents or carers of children who are registered at the school.

### Informal concern

We at PORG International School think it is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal procedures. PORG International School takes informal concerns seriously and makes every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. This can usually be achieved through discussion and good communication. First talk to the teacher or pastoral care most closely concerned to clarify the facts and resolve through discussion. A request for discussion with the head teacher or principal may also be desirable before making a formal complaint.

### Formal complaint

If not satisfied with the outcome of informal concern, you may wish to make a formal complaint.

This should be done in writing to the principal. You must use the form attached to this complaint policy, otherwise the complaint will be treated as informal. The form can be provided also in principal's office on request.

Your complaint will be acknowledged within three school days.

The teacher/principal will consider the complaint and in doing so will:

- Establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved.
- Meet or contact you if they need further information.
- Clarify what you feel would put things right if this has not been included on your form.
- Interview those involved in the matter and those who are the subject of the complaint, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish.
- Conduct any interviews with an open mind.
- Keep notes of any interview for the record.

The teacher/principal will keep in mind ways in which the complaint can be resolved. It may be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology.
- An explanation.
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better (please note this is not an admission of negligence).
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur.
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again.
- An undertaking to review policies and practice in light of the complaint.
- The school may ask for advice from the local authority where appropriate.

The principal will discuss the outcome with you and should send a detailed response within a maximum of 20 school days. Where this proves to be unrealistic, you will be informed in writing and given an estimate of how long it will take to provide a detailed response.

## Appeals procedure

If you are not satisfied with the response of the principal, then you must write to the proprietor as soon as possible after receiving the decision, briefly outlining the content of the complaint. The proprietor will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 school days.

The proprietor will discuss the outcome with you and should send a detailed response within a maximum of 20 school days. Where this proves to be unrealistic, you will be

informed in writing and given an estimate of how long it will take to provide a detailed response.

If you are not satisfied with the response of the proprietor, then you must write to the clerk to the governing body as soon as possible after receiving the decision and briefly outline the content of the complaint.

The clerk to the governing body will acknowledge receipt of the letter within 5 school days. The acknowledgement will inform the complainant that three members of the school's governing body will hear the complaint within 20 working days of receiving the complaint. The letter will invite the complainant to attend and also explain that the complainant has the right to submit any further documentation relevant to the complaint. The complainant may bring a friend or someone else for support.

## Governing body

Complaints should not be shared with the whole governing body, except in very general terms, in case an appeal panel needs to be organised.

No governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.

- If the whole governing body is aware of the substance of a complaint before the final complaint has been completed, PORG International School will arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint.
- Complainants have the right to request an independent panel and the school should consider the request. Ultimately however, the decision is made by the governors.
- PORG International School will listen and resolve the complaints with the aim of contributing to school improvement. The governing body will review handling of the complaints at regular intervals every three years allowing the school to take into consideration any new guidance issued by the Department for Education or legislative changes.
- Many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting; Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The panel chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible.

- Extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child and is present during all or part of the hearing. If the child is the complainant, the panel should ask in advance if any support is needed to help the child present their complaint. Where the child’s parent is the complainant, the panel should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the hearing, if any, the child needs to attend. The parent should be advised however that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child to attend a part of the meeting which the panel considers not to be in the child’s best interests.

## Recording complaints

PORG International School accepts complaint form in writing, however the complainant may have communication preferences due to disability or learning difficulties and PORG International School allows alternative methods of contact:

- A complaint may be made in person, by telephone, or in writing.
- Brief notes of meetings and telephone calls should be kept, and a copy of any written response added to the record in order to prevent any later challenge or disagreement over what was said.
- Schools should record the progress of the complaint and the final outcome. The principal should be responsible for these records and hold them centrally.
- Complainants have a right to copies of these records under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts.

## Unreasonable complainants

PORG International School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive, or threatening.

PORG International School defines unreasonable complainants as ‘those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people’s complaints’.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated, and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- maliciously
- aggressively
- using threats, intimidation, or violence
- using abusive, offensive, or discriminatory language
- knowing it to be false
- using falsified information
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers

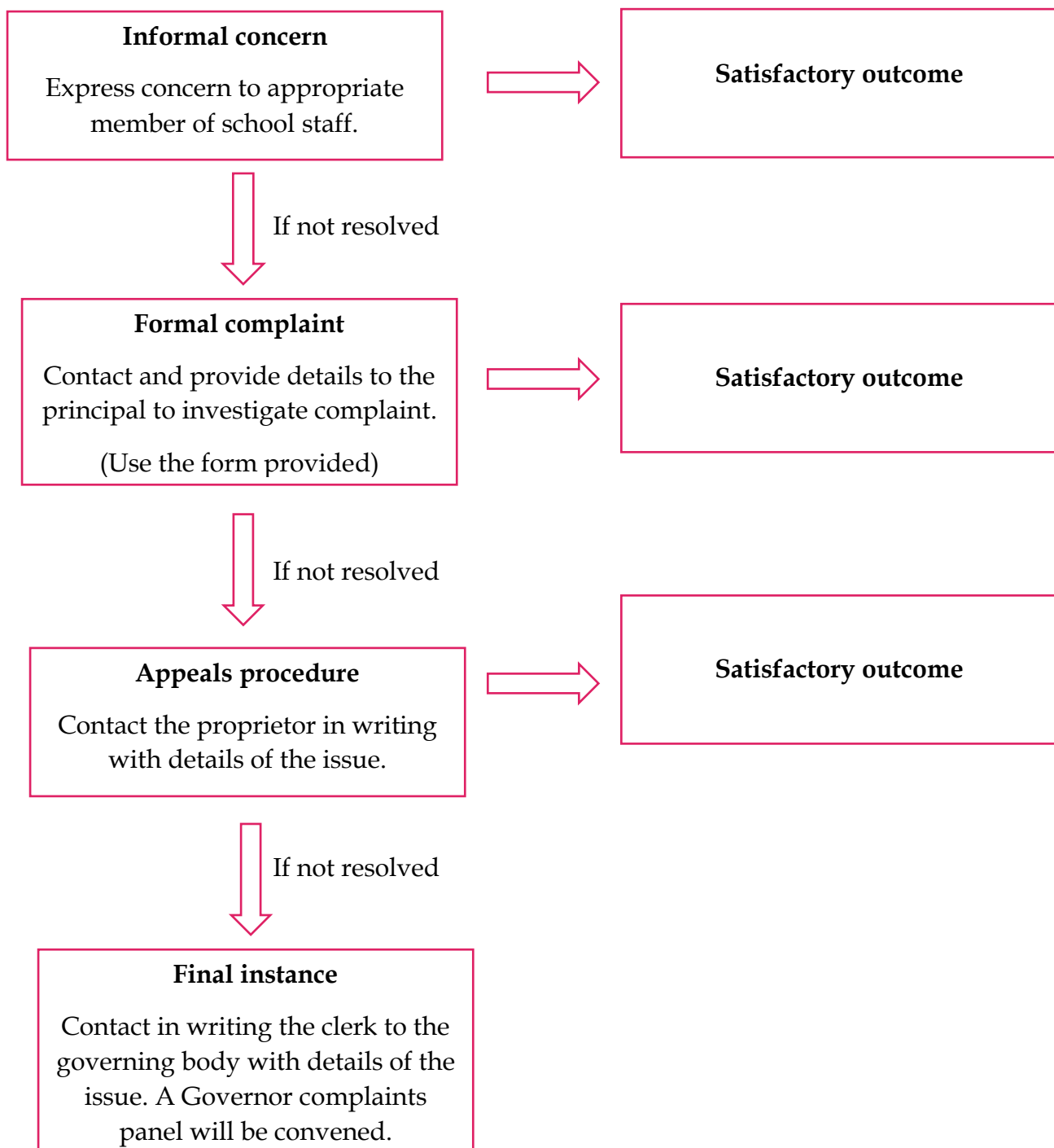
Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email, or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached. Whenever possible, the head teacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking. If the behaviour continues the head teacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it.

For complainants who excessively contact PORG International School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from PORG International School.



## Complaints procedure flowchart



## Complaint Record

### Details of complainant

Surname	
First name	
Phone number	
Email address	
Address	
How would you prefer us to contact you?	

### Details of complaint

Date of complaint	
Complaint received by:	
Complaint made via:	<input type="checkbox"/> phone <input type="checkbox"/> email <input type="checkbox"/> in person <input type="checkbox"/> letter

### Complaint type

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> School<br><input type="checkbox"/> Employees/staff/volunteers<br><input type="checkbox"/> Classmate/s | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/s<br><input type="checkbox"/> Extra-curricular activities<br><input type="checkbox"/> Others: ..... |
|--|---|

## Information about complaint

## Informal resolution

As stated in Complaints Procedure a complainant should always attempt to resolve the matter informally before submitting a formal complaint. Please include details of the steps you have taken to do this, who you have spoken with and why you feel the outcome has been unsatisfactory

**Your suggestions to resolve complaint**

**Official school use**

Date acknowledgement sent	
By whom	
Complaint referred to	
Date	

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