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# PARENT COMPLAINT POLICY

## I. Purpose

The school believes that feedback is an important process in contributing to school improvement and raising standards. Member of the school community who have concerns or complaints should feel comfortable about voicing and knowing that concerns and complaints will be considered seriously.

The guiding principles of the policy are as follows:

- There is a difference between a concern and a complaint. A concern is likely to be a difference of opinion and requires discussion between teacher, student and parent. If the concern is not resolved by this process, then it may become a complaint.
- A complaint may arise when there is an issue of physical or emotional well-being and security or when the school's stated values or aims are being infringed.
- A breach of the law will always constitute a complaint.
- Feedback will be actively sought from students and parents to minimise concerns and complaints and maximise accountability.
- All complainants have the right to be accompanied when making a complaint and students may be accompanied by a parent or another adult.
- Confidentiality for all parties will be maintained throughout the process, and it is expected all parties will respect this requirement.
- Complaints need to be considered, and resolved, as quickly and efficiently as possible. An effective complaints procedure will have realistic time limits for each action within each stage. However, where further investigations are necessary, new time limits can be set and the complainant sent details of the new deadline and an explanation for the delay.

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## II. Type & Scope

### Type: External Policy

This policy applies to:

- All leaders, teachers, administrative staff and parents/guardians of Anne Hill International School

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## III. Policy Statement

### 3.1. Informal stages

At our school, we are committed to building a positive and responsive partnership with our families. Most concerns can be resolved informally and quickly by discussion with the teacher or staff member concerned.

We encourage parents and guardians to, in the first instance, make an appointment to discuss the concern with relevant teacher or/and Learning & Teaching Assistant (LTA) or/and the relevant staff member regarding any concerns. The direct involvement of all parties and anticipated partnership to address the concern immediately to the benefit and satisfaction of all should contribute to a speedy resolution of the matter.

In addition to this, we also provide a Parent Feedback Survey Link for families to share compliments, comments or concerns at any time. This feedback will be directed to the relevant stakeholder, and a response will be provided within 48 hours. If feedback is submitted anonymously, it will be addressed collectively in a general email on a monthly basis. This ensures that all voices are heard – even if a concern is not raised through formal complaint channels.

We aim to resolve all issues in a constructive, timely, and respectful manner. While we encourage informal dialogue as a first step, we also have a clear procedure for raising formal complaints when needed.

### 3.2. Formal stages

There are three formal stages:

Minor complaints (Stage 1) should be resolved quickly and informally. More serious complaints (Stage 2), for example allegations that a teacher is failing to set homework regularly or that a student has been inappropriately punished, should be referred to the appropriate member of the Academic Leadership Team, (Stage 3), concern allegations of serious professional misconduct, such as a member of staff physically striking a student. In these cases, the Head of School should be the first to be informed, and the procedure followed.

#### Stage 1

If a student/parent/guardian is still dissatisfied after the informal stage, they can refer the matter to a member of the Academic Leadership Team (ALT) – Vice Principal. This should be written to make the situation clear to all parties involved.

Any complaint made to the EMB or Head of School at this stage will be referred to the ALT for consideration and action.

The Vice Principal will offer a meeting with the student/parent/guardian at a mutually convenient time to discuss and clarify what the issues are and what the school or student/parent/guardian intends to achieve.

If the issue is complex the Vice Principal may need to speak to other staff and students to investigate the concerns. This should happen within 5 school days. If this schedule cannot be met the Vice Principal should inform the student/parent/guardian that the process will take longer, explaining the reasons for this and giving a timescale for when the investigation will be completed.

Together all parties should eventually agree on an acceptable outcome that is to the satisfaction of all parties involved. This should be documented and agreed by all parties so there is no misunderstanding, and all parties should receive a signed copy.

## Stage 2

If, following the involvement of the Vice Principal, the matter is still not resolved to the student/parent/guardian's satisfaction, the complaint may be escalated in writing to the Head of School.

If the Head of School is the subject of the complaint, the complainant will be directed to the Executive Director.

He/she will offer to meet with the student/parent/guardian, at a mutually convenient time and hear the complaint.

## Stage 3

If the complaint is still not resolved to the student/parent/guardian's satisfaction the complaint may be escalated to the Executive Director who may decide on the process of further investigation, determine and provide a decision in writing, along with the reasons for the decision.

It should be noted that the decision of the Executive Director on any matter of complaint will be considered final.

### 3.3. Investigating complaints

If an anonymous complaint is received it will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances, serious concerns such as child protection issues or bullying allegations, where the school might consider appropriate to contact outside agencies.

The person investigating a complaint will:

- Establish what has happened so far and who has been involved.
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved.
- Meet with the complainant or contact them if further information is required
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

- Conduct any interviews and be prepared to persist in the questioning.
- Complete all necessary notes.

### 3.4. Resolving complaints

After understanding the situation, the school may discuss with the complainant and 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 admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
- Assurance that the event that was the basis of the complaint will not recur.
- Explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure it does not happen again.
- An undertaking to review school policy or procedure considering the complaint.
- An explanation that there is insufficient evidence and thus the complaint cannot be upheld.
- An explanation is that, following investigation, the evidence does not substantiate the concern.

## IV. Roles & Responsibilities

The Head of School will ensure that:

- This complaints policy and the procedures are made known to all members of the school community through the Parent-Student Handbook.
- All complaints are put in writing and are dealt with in the first instance by the Head of School, or a member of the leadership team, who will document and log into the complaint (names, dates, times, events); acknowledge in writing within three days of receipt and consulting with all those directly concerned.
- The complainant receives notification and explanations with reasons for any findings, decision, response or action taken **within ten working days** of the complaint.
- All Stage 2 complaints received by the school and how they were resolved are recorded.

**ALT and School Staff** are expected to encourage students and parents who have concerns that cannot be addressed through an initial, informal process to follow the complaints procedure.

The **Executive Director** will ensure that if a complainant is not satisfied with the action taken by the Head of School, then the Executive Director will hear the complaint. And that on receipt of any complaint he/she will:

- (i) inform the Head of School and/or other named school personnel, if any
- (ii) establish a process to investigate the complaint.

- (iii) invite the complainant to attend any hearing giving seven working days' notice and informing the complainant or the person complaining that they may be accompanied by a supporter if they wish.
- (iv) Write to the complainant and the person complained about within seven working days, informing them of any findings, the decision, the reasons for it, and any action taken by the school.

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## V. Review Cycle and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually by the EMB, School's leadership team alongside the Strategy, Communications & Policy (SCP) department at the end of each academic year to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

## VI. Concluding Remarks

Although parents may be glad to know that a structured complaints procedure exists, most issues should be dealt with through individual discussions between the parents and the appropriate member of staff. The importance of raising matters of concern at an early stage rather than leaving them unresolved is critical. To that end, it is essential for parents to alert the school directly so it can act. The school is committed to good communication with the parent body, whose co-operation is essential if matters are to be dealt with effectively and appropriately.

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## VII. Related Documents, Policies & SOPs

- Parent & Guardian Code of Conduct
- School Communication Policy
- Parent-Student Handbook

<b>Previous Update(s)</b>	N/A	<b>Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Current Update</b>	Version 1	<b>Revision Date:</b>	01/10/2025

<b>Next Update</b>		<b>Revision Date:</b>	
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Anne Hill

**ANNE HILL INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

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