

International School of Creative Arts

# **Complaints Policy and Procedure**

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## Control Page

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## **ISCA Complaints Procedure**

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### **Introduction**

International School of Creative Arts welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes seriously complaints and concerns that they may raise.

Although the way we work is reviewed regularly, nevertheless a parent may feel they have a concern or complaint against some aspects of our School, or an individual member of staff. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially (although disclosure may be required in the course of the School's inspection or where legal obligation prevails).

Reference to "Parent" / "You" includes parents of current students and may at our discretion include parents of students who have left the School.

We aim to resolve any complaints in a timely manner. Timescales for each stage are set out below in the relevant paragraphs. When we refer to working days, we mean Monday to Friday, during term time. The dates of terms are published on the School's website.

If a person wishes to make a complaint, they should follow our Complaints Policy and Procedures. The policy is available to parents on the school website and/or on request.

### **Legal Framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Education Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Immigration Act 2016
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018

### **Complaints Procedure**

#### Stage 1: Informal Concerns

You are encouraged to make an appointment with the Head of School via telephone to discuss any concerns. An appointment can be made via the School Office or the Head of School can be contacted directly.

Should the outcome not be resolved satisfactorily within 5 working days, you may wish to proceed with a formal complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

At the discretion of the Head of School, 'Informal Concerns' that warrant a follow up will be logged in the Complaints folder.

### Stage 2: Formal Complaint

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, please write to the Head of School detailing the nature of the complaint. The letter should provide full details, including names and dates where appropriate, and make it clear that a formal complaint is being lodged. A written 'Formal Complaint' will always be logged in the Complaints Book.

The Head of School will either investigate the matter himself or ask a senior member of staff to do so in his place. The Head of School will prepare a report on the investigation and make recommendations. Within 20 working days a summary of this report will be sent to you advising the conclusion of the investigation and any action proposed or taken.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can request that the complaint be referred to the Complaints Panel under Stage 3 of this procedure.

### Stage 3: Panel Hearing

A Complaints Panel Hearing is a review of the decisions taken at Stage 2 by the Head of School. The Panel will not consider any new areas of complaint which have not been previously raised as part of the complaints procedure. The role of the Panel is to establish the facts surrounding the complaints that have been made by considering:

- (a) the documents provided by both parties and
- (b) any representations made by the complainant and the Head of School

The panel will reach a decision, on the balance of probabilities, as to whether each complaint is valid in whole or in part.

It is not within the powers of the Complaints Panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, students or parents. The Complaints Panel may make recommendations to the School on these matters or any other issues as appropriate.

A request for a Complaints Panel must be put in writing to the Chair of Proprietorial Body within 5 working days of receiving the outcome of the Head of School investigation in Stage 2.

Chair of Proprietorial Body will convene a panel of at least three people not directly part of the complaint, one of whom will not be involved in the management and running of the School.

The Panel will call for a full report from the Head of School and, if necessary, obtain further particulars about the matter from all parties. Within 10 working days of receiving the request for a Complaints Panel, the Panel will send the complainant an invitation to attend to a meeting (the Hearing).

The complainant should confirm receipt of the invitation by return and must accept the invitation to attend the Hearing within 5 working days of receiving it. The exact date and time of the Hearing will be established by mutual accord, but it must take place within 10 working days of the complainant receiving the invitation letter/email.

The complainant may be accompanied to the Hearing by one other person. This may be a relative or friend. The Hearing is not legal proceedings and so legal representation is not necessary. If the complainant does wish to be accompanied by someone who is legally qualified, the complainant must notify the Panel of this at least 5 working days prior to the Hearing and should note that the Panel will wish to speak to the complainant directly, and that this person will not be permitted to act as an advocate.

The Hearing will be conducted in an informal manner and a clerk will be appointed to minute the proceedings. All those present at the Hearing shall have the opportunity to ask questions and make comments in an appropriate manner and are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners or, after due warning, the Hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the Chairperson. 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 comments will be minuted.

After due consideration of all the relevant facts, the Panel will reach a decision on the balance of probabilities and make recommendations which shall be completed within 10 working days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the complainant informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The Panel's findings and recommendations will be:

- sent in writing to the complainant and, where relevant, the person who is the subject of the complaint;
- made available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and Head of School.

The completion of Stage 3 represents the conclusion of the School's complaints procedure.

If the complaint is made against or about the Head of School in the first instance, the Executive Director will take the place of the Head of School in this policy.

### **Record Keeping**

A written record will be kept of all formal complaints, including the stage at which they were resolved and any action taken as a result of the complaint, whether it was upheld or not. In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will be kept for seven years.

Complaints about boarding will be kept separate from other complaints.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under requests access to them.

### Complaints to the Department for Education (DfE)

Complainants can ask DfE to consider their complaint if they have followed all the steps in the school's complaints procedure.

The DfE cannot investigate individual complaints but it will consider any reports of a major failure to meet their standards.

DfE can ask the school inspectorates to take minor complaints into account when the school is next inspected.

Complainants can complain to DfE by filling in the online school complaints form, using the link below:

[https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact the Department for Education](https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact%20the%20Department%20for%20Education)

### Contacts

<i>Head of School</i>	Robert Hunter – 01753 208 820 - <a href="mailto:r.hunter@isca.uk.com">r.hunter@isca.uk.com</a>
<i>School Office</i>	01753 208 820 – <a href="mailto:enquiries@isca.uk.com">enquiries@isca.uk.com</a>
<i>Chair of Proprietorial Body</i>	Colin Kerrigan - <a href="mailto:contactgovernance@isca.uk.com">contactgovernance@isca.uk.com</a>

### Formal Complaints Record

The following is a record of the Stage 2 and/or Stage 3 complaints received by ISCA over the past 4 academic years:

- 2023-2024      1 formal complaint
- 2022-2023      0 formal complaints
- 2021-2022      0 formal complaints
- 2020-2021      0 formal complaints
- 2019-2020      0 formal complaints