



COMPLAINTS POLICY

**Updated policy from October 1st 2022
Version 1.0/22**



Complaints policy

Rationale

No school is perfect and from time to time issues of concern may arise that need to be addressed. The aim of this document is to guide students and parents as to how such problems may be addressed and the procedures that need to be followed should formal complaints be made.

Students

School life can be complex with a lot of different issues to handle either in terms of academic work and progress or more personal issues. Often, talking to someone about problems or worries helps a great deal and many difficulties can be resolved simply through discussion. In addition to their parents, students may like to speak to the following members of the school community:

- A teacher with whom the student has a good understanding
- Form Tutor/Class teacher
- Relevant Head of School
- Boarding House Parent or Head of Boarding
- Principal

In accordance with the school's child protection policy, any student feeling in any way unsafe or at risk of physical and/or emotional harm may speak to the school's DSLs either directly or through the channels listed above. They can also speak to any adult in school should this make them more comfortable.

More general complaints may also be raised through pupil forums such as school and boarding councils. Complaints of a more specific and individualised nature should be made initially verbally to a member of the relevant school's Senior Leadership Team. This is an **informal complaint**.

If the matter cannot be settled in this manner, the student may lodge a **formal complaint** in writing to the Head of School. This may be done through email or by physical copy. If by email this must be done via **the student's school email address**. A member of the school's academic staff may support the child in writing this complaint. The Head of School will then see the student to discuss the issue. The student is welcome to bring a friend or member of staff to the meeting to offer support. It is hoped that a meeting with the Head of School should resolve the matter concerned.



Students can channel their complaints and concerns through their parents at all times. Should the procedure above not settle an issue or should parents wish to approach the school directly on any matter causing anxiety the procedure below should be followed.

Parents

Step 1: Informal meeting to resolve concerns

Step 1 allows complaints to be addressed through an informal meeting process. Parents are welcome to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss their concerns. To avoid unnecessary delays and to ensure that parents can meet with the relevant member of staff pre booked appointments are recommended.

Head of Junior School	hojs@cislago.org
Head of Senior School	hoss@cislago.org
Head of Chadsworth	bhilak@cislago.org
Boarding concerns	anangr@cislago.org

Appointments can also be arranged to meet with a student's Form Tutor/Class Teacher via the school office.

Hopefully most problems can be addressed and resolved at an early stage.

However, should a complaint not be resolved via the process described above then the **formal complaints process below should be used.**

Step 2: the submission of a formal complaint

A **formal** complaint may be made verbally but this should be followed up in writing to the relevant Head of School who will acknowledge receipt within forty eight hours. This letter may be by email (scanned document with signature) or hard copy.

Head of Junior School	hojs@cislago.org	Via Junior School Office
Head of Senior School and for formal Boarding complaints	hoss@cislago.org	Via Senior School Office
Head of Chadsworth	bhilak@cislago.org	Via Senior School Office

In their acknowledgment, the Head of School will outline the timeframe needed for investigation, which may vary according to the nature of the complaint (This process will usually be completed within 7 days but a more complex concern or one where children and staff are out of school may take longer). After the investigation, the Head of School will give feedback in writing, but will also convene a meeting either in person or zoom with the parents to enable discussion and clarification.



The Head of School, may at any stage during this process escalate the concern to the Principal (step 3)

Where students are asked to assist an investigation at this stage, they may be required to give a written account of what they may have witnessed. These written accounts may only be at the request of the Head of School or a delegated member of the Senior Team.

Step 3: Appeal of the decision to the Principal or escalation to the Principal by the Head of School

Should step 2 of this process not resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the parents concerned, they may refer the issue in question in writing to the Principal. Equally should the Principal deem the complaint in question to be of a very serious nature, they may refer it immediately to the School Director. In the letter parents are asked to be specific as to why they are unhappy with the original proposed resolution to the complaint.

The Principal will confirm that he is now considering the complaint within 48 hours of receiving the request and will review all relevant materials, meet with the parents directly and convey his findings in writing within 7 days of the complaint being escalated to him.

Step 4: Appeal to the School Director

Upon receipt of the written response by the Principal the parent may, within 7 days, write to the Principal asking for the matter to be considered by the School Director. This letter should outline **the specific grounds** upon which the appeal is made. The School Director will:

- Convene a panel to consider the appeal which will consist of no fewer than 3 people who were not directly involved in the initial complaint. One member of this panel will be independent of the management of the school.
- Invite the parent(s) to attend the panel meeting. Parents may be accompanied by another person/persons. The details of those accompany parents to this meeting must be shared with and approved by the school director no less than 48 hours prior to the meeting. Legal representation is not required as this meeting does not constitute legal proceedings.
- Ensure that all available information is considered, listen to all sides, and agree the best way ahead. Any new information provided at this appeal must be shared with the Director at least 48 hours prior to the meeting and must address the specific grounds for the appeal.
- The decision and recommendations of the panel will be communicated in writing to:
 - i) The complainant(s).



- ii) The person or persons against who the complaint has been made.
- iii) The Principal.
- iv) Members of the panel.

The judgement of the Director and panel is final and no further appeal may be made.

A formal complaint written complaint as outline in stage 2 of the above procedure will be a matter of written record. This information will be held confidentially by school with the number (but not detail) of such complaints being publish as an appendix to the annula update of this policy.