



## BRITISH SCHOOL OF BEIJING, SANLITUN

### GENERAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

#### Part A: Complaining about the actions of a member of staff other than the Principal

##### 1) Informal Stage

The complainant is normally expected to arrange to communicate directly with the member of staff<sup>1</sup> concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage. [In the case of serious concerns it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Principal<sup>2</sup>] Any unreasonable refusal to attempt an informal resolution may result in the procedure being terminated forthwith. [Any dispute in relation to the "reasonableness" may be determined through the review process].

##### 2) Formal Stage

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal stage the complainant must put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Principal<sup>2</sup>, who will be responsible for its investigation.<sup>3,4</sup>

The complainant should include details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents. In addition the Principal<sup>2</sup> may meet with the complainant to clarify the complaint.<sup>5</sup>

The Principal<sup>2</sup> will collect such other evidence as he/she deems necessary. Where this involves an interview with a member of staff, who is the subject of the complaint, that member of staff may be accompanied by a friend or representative if he/she wishes.

The investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, the complainant, and the member of staff concerned, will be informed in writing of the outcome. This may be to the effect that:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld;



- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence;
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full. Some details may then be given of action the school may be taking to review procedures etc. but details of the investigation or of any disciplinary procedures will not be released;
- The matter has been fully investigated and that appropriate procedures are being followed, which are strictly confidential. [e.g. where staff disciplinary procedures are being followed].

The complainant will be told that consideration of their complaint by the Principal is now concluded. If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, the complainant may request that the Regional Office review the process followed by the Principal<sup>2</sup> in handling the complaint. Any such request must be made in writing within two weeks of receiving notice of the outcome from the Principal, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure. The procedure described in Part C will be followed.

If the complainant considers that the decision of the Principal is perverse, or that the Principal has acted unreasonably in considering the complaint, then the complainant may bring a complaint against the Principal under part B of this procedure. This will provide an opportunity for the evidence to support such a complaint to be investigated.

## Part B: Complaining about the actions of the Principal

### 1) Informal stage

The complainant is usually expected to arrange to speak directly with the Principal. [In the case of serious concerns it may be appropriate to raise them directly with the Regional Director, Nord Anglia Education China Region] Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information. If the matter is not resolved, and if both parties agree, then a third party may be invited to act as a mediator at a further meeting. A refusal, unreasonably, to attempt an informal resolution may result in the procedure being terminated forthwith.

### 2) Formal Stage

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal stage the complainant must put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Regional Director, Nord Anglia Education China Region, who will determine which of the agreed procedures to invoke<sup>3,4</sup>. If it is determined that the complaint is "General", the Regional Director<sup>6</sup> will arrange for its investigation. The complainant should include details which might assist the investigation, such as names of



potential witnesses, dates and times of events, copies of relevant documents etc. In addition the complainant will be invited to meet with the Regional Director/Investigating Officer nominated by the Regional Director<sup>6</sup> to present oral evidence or to clarify the complaint.<sup>5</sup>

The Regional Director/Investigating Officer will collect such other evidence as is deemed necessary. This may include the interviewing of witnesses and others who may provide relevant information.

The Principal will be provided with a copy of the complaint and any additional evidence presented by the complainant or collected by the Investigating Officer. Once there has been an opportunity for the Principal to consider this, he/she will be invited to meet separately with the Investigating Officer, in order to present written and oral evidence in response. The Principal may be accompanied at this meeting by a friend or representative.

When the investigation has been concluded, the complainant and the Principal will be informed in writing of the outcome. The complainant will not be informed of any disciplinary/ capability action. The complainant will be told that consideration of their complaint by the Regional Director<sup>6</sup> is now concluded.

The decision of the Regional Director is not subject to review, except by regulatory authorities such as may be appropriate to the nature of the complaint.

## **Part C: Review Process**

Any review of the process followed by the Principal<sup>2</sup> (Part A) shall be conducted by a panel of at least three members of the Regional Office.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests to make oral representations should be considered sympathetically.

The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant. The panel will then invite the Principal<sup>2</sup> to make a response to the complaint. The panel may also have access to the records kept of the process followed.

The complainant and the Principal<sup>2</sup> will be informed in writing of the outcome. This may be to the effect that:



- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld
- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full but that the procedural failure did not affect the outcome significantly so the matter is now closed.
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full and the Regional Office will ask the Principal to rectify the situation and take steps to prevent a recurrence. Should this not be possible, the complainant will have recourse to the Regional Director as outlined above.

## Confidentiality

**All correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential, except in cases where local legal requirements permit access or enable restriction by local authorities.**

## Superscripts

<sup>1</sup> or other designated post-holder/middle manager, such as a Key-stage Co-ordinator, Head of Department, Head of Year.

<sup>2</sup> or other designated member of staff on behalf of the Principal [in such case the Principal must be satisfied that the process has been conducted properly and accept responsibility for the same].

<sup>3</sup> Alternatively the complainant may be referred back to the informal stage of the procedure.

<sup>4</sup> If the complaint is judged to be vexatious, then the complainant will be informed that their complaint will not be accepted and will not be investigated.

<sup>5</sup> it may be appropriate to offer the complainant the opportunity to be accompanied by a friend at any such meeting.

<sup>6</sup> or Investigating Officer responsible for investigating complaints.