

Introduction

1. Purpose and Policy Statement

Penta International is an independent provider of inspection and consultancy services for international schools worldwide. We are approved by the UK Department for Education (DfE) to inspect British schools overseas (BSO). Penta International is committed to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and fairness in all our inspection and consultancy services.

We recognise that, on occasion, individuals or organisations may wish to raise a concern or make a complaint. This policy sets out how complaints will be handled promptly, respectfully, and transparently, ensuring that all parties are treated fairly and that lessons are learned to improve our practice.

2. Scope

This policy explains how school leaders or other stakeholders may raise concerns or make complaints about our inspection activities. It sets out the stages through which we will handle complaints and the standards of service you can expect.

We will consider complaints that relate to:

- the conduct or professionalism of Penta inspectors or consultants;
- school inspection processes or procedures;
- the judgements, findings, or outcomes reached in an inspection report;
- administrative or operational processes;
- other aspects of our service delivery.

This policy does **not** cover:

- employment-related matters;
- matters already subject to legal proceedings.

We take every complaint seriously, treat all parties respectfully, and use outcomes from the process to strengthen the quality of our work.

3. Definitions

- **Concern:** An issue raised informally in order to seek clarification or prompt resolution.
- **Complaint:** A formal expression of dissatisfaction with Penta International's actions, decisions, or service quality.
- **Complainant:** The person or organisation making the complaint.

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- **Respondent:** The individual or team whose conduct or actions are the subject of the complaint.

4. Wording

Throughout this policy 'us', 'we' and 'our' refer to Penta International; 'you' and 'your' refer to the most senior leader in a school that has recently worked with Penta International.

5. Principles

All complaints will be handled in accordance with the following principles:

- **Fairness:** complaints will be investigated objectively and without bias;
- **Confidentiality:** information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis;
- **Timeliness:** complaints will be dealt with promptly at each stage;
- **Accessibility:** complaints may be submitted in writing or another reasonable format;
- **Learning:** findings will be used to improve service quality and professional practice.

6. Responsibilities

- A **Senior Consultant** oversees the process and ensures that timeframes and procedures are followed;
- A **Senior Director** or a designated senior leader may review cases at later stages;
- An **External Reviewer** is an independent professional appointed to ensure impartiality at Stage 3.

7. Stages of the Complaints Process

We encourage open, professional dialogue between inspectors and school leaders throughout an inspection. If concerns arise, the school's senior leader should raise them immediately with the lead inspector so they can be addressed on site.

If the concern cannot be resolved, the head of the school may contact Penta head office to discuss the matter. This ensures any urgent issues can be handled promptly while the inspection is still in progress.

Inspectors will note all concerns raised, the discussions held, and any agreed actions.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

If the issue was not resolved during the inspection visit, the complainant may raise an informal concern following the inspection.

Process:

- Concerns must be submitted within five working days of the end of the inspection.

- Initial concerns should be raised with **Penta head office**, who will discuss the issue with the lead inspector.
- Concerns will be acknowledged within five working days; the head office will respond with a response or resolution within 10 working days.
- If the matter is not resolved, the complainant may proceed, after receiving the draft inspection report, to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

If the concern cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint should be submitted within 5 working days of receiving the draft report. The complaint must be made in writing to **Penta head office** via **Sue@penta.co.uk**, including:

- name and contact details;
- a clear description of the complaint;
- relevant dates, persons involved, and supporting evidence;
- the desired outcome or resolution sought.

Process:

- Written acknowledgement will be provided within five working days.
- The complaint will be investigated by a **senior consultant** not previously involved in the inspection or informal complaint.
- A written response, outlining findings and any actions taken, will be issued within 20 working days of acknowledgement.

The outcome will state whether the complaint is upheld in whole or in part and describe any actions to be taken, which may include correction, apology, or review of procedures.

Stage 3 – Independent External Review

If the complainant believes the internal process has not been handled fairly or that the decision was unreasonable, they may request an **Independent External Review**. This will be conducted by a senior advisor appointed by Penta International.

Process:

- The request must be made in writing within five working days of the Stage 2 outcome.
- The external reviewer will examine the process and evidence. They will assess whether the process of handling your complaint was fair and proportionate; and whether the findings and decision were a reasonable in the circumstances.
- The external reviewer may request additional documentation or interviews where necessary.
- A final written decision will be issued within 30 working days of the reviewer's appointment.

This decision will represent the **final stage** of Penta International's complaints process.

Timescales

All efforts will be made to remain within the deadlines set out in this policy wherever possible, however, if this is not possible for any reason, we will contact you with an explanation and a revised deadline.

8. Record Keeping

A log of all formal complaints will be maintained by Penta head office, including details of investigations, outcomes, and actions taken. Regular summaries will be reviewed by senior management for quality assurance and service improvement.

9. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All complaints will be handled in line with data protection legislation. Information will be shared only with those who need it to investigate or respond to the complaint. Records are retained securely for six years from closure and then permanently deleted.

10. Learning and Continuous Improvement

Penta International views complaints as opportunities to learn and improve. Findings from complaints will be analysed periodically to identify trends and inform training, guidance or procedural updates.

11. Vexatious or Persistent Complaints

While every complaint will be considered seriously, Penta International reserves the right to cease correspondence in cases of unreasonable, repetitive, or abusive complaints. Decisions to apply this provision will be made by the senior director and recorded formally.

12. Equality and Accessibility

Penta International will ensure that no complainant is disadvantaged because of age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic. Alternative formats and/or reasonable adjustments will be provided upon request.

13. Monitoring and Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by senior management or sooner if legislation or operational needs change.

14. Contact Information

Email: Sue@penta.co.uk

Website: www.pentainternational.co.uk