

MBIS Complaints Policy

Purpose of the Complaints Policy

This policy aims to reassure parents and others with an interest in the school that:

- Any complaint against the school will be dealt with in a fair, open and responsive way, with the aim of achieving a speedy and satisfactory resolution; and
- The school recognises that a willingness to listen to questions and criticism and to respond positively, can lead to improvements in school practices and provision for Student's.

Scope of the Policy

- A complaint is defined as a clear statement of dissatisfaction about any specified aspect of the school's work.
- This procedure deals with all day-to-day complaints regarding the management and/or operation of the school. Serious complaints will be dealt with by specific employment procedures (eg. allegations of professional abuse, criminal offences or those that are potentially staff disciplinary issues).
- Complainants may be anyone eg. parents, guardians, grandparents, neighbours of the school or anyone with an interest in the work of the school. However, it is expected that it will be mainly parents or guardians who will make use of this procedure. The term 'parent' is therefore used throughout the procedure as a generic term but the procedure also applies in relation to any other type of complainant.
- Complaints may be made by telephone, letter, e-mail, or in person.

General

- Records of all conversations and meetings with parents to receive complaints will be kept. At a Directors' Complaints Panel meeting, minutes will be taken. To help prevent recurring complaints, copies of correspondence and notes will be kept on file in the school's records, separately from individual child records.
- If at any stage in the procedure it becomes apparent that the complaint falls outside of this general complaints procedure, parents will be informed.
- There may be rare occasions when, despite all the stages of the procedure having been followed, a parent remains dissatisfied. If the parent seeks to re-open the same issue, the school reserves the right to inform him/her in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is closed.

Procedure for dealing with complaints

Stage 1: Informal stage

1. On most occasions, it is hoped that a parent may raise a concern directly with school staff without any formality. At all times, the staff will listen carefully and patiently. The aim will be to resolve the concern in a speedy and effective way.
2. If a parent has a complaint (s)he should normally contact their child's Class Teacher or Tutor. Complaints made directly to the Principal will usually be referred to the relevant teacher unless (s)he deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
3. It is the school policy to respond to the verbal complaint within two working days, even if the issue cannot be entirely resolved in this time.
4. If the concern cannot be resolved, the opportunity to discuss the matter with an appropriate member of staff will be given (eg. Subject Leader, Phase Leader or Deputy Principal). The member of staff will discuss the issue with the parent and those involved in school, with the aim of resolving the complaint as soon as possible. The parent will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and what action, if any, the school proposes to take.
5. If a parent has a complaint about a member of staff (s)he should approach the Deputy Principal or the Principal.
6. In the case of complaint against the Principal, this stage will always be heard by the Principal him/herself.
7. The school will keep a register of all informal complaints. The register will include information on the complainant, the issue raised, the performance area the complaint applies to, date of acknowledgment of the complaint, steps taken to resolve the complaint, date of the response sent to parents and whether the complaint came to a satisfactory conclusion. (See Appendix 4).
8. If the informal process has been exhausted and no satisfactory solution has been found, the parent will be asked by the member of staff dealing with the complaint whether (s)he wishes the complaint to be considered formally at Stage 2 of this procedure.
9. If so, the parent will be invited to put the issue in writing to the Principal and directed to the school Complaints Policy – with specific reference to the form attached at Appendix 1. The form should be sent to the Principal within ten school days.

Stage 2: Referral to the Principal for further investigation

Where the complaint has been addressed by the Principal at Stage 1, the form should be sent to the Directors: the matter will advance onto Stage 3 and will be heard by the Directors' Complaints Panel (established according to the suggested composition detailed in Appendix 2 attached). Where another staff member has handled the complaint at Stage 1, then the Principal will address Stage 2.

1. The Principal will acknowledge the written complaint within five school days of receipt and provide an opportunity to meet the parent to discuss the complaint. The complaint will be officially registered and written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
2. The Principal will investigate the complaint and a written response will normally be made within ten school days of receipt of the complaint. If this is not possible, a letter will be sent explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised target date.

3. The written response will include full reasons for the conclusions reached by the Principal and what action, if any, the school proposes to take to resolve the matter. If the parent still remains dissatisfied, (s)he will be advised that, in order to progress the complaint further at Stage 3, (s)he must notify the Chair of the Board of Directors in writing (by hard copy - care of the School Office, or by e-mail board@mbisegypt.com) within ten school days.
4. The Chair of the Board will then ensure that the parent is offered the opportunity of taking the complaint to the Directors' Complaints Panel at Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3: Directors' Complaints Panel

Complaints only rarely reach this level. However, when the need arises, the Directors' Complaints Panel (established according to the suggested composition detailed in Appendix 2 attached) will consider complaints at this stage.

1. A written acknowledgement of the complaint and the request for it to be heard at Stage 3 of the Procedure will be sent to the parent by the Chair of the Board of Directors within five school days.
2. The letter will inform the parent that the complaint will be heard by the Directors' Complaints Panel (DCP) within ten school days. It will also inform the parent of the right to submit any further documents other than the complaint form and that these must be made available to the Directors within five school days of receipt of the acknowledgment letter. The right to call witnesses to the meeting, subject to the approval of the Chair of the DCP, and the right of the parent to be accompanied by a companion of her/his choice - in a neutral but supportive role - will also be explained in the letter.
3. The Directors will send a copy of the letter of acknowledgement of the complaint to the Principal and request a written report in response to the complaint to the DCP within five school days of receipt of the letter. The right to call witnesses, subject to the approval of the Chair, will also be explained.
4. The Directors will then convene a DCP meeting, having consulted with all parties on convenient times. The date, time and venue for the meeting will then be confirmed at least five school days in advance.
5. The names of all parties and witnesses (if any) to attend the meeting and all the relevant documents to be referred to at the meeting will also be provided by the Chair of the DCP to: the parent; Principal, and each panel member. This will be provided as soon as possible and, in any event, at least five school days prior to the meeting.
6. The meeting will be held following the procedures for hearing a complaint detailed in Appendix 3.
7. A written decision will be sent to both the parent and the Principal by the chair of the DCP within ten school days of the hearing.
8. The letter will explain that the decision of the Directors' Complaints Panel is final.

Confidentiality

Parents can be assured that all concerns, complaints and investigations will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Policy Agreed by Board of Directors – April 2015

This policy was reviewed August 2023 and biennially thereafter

APPENDIX 1
Formal school complaint (Stage 2 and/or Stage 3)

Student's Name _____ Class group _____

Parent/Guardian _____

Contact details _____

Details of complaint (*Please attach a continuation sheet/additional information if you wish*)

(Please be as specific as possible e.g. giving dates, who was involved and where etc)

What action have you already taken to resolve your complaint? (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem?

Signed _____ Date _____

Official Use: Date acknowledgement sent by Principal: _____

APPENDIX 2

Composition of the Directors' Complaints Panel

The Directors' Complaints Panel (DCP) will be appointed by the Chair of the Board and should consist of at least 3 members. Where practicable, this will be two members of the Board and one member who is independent of the management and running of the school. A Chair of the DCP will also be appointed.

No member of the DCP should have had prior involvement with the complaint.

APPENDIX 3

Directors' Complaints Panel (DCP) - Procedures for Hearing the Complaint

Introduction

The aim of the meeting is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the parent.

The Chair of the DCP will ensure that the meeting is properly minuted. Although the meeting will follow the structured order below, given potential sensitivities and anxieties, the Chair will endeavour to ensure that the proceedings are as informal as possible and that all parties are put at their ease.

The introduction of new information or witnesses, previously not notified to all parties, would be reason to adjourn the meeting so that everyone has time to consider and respond to the new information.

Order of Meeting

The Chair welcomes the parent and his/her companion and introduces the DCP.

The Chair explains the purpose of the meeting, the procedure, and that all written evidence has been made available to all parties.

The parent/companion explains the complaint, calling in witnesses if appropriate.

The DCP may question the parent/companion and witnesses.

The parent and companion retire from the meeting.

The Chair welcomes the Principal.

The Chair explains the purpose of the meeting, the procedure, and that all written evidence has been made available to all parties.

The Head of School presents a response to the complaint, including action taken to address the complaint at stage 1 and 2 of the procedure and calling witnesses, if appropriate.

The DCP may question the Principal.

The Principal retires from the meeting.

The Parent, together with his/her companion, is invited back into the room to make a final statement, and then retires.

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The DCP considers the complaint and reaches a majority decision. The DCP also decides what action (if any) to take to resolve the complaint and, if appropriate, recommends changes to ensure similar complaints are not made in future.

When a decision has been made, the Chair recalls the parent, then the Principal and each is informed of the outcome and any action to be taken.

All outcomes are confirmed in writing to both parties in accordance with the Complaints Procedure.

APPENDIX 4

Informal school complaint (Stage 1)

Student's Name _____ Class group _____

Parent/Guardian _____

Contact details _____

Date of Complaint: _____

Details of Complaint: (Please be as specific as possible)

Date of Acknowledgement of Complaint: _____

Details of Response/Steps Taken:

Date of Response to Parent: _____

Outcome Details:

Staff Member

Signed _____ Date _____

SLT Member

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed, hard copies to: Staff Member and Complaints File in Principal's Office