



# BIS Complaints Policy

Last reviewed: June 2020

# COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

## OUR AIM

The British International School and Montessori Education is committed to providing a quality service for its parents, pupils and staff and to working in an open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of all our stakeholders. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our parents, pupils, staff and other stakeholders, and in particular, by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- We treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response;
- We deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
- We respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc;
- We learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

We recognise that, many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly. Our aims are to:

- Resolve informal concerns quickly;
- Keep matters low-key;
- Enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

## FORMAL COMPLAINT POLICY

The school's responsibility is to:

- Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- Respond within a stated period of time;
- Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- Take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- Bring their complaint, in writing, to the school's attention normally within 1 week of the issue arising.
- Raise concerns promptly and directly with a senior member of staff in the school;
- Explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;

- Allow the school a reasonable time to deal with the matter;
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond the school's control.

#### Responsibility for Action:

#### Confidentiality:

Apart from in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and the school maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (each complaint must be judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

#### Monitoring and Reporting:

The Advisory Committee will receive annually an itemized report of complaints made and their resolution. This policy will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will also be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

### FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE STAGE

#### 1

In the first instance, if the issue remains unresolved informally, a letter should be written to the Head of School, in order to provide an opportunity to correct matters. It is important that the complainant writes down the complaint details, the resulting consequences endured, and the remedy that is sought. All complaints should be sent to the Head of the School. And at this stage, either the complainant or the School authorities may ask for the Executive of the Parents Teachers Association to be involved to mediate.

The complaint can be expected to be acknowledged in written form, electronically or by hard copy, within 3 working days of receipt. A response and an explanation will be available within 7 working days.

#### STAGE 2

If the initial response to the complaint is not satisfactory, the next step is to write to the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee and ask for the complaint and the response to be reviewed. Acknowledgement by the Chairperson of your request can be expected within 3 working days of receipt and a response within 7 working days.

The school's aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to be fully investigated. Consequently, timescales given for handling and responding to complaints will reflect this. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, an interim response will be given describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Advisory Committee will conduct an investigation and determine the best course of action. This may involve referring your complaint back to the Head of the School and the Director of Studies to resolve with a recommended course of action.

Should the Advisory Committee fail to achieve an acceptable outcome, the matter will then be referred to a Complaints Panel for consideration.

### STAGE 3

A Complaints Panel will be appointed by the Advisory Committee, on a case-by-case basis or as the Chairman considers appropriate, and will comprise of up to three independent persons unrelated to the governance or leadership of the school but may be drawn from the Parents Teachers Association.

Members of the Complaints Panel will not have been involved in dealing with your complaint at an earlier stage. If it deems it necessary, the Panel may require further particulars of the complaint or any related matter to be supplied in advance of a hearing. A hearing will be arranged as soon as practicable and normally within fifteen working days of the convening of the Panel. Parents may be accompanied to a hearing of the Panel by one other person. It would normally be inappropriate for this person to be acting in a professional capacity.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all the relevant facts the Panel will reach a decision and make recommendations within fifteen working days of the conclusion of the hearing. The Panel will write to complainant informing them of its decisions and the reasons for them. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the complainant, the leadership of the school, the Advisory Committee and, if relevant, the person complained about. Decisions made by the Complaints Panel will be final.

All correspondence, statements and records throughout all stages of the complaints procedure will be kept confidential except where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection, or where any other legal obligation prevails. Records of complaints are kept for three years.

### FINAL STAGE

Any further disputes shall be judged by the Court appropriate for the School jurisdiction.

#### **Training**

Staff will receive up to date and relevant training on complaints procedures and changes in policy where necessary training is required.

#### **Anonymity**

Anonymous complaints may not be pursued.

## **Information Requests**

The complaints procedure is for genuine complaints or concerns and should not be used simply to obtain information from the School.

Reviewed 24th June 2020