



# BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

## PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

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### SCOPE OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Management set the direction and tone of the school in all that they do and are committed to working with parents in the best interests of their children's education. The purpose of the Complaints Procedure is to address complaints raised by parents/guardians.

1.1 The procedure covers all matters relating to the actions of staff employed in the school and the application of school procedures, where they affect individual pupils. However, schools need to be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest possible stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.

1.2 Where it becomes evident at an early stage that a matter should be dealt with according to other established procedures or appeals mechanisms, this

Complaints Procedure will be set aside in favour of the agreed procedure such as

Child Protection, Special Education, Admissions, Suspensions and Expulsions, Grievance, Discipline, Bullying and Harassment or Unsatisfactory Teaching Procedure.

1.3 The school will not deal with anonymous complaints (except for those concerning child protection matters) and therefore these procedures do not provide for a resolution of anonymous complaints.

## **2. AIMS**

2.1 In operating this Complaints Procedure we aim to:

- Encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible.
- Allow swift handling of a complaint within established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of progress.
- Keep people informed of progress; ensure a full and fair investigation.??
- Have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary.
- Provide information to the school's Management Team and PTA Executives so that services can be improved.

2.2 The procedures are designed to be:

Easily accessible and publicised.

A copy of the procedures will be placed on the school's website or available on request from the school.

Simple to understand and use.

- Impartial
- Non-adversarial;

## **3. WHAT TO EXPECT UNDER THESE PROCEDURES**

3.1 Your rights as a person making a complaint

In dealing with your complaint we will ensure that you receive:

- Fair treatment.
- Courtesy.
- A timely response.
- Accurate advice.
- Respect for your privacy – complaints will be treated as confidentially as possible.
- Allowing for the possibility that we may have to consult with other appropriate parties about your complaint.
- Reasons for our decisions.

Where the complaint is justified we will acknowledge this and address the complaint you have raised. If, after investigation, it is judged there are no grounds for your complaint, you will be advised accordingly.

3.1 Your responsibilities as a person making a complaint

In making your complaint we would expect that you:

- Raise issues in a timely manner. ☒
- Treat our staff with respect and courtesy.
- Provide accurate and concise information in relation to the issues you raise.
- Use these procedures fully and engage in them at the appropriate levels.

### 3.2 Rights of parties involved during the investigation

The process is non-adversarial and does not provide a role for any other statutory or non-statutory body.

#### **COMPLAINANT**

The complainant may be accompanied by another person where it is accepted, by the Head of School and HRM, that this will assist the investigation and resolution of the complaint.

#### **STAFF**

Staff may seek the advice and support from their professional body, and may also be accompanied by another person where it is accepted by the Head of School and HRM to assist the investigation and resolution of the complaint.

A member of staff who is directly referred to in a complaint will be provided with a written copy of the complaint and details of any information brought by the parent/career before being required to respond to the matters raised.

#### **LEGAL REPRESENTATION**

Legal representation or representation by person(s) acting in a professional capacity is not permitted within this procedure

This procedure does not take away from the statutory rights of any of the participants.

### **MAKING A COMPLAINT**

#### 5.1 Informal Stage

##### **Step 1 - Speaking with the Teacher concerned**

In the first instance a complaint should normally be raised verbally with the teacher or person concerned (whether that be a classroom teacher, management member etc.), so that s/he may have an opportunity to address the issue(s). Please observe the school's existing protocols for arranging and conducting such meetings and follow the school's policy with respect to access to members of teaching staff.

This approach would not prevent you from choosing to enter the formal process at a later stage, if you believe that to be an appropriate course of action.

*If the complaint does not relate to a teacher in the school, it should be referred to the Head of School.*

**Step 2** - Contact the Head of School if your complaint is against a Member of Staff other than the Head of School and Management members

If your complaint remains unresolved following Step 1 you should arrange a meeting with the Head of School to discuss the issue(s). In advance of this meeting you should inform the Head of School in writing, of the nature of your complaint so that s/he may be in a position to resolve the problem without further delay.

In some circumstances the Head of School may not be able to deal effectively with your complaint immediately and s/he may require some time to investigate and prepare a response. If further time is required you will be informed of the timescale and the likely date by which a response will be issued.

## **5.2 FORMAL STAGE**

### **STEP 3 – WRITING TO THE COMPLAINT COMMITTEE IF YOUR COMPLAINT IS AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF OTHER THAN MANAGEMENT MEMBERS**

Sometimes it will not be possible for you to have your complaint resolved through the informal processes proposed at Steps 1 and 2, or indeed it might be more appropriate to initiate the procedures at Step 3. You should write to the Complaint Committee, and drop your letter in the complaint box which is under lock and key located at the primary and secondary front, and state the grounds for your complaint as concisely as possible addressing specifically the issue(s) that are of concern to you. You can also email at [complaint.committee@bisghana.com.gh](mailto:complaint.committee@bisghana.com.gh) or deliver in person your formal complaint in writing to the HR Manager. We encourage parents to put in writing formal complaints to allow the committee to understand from the complainants own words and to avoid confusion or any misinterpretation.

You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within 5 working days. This will confirm that your letter has been received, and either:

- Provide a response to the issue(s) you raised; or
- State that your complaint is being investigated and indicate when you can expect a response to be issued (normally a maximum of 7 working days from the date on which your letter was received). The investigation may require you to meet the Complaint Committee and due notification will be given of such meetings. The Complaints Committee will have a minimum of three (3) voting members.

## **5.3 WHERE THE COMPLAINANT IS A MANAGEMENT MEMBER**

Where the complainant is a Management Member, they will play no part in the management or appeal of the complaint as set out in this procedure. Where a complaint is against the vice principal, the complaint should be made to the Head of school/ School Principal. If the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can proceed to write to the complaint committee by dropping a formal letter in the complaint box at the front Office or email at [complaint.committee@bisghana.com.gh](mailto:complaint.committee@bisghana.com.gh)

Where the complaint is against the Head of Admin/ Head of Admissions, the complaint should be made to the HR Manager and if not satisfied with the outcome, you can proceed to write to the complaint committee.

Where the complaint is against the HR Manager or the Head of School, the complaint should be made to the CEO via email at [bisghana@gmail.com](mailto:bisghana@gmail.com)

All complaints under 5.3 is considered formal and should be in writing. The HR Manager shall investigate and forward all findings to the CEO to be addressed accordingly. We may not be able to resolve issues on the same day as there may be need for further findings and you may be called in to provide more information.

#### **5.5 STEP 5 - APPEALS PROCESS – APPEALS TO SENIOR MANAGEMENT**

Appeals can be made no later than 20 working days after the committee's response.

All appeals are to be in writing. One addressed to the committee and the other addressed to senior management.

The decision of the Senior Management is final. At the end of the process you will be informed in writing, that the Complaints Procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is considered closed.

#### **6. RECORD KEEPING**

The Head of School and the Human Resource Manager shall maintain a record of all correspondence, conversations and meetings concerning your complaint. These records shall be held confidentially in the school and shall be kept apart from pupil records. All such records will be destroyed three years after the date of the last correspondence on the issue.

#### **7. MALICIOUS OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS**

Where the Head of School consider the actions of a Parent/group of parents to constitute frivolous or vexatious behaviour, s/he will seek advice from the relevant employing authority in order to protect staff, from such actions.

**\*PLEASE NOTE\***

- ❖ We want all actions, be it verbal or non-verbal documented for future proof.

- ❖ Complainants are not required to put into writing informal complaints however, all meetings will be captured in the minutes and shall be documented by the school.
- ❖ Complainants are required to put formal complaints into writing to the school.

Informal complaints