

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

School's Mission

*“At EGIS, we **challenge, inspire and empower** each other to **succeed** in realising our fullest potential, by pursuing **opportunities** to become passionate life-long learners, prepared to contribute to this rapidly changing world.”*

School's Vision

“EGIS aims to provide a world-class education enriched by international approaches in an atmosphere that empowers everyone to be self-critical, recognising the need for growth and change whilst constantly striving for excellence.”

1. Introduction

The School's goal is to provide a high-quality learning environment. From time to time, however, issues may arise that parents may wish to raise with the School. The procedure set out below is intended to facilitate this process and ensure positive outcomes and the resolution of particular problems.

All teachers, administrators and Board of Governors are aware of this protocol and operate within it. Parents and prospective parents are provided with this procedure via the Parent Handbooks and the School's website.

The International British School and the National Language School sections keep separate records of complaints (and how they were resolved). The Principal keeps a central record for the two schools.

2. Aim

Our aim is to ensure that causes of concern and complaints are handled:

- clearly and consistently
- thoroughly and objectively
- in a timely manner.

3. Principles

- 3.1 The School seeks to ensure that any complaints are investigated in a thorough and professional manner.
- 3.2 The School takes complaints seriously and views them as potentially making an important contribution to the School's quality assurance measures.
- 3.3 The School respects confidentiality, and parents should NOT copy their complaint to other parents or parties without full consideration of any Data or Child Protection implications. To do so could be a breach of confidentiality as well as the Parental Code of Conduct.
- 3.4 The School's working definition of a complaint is *“a written expression of serious dissatisfaction or concern in relation to the School's activities that requires a response”*. Many concerns can be resolved informally, and the procedure for this is described in Stage 1 below. Only a formal complaint made in writing will be dealt with under the formal complaints procedure outlined below in Stage 2.

4. Stages of Resolution:

4.1 Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- 4.1.1 It is hoped that most complaints or concerns can be resolved quickly and informally. At all times staff will listen carefully and patiently to you. In doing so they will recognise that the issue is of concern to the parent or pupil.
- 4.1.2 If parents have a complaint they should, in the first instance, normally contact their daughter's/son's Form or Class Tutor. It is the School's policy to aim to respond to the verbal complaint within two working days although it is possible that investigating and resolving the issue may not be possible within this timeframe.
- 4.1.3 In many cases the matter will be resolved straightaway to the parents' satisfaction. If the teacher cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult the relevant Key Stage Coordinator/Head/Deputy Head or School Principal.
- 4.1.4 If parents have a complaint about a member of staff they should, in the first instance, approach the Key Stage Coordinator/Head of Section if it relates to an academic matter or the relevant Head of Year/Key Stage Coordinator if it relates to a pastoral matter. If the concern/complaint is about one of the latter, then contact should be made with the School Principal. Concerns of a Safeguarding nature should be referred directly to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead¹.
- 4.1.5 Complaints made directly to a School Principal will usually be referred to the relevant teacher unless s/he deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- 4.1.6 The Tutor/Class teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. This will be passed to the respective Line manager (Appendix 1). Should the matter not be resolved within seven working days, or in the event that the teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in writing in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

4.2 Stage 2 - Formal Complaint Resolution

- 4.2.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the KS Coordinators/Head of Secondary using the Formal School Complaint form (Appendix 2). The KS Coordinators/Head of Secondary will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. At this stage, the complaint will be officially registered, in addition to further written records being made.
- 4.2.2 In most cases the KS Coordinators/Head of Secondary will meet the parents concerned, normally within seven working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage. It may be necessary, however, for the KS Coordinators/Head of Secondary to carry out further investigations.
- 4.2.3 The KS Coordinators/Head of Secondary will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

¹ Ms. Rachel Abundo – DSL and Deputy Principal

- 4.2.4 Once the KS Coordinators/Head of Secondary is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision and the reasons for his/her decision.
- 4.2.5 In the unlikely event that parents are not satisfied with the decision, it can be referred to the School Principal - Stage 3.

4.3 Stage 3 - Referral to the Principal

- 4.3.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved under Stages 1 and 2, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Principal (using the Formal School Complaint form (Appendix 2)). The School Principal will decide, after consulting with the relevant KS Coordinators/Head of Secondary/Deputy Principal, the appropriate course of action to take.
- 4.3.2 In most cases the School Principal will meet the parents concerned, normally within seven working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- 4.3.3 The School Principal will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- 4.3.4 Once the School Principal is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The School Principal will also give reasons for his decision.
- 4.3.5 In the unlikely event that parents are not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 4 where they are entitled to an independent hearing.

4.3 Stage 4 - Panel Hearing (Governors' Complaints Panel)

- 4.3.1 Parents should only invoke a panel hearing following a failure to reach an earlier resolution. At this stage they will be referred to the Secretary to the Board of Governors who has been appointed in this respect to call hearings of the Governors' Complaints Panel (GCP).
- 4.3.2 The matter will then be referred to the Governors' Complaints Panel for consideration. The GCP will consist of at least three persons who have had no prior involvement in the case and have no connection with the complainant. Each of the GCP members shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Board. Where practicable this will be two current members of the Board and one member who shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Chairman of the Board of Governors, on behalf of the GCP, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 working days.
- 4.3.3 If the GCP deems it necessary it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than three days prior to the hearing by the Secretary to the Board Governors.
- 4.3.4 If possible the GCP will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. At the hearing you may wish to be accompanied by a friend, in a neutral but supportive role.
- 4.3.5 The meeting of the GCP will be held following the procedures detailed in Appendix 3.

Where further investigation is required the GCP will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts its consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make

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recommendations, which it shall normally complete within seven working days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it.

The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Principal, the Board of Governors and (if relevant) the person complained of.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential. The School's external inspectors may need to sample evidence of complaints and how they were dealt with and, again, this will occur in strict confidence.

The Chairman of the Board of Governors can be contacted in writing (c/o the School) or by email: Board@elgounaschool.net. All matters will be treated in strict confidence.

5. Confidentiality

Parents can be assured that all concerns will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential. However, it is possible that external inspectors or accreditors may need to sample evidence of concerns and the school's procedures for dealing with them. In such circumstances they will be given access to any evidence gathered.

February 2022

SLT Reviewed - February 2022

Board Approved – February 2022

Date of next review - February 2023



APPENDIX 1

Informal School Complaint (Stage 1)

To be completed by the member of staff receiving the complaint

Child's Name _____ Form/Year 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 (KS Coordinator/Head of Section/Deputy Principal)

Signed _____ Date _____

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



APPENDIX 2

Formal School Complaint (Stage 2 and/or Stage 3 and/or Stage 4)

Child's Name _____ Form/Year Group _____

Parent/Guardian _____

Contact details _____

Date of Complaint _____

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 School Principal



APPENDIX 3

Governors' Complaints Panel (GCP) – 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 GCP 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

1. The Chair welcomes the Parent and his/her companion and introduces the GCP.
2. The Chair explains the purpose of the meeting, the procedure, and that all written evidence has been made available to all parties.
3. The Parent/companion explains the complaint, calling in witnesses if appropriate.
4. The GCP may question the Parent/companion and witnesses.
5. The Parent and companion retire from the meeting.
6. The Chair welcomes the School Principal.
7. The Chair explains the purpose of the meeting, the procedure, and that all written evidence has been made available to all parties.
8. The School Principal presents a response to the complaint, including action taken to address the complaint at Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the procedure, and calling witnesses if appropriate.
9. The GCP may question the School Principal.
10. The School Principal retires from the meeting.
11. The Parent, together with his/her companion, is invited back into the room to make a final statement and then retires.
12. The School Principal is invited back into the room to make a final statement and then retires.
13. The GCP considers the complaint and reaches a majority decision. The GCP 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.
14. When a decision has been made the Chair recalls the Parent, then the School Principal, and each is informed of the outcome and any action to be taken.
15. All outcomes are confirmed in writing to both parties in accordance with the Complaints Procedure.