



Appeals, Concerns and Complaints Policy

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Rationale

At Emirates International School Meadows (EISM), we believe that concerns raised by parents/guardians or third parties about the school's activities or actions should be resolved swiftly and fairly. Parents/guardians who raise a concern or complaint can expect it to be handled in accordance with this procedure.

This procedure distinguishes between concerns that can be resolved informally and formal complaints that require further investigation. It may be adapted, where appropriate, to the circumstances of individual cases.

Where the Director or Assistant Director of Schools receives a complaint, it will usually be referred to the Principal. If the complaint concerns the Principal's response to a previous complaint, it will be referred to the Director or Assistant Director of Schools.

Separate procedures apply to child protection concerns and student exclusions.

If parents/guardians have concerns about their child's immediate safety, they should notify the person best placed to take urgent action and confirm the concern in writing to the Principal.

A complaint is any issue of concern or difficulty formally raised by a parent/guardian.

An appeal is a request for review after a complaint has been considered and the complainant remains dissatisfied with the school's decision.

Underpinning Complaints Philosophy

EISM is committed to ensuring parents/guardians have a voice and welcomes their feedback. The school aims to resolve concerns and complaints promptly and effectively, preventing unnecessary escalation or recurrence. Wherever possible, concerns should be resolved informally; where this is not possible, the formal complaints procedure will apply.

Formal complaints are rare, reflecting the positive relationships between students, parents and the school that enable most matters to be resolved informally.

During INSET and throughout the academic year, teachers and leaders are reminded of the professional expectation to be proactive, preventative and accommodating when resolving parent concerns.

The formal procedure reflects the requirements of local regulatory authorities. All stages of the complaints procedure will be investigatory rather than adversarial.

Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out the expectations and procedures for managing parent/guardian concerns and complaints proactively, fairly and efficiently.

It also establishes procedures for recording and monitoring complaints, supporting timely resolution and helping the school identify and prevent recurring issues.

Any complaint requiring action beyond initial listening must be escalated and recorded, including the actions taken, resolution and relevant dates. Email records may form part of this documentation. More serious cases may require a formal timeline. Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated unless exceptional circumstances apply, such as child protection or bullying concerns that may involve external agencies.

Responsibilities

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that this policy and its procedures are implemented and that complaints are appropriately investigated.

All staff are responsible for following this policy and reporting complaints to their line manager or the Senior Leadership Team, as appropriate.

Procedures

Stage 1: Informal Procedure

Most concerns should be resolved quickly and informally. Parents/guardians should initially speak to their child's class/subject teacher, Form Tutor and/or Head of Year. A concern raised verbally may not necessarily receive a written acknowledgement.

- Written concerns will be acknowledged within 24 hours during term time and as soon as practicable during weekends or school holidays. Wherever possible, the matter will be resolved promptly.
- In most cases, this process should lead to an agreement or shared understanding between the parties.
- During Stage 1, a concern/complaint may be referred to relevant staff before a suitable resolution is reached, for example:
 - Class/subject teacher or Form Tutor
 - Head of Year
 - Head of Pastoral
 - Deputy Head of School (PS/HS)
- The member of staff who resolves the concern/complaint will keep a record of the issue, responses and relevant dates. If the matter is escalated, they will provide a timeline outlining how it was handled and by whom.
- Where a complaint concerns a specific member of staff and is considered serious, parents/guardians may raise it directly with the relevant Head of School or the Principal. The matter may then proceed directly to Stage 2.
- Where the first contact is made directly with the Principal or Director/Assistant Director of Schools, the matter will initially be treated as an informal concern and normally referred to the relevant Head of School.
- If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, parents/guardians should proceed to Stage 2 (see Appendix 1).

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, parents/guardians should submit it in writing to the Head of Primary, Head of High School or Principal.

- The relevant Head of School will inform the Principal of any formal complaint within 24 hours of receipt.
- The relevant Head of School will meet with the parents/guardians within two working days of receiving the written complaint, subject to their availability. Wherever possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. If the complaint concerns a specific member of staff, the Head of School will determine whether that member of staff should attend the meeting.
- The Head of School may appoint an Investigating Officer. A response will normally be provided within two working days, confirming whether there is a case to answer and communicating the outcome to the relevant parties.
- The school will keep records of all meetings and interviews relating to the complaint.
- If parents/guardians remain dissatisfied, they should proceed to Stage 3, which will be considered by the Principal.

Stage 3: Principal's Review

At Stage 3, the complaint will be referred to the Principal for review.

- The Principal will acknowledge receipt within 24 hours and respond within a further two working days.
- The Principal's review will include:
 - A review to ensure that the correct processes have been followed.
 - A review of the written records of meetings and interviews and of any other evidence.
 - A review of the decision made by the relevant Head of School.
- The Principal will meet with the parents/guardians to communicate the decision.

Stage 4: Final Appeal to the Complaint and Appeal Panel

If parents/guardians or third parties remain dissatisfied with the Principal's decision, they should write to the

Director of Schools within seven days of being notified. The matter may then be referred to the Complaint and Appeal Panel.

The appeal must include copies of all relevant documents, full contact details, the outcome sought and the grounds for appeal. The Panel will only be convened once Stages 1–3 have been completed.

The Director of Schools' PA will acknowledge the appeal and arrange a hearing as soon as reasonably practicable. The Panel will not normally sit during half-term breaks or school holidays.

The Panel will comprise at least three people who have no detailed prior knowledge of, or direct involvement in, the complaint. Panel members will be appointed by Governance. One member will chair the hearing, which will be conducted informally. The Director of Schools' PA will take minutes.

Parents/guardians or the third party will receive written notice of the hearing date, time and location, together with brief details of the Panel members. They may attend with one other person, such as a relative or friend. Legal representation is not normally considered appropriate.

If a parent/guardian wishes to be accompanied by a legally qualified person acting in a professional capacity, the school must receive at least seven days' notice.

After considering the matters presented, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations. The outcome will normally be completed within 14 working days of the appeal hearing. The Director of Schools' PA will communicate the decision and reasons in writing. The Panel's findings and any recommendations will be shared with the parents/guardians or third party, the Principal, Governance and, where relevant, the person complained about.

All concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential.

The Complaint and Appeal Panel may include:

- Director of Schools.
- Assistant Director of Schools parent, who does not know the complainant or student.
- Group Business Manager.
- A School Leadership representative (normally the Principal, however the Principal will not take part in making the final decision).

If a satisfactory resolution has not been reached after completion of the school's complaints procedure, parents/guardians may refer the matter to KHDA through the relevant complaints and resolution process.

Complaints about members of the Senior Leadership Team and the Principal

Where a complaint concerns a member of the Senior Leadership Team, every effort will be made to resolve it informally. If this is not appropriate, the complaint should be sent directly to the Principal.

Where a complaint concerns the Principal, every effort will be made to resolve it informally. If this is not appropriate, the complaint should be sent directly to the Director or Assistant Director of Schools.

Register of Complaints

A confidential record of all written complaints, including whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to investigation, will be maintained by the relevant Head of School.

A central register of Stage 3 complaints and those escalated to the Director or Assistant Director of Schools will be maintained by the Director of Schools' PA.

Confidentiality

All concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential.

Unreasonable Complaints and Serial or Persistent Complainants

EISM is committed to handling complaints fairly and impartially and to providing a high-quality service. The school will not normally limit a complainant's contact with EISM.

However, staff are not expected to tolerate unacceptable behaviour, including conduct that is abusive, offensive or threatening. The school will take appropriate action to protect staff.

EISM considers a complainant to be serial or unreasonable where the frequency or nature of their contact with the school hinders the consideration of their own or other people's complaints.

A complaint may be considered unreasonable where the complainant:

- Refuses to clearly explain the complaint, its grounds or the outcome sought despite offers of assistance.
- Refuses to cooperate with the investigation process while continuing to seek resolution.
- Refuses to accept that certain issues fall outside the scope of the complaints procedure.
- Insists that the complaint is handled in a way that is incompatible with this procedure or accepted good practice.
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information, raises excessive numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, or demands immediate responses to self-imposed timescales.
- Makes unjustified complaints about staff dealing with the matter and seeks to have them replaced.
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
- Repeatedly raises the same complaint after previous investigations or responses have concluded that it is unfounded or has been addressed.
- Refuses to accept the findings of an investigation where the school's complaints procedure has been fully and properly followed.
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome.
- Makes excessive demands on school time through frequent, lengthy or stressful contact with staff while the complaint is being considered.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable where the complainant acts, whether in person, by telephone, in writing or electronically:

- Maliciously.
- Aggressively.
- Using threats, intimidation or violence.
- Using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language.
- Knowing it to be false.
- Using falsified information.
- Publishes unacceptable information through social media, newspapers or other media.

A complainant will not be classified as serial simply for exercising their right to refer a complaint to the Director of Schools and/or KHDA, regardless of the stage reached.

Complainants should avoid excessive or repeated communication while a complaint is being considered, as this may delay resolution.

Wherever possible, the Principal, Director or Assistant Director of Schools will discuss concerns with the complainant informally before determining that behaviour is unreasonable.

If the behaviour continues, the Principal will write to the complainant explaining why it is considered unreasonable and requesting that it changes. Where excessive contact causes significant disruption, EISM may specify communication methods and limit the frequency of contact through a communication plan, normally reviewed after six months.

Serious incidents of aggression or violence will be documented immediately and may be reported to KHDA and/or the police. This may include restricting an individual's access to EISM.

Complaint Campaigns

If EISM receives a large volume of complaints on the same issue from people unconnected with the school, it may issue a standard response to complainants or publish a single response on the school website.

Access to the School Premises

Although schools fulfil a public function, school premises are private and members of the public, including parents, do not have an automatic right of entry.

Governance has a responsibility to protect the wellbeing of students and staff and to ensure the school remains a safe environment.

If a parent's/guardian's behaviour causes concern, EISM may ask them to leave the premises. In serious cases, the Principal or Director/Assistant Director of Schools may notify them in writing that their permission to access the premises has been temporarily withdrawn, subject to any representations they wish to make. The parent/guardian will be given an opportunity to express their views in writing.

The decision will then be reviewed in light of any representations received and either confirmed or withdrawn. If confirmed, the parent/guardian will be notified in writing of the duration of the restriction. Any complaint about restricted access may be submitted by letter or email to the Principal.

Links to other policies

Admissions

Scholarship

Assessment

Behaviour

Learning and Teaching

Inclusion

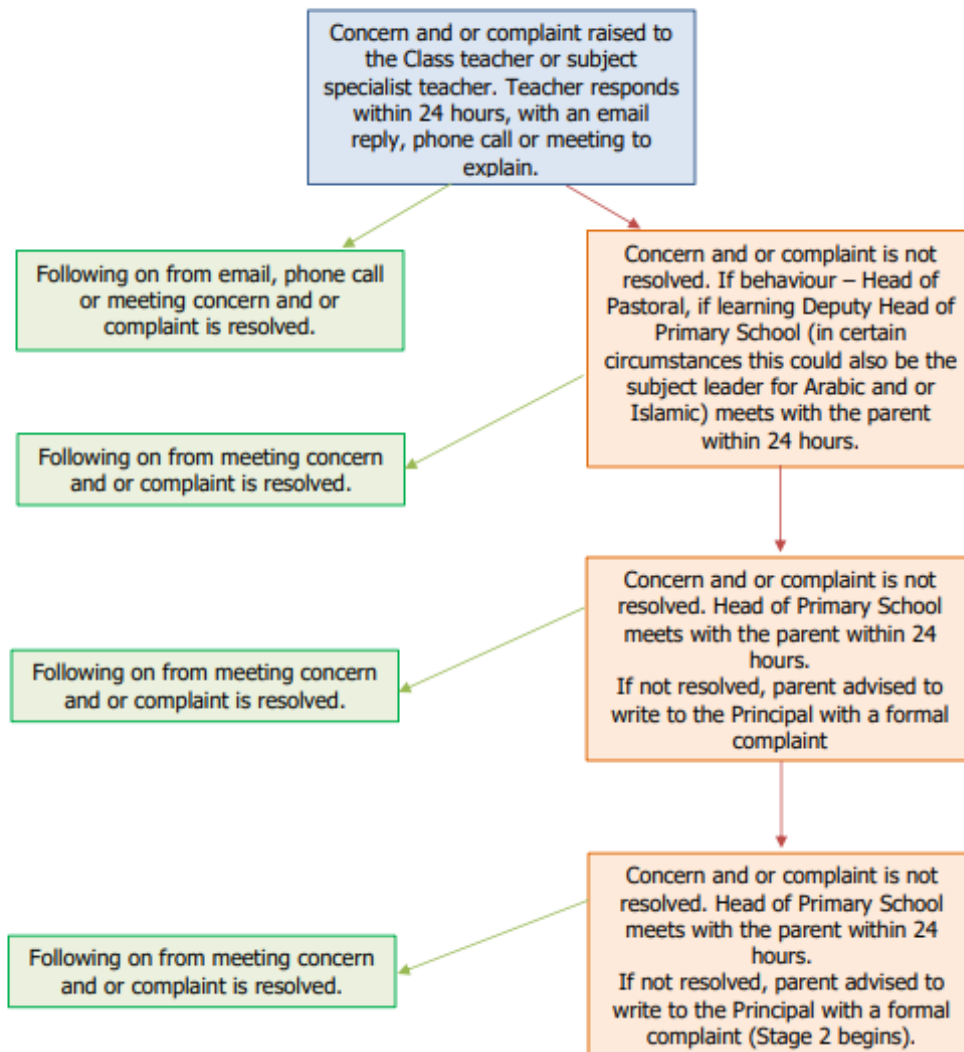
Child Protection and Safeguarding

Appendix 1



مدرسة الإمارات الدولية - ميدوز
Emirates International School - Meadows

Procedure for dealing with Stage 1 – Primary School Informal Complaints





مدرسة الإمارات الدولية - ميدوز Emirates International School - Meadows

Procedure for dealing with Stage 1 – High School Informal Complaints

