

# Meridian International School s.r.o.



## – Concerns & Complaints Policy –

### PRIMARY SCHOOL (GRADE 1 to GRADE 5)

**Review Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> September (2017)

**Next Review Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> August (2018)

**Approved by:** Mr. Ahmet Gursoy (School Director)

**Signature:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Gursoy', is written above a solid horizontal line.

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## Important Child & General Safety Contact Information

Name	Contact Number
Police Department	158
Fire Department	150
Ambulance	155
International Aid Communication in Foreign Languages	112
Prague City Police	156
Department of Social and Legal Protection of Children	+ 420 222 805 244
Educational Psychologist (Prague 8)	+ 420 286 882 368
Canadian Medical Centre Child Psychiatrist	+420 235 360 133

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## **Meridian International School**

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## 1. Introduction: Dealing with Complaints

At Meridian International School, we feel that a well structured and clear complaints procedure will help us to successfully run and cope with the demands of modern learning. With a clear commitment to improving our educational standards, we welcome suggestions of improvement from parents, guardians, as well as from members of staff, students and other outside parties.

Be assured that, no matter what you want to tell us, our support and respect for your child will not be affected in any way. Please tell us of your concern as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to investigate an incident or problem properly if it took place some time ago. We do appreciate the assistance we receive from parents in addressing any problems that arise.

Problems sometimes arise from misunderstandings which are easily addressed. Most concerns and complaints can be sorted out quickly by speaking with your child's class teacher. When parents and teachers treat each other with mutual respect and support, this provides a very good role model for all our children.

If, having spoken to the class teacher, you still have concerns, you should see the Head of School. He will investigate the problem and discuss his findings with you so that we can find a way forward together which serves the best interest of both the school and your child. In the unlikely event of the problem remaining unresolved you can put your complaint in writing and, if necessary, could subsequently refer it to the School Director.

The procedure to be followed in the event of a complaint being made is summarised in the following steps:

- 1) Informal Action
- 2) Referral to the Head of Secondary & High School
- 3) Review by the School Director
- 4) External Authorities

**PLEASE NOTE: the school E-School system, Edupage, should be the primary source of communication between parent and school.**

## 2. Aim of Policy

At Meridian International School, Prague, it is our firm belief that:

- i) everyone within our school – parents, students, staff – are entitled to report and resolve issues in connection to educational matters;
- ii) all concerns and complaints should be recognised, acknowledged and dealt with via an organised procedure;
- iii) any communication from a parent must be addressed in an understanding and non-discriminatory manner;

- iv) if anyone – parents, students, staff – is unhappy with the result of any complaint’s procedure, they have the right to request a review.

The following policy offers parents, as well as anyone associated with Meridian International School, an easy to follow and accessible guide in how to swiftly solve any concern or complaint. Our aim is to not disturb the process of learning within the school and to resolve matters in a professional manner.

The guide informs on the following:

- i) the roles and expectations of the school and staff;
- ii) the procedures that are to be followed (informal and formal);
- iii) how to request a review of a particular complaint procedure.

### **3. Roles & Expectations**

#### **3.1 School**

As a commitment to this policy, Meridian International School will endeavour to ensure that parents, students and staff are always informed about information related to the school and the complaints/concerns procedure. Information will be provided in a clear way and any change of information will be clearly communicated via E-School. Over the course of the academic year, measures will be taken to improve the concerns & complaints procedure, particularly at the ‘formal level’.

#### **3.2 Staff**

Meridian goes to great lengths to ensure that all members of staff are properly aware of its complaints & concerns procedure. Any member of staff which is presented with a complaint is encouraged to deal with any raised issues in a quick and impartial manner. At all times, members of staff should handle complaints within the remit of the school’s ethos and professionally, to ensure that the students’ well-being is preserved.

Meridian staff will:

- i) reply to parents in a prompt fashion via the E-School system;
- ii) be polite and show respect to the complainant;
- iii) if requested, arrange a mutually-convenient appointment with the parent within an acceptable time period since the complaint was made;
- iv) be educated in the remit of this policy and follow the guidelines as closely as possible with all complaints;
- v) attempt to resolve the complaint without interfering with the school-routine of any pupil and to ensure the child is protected as necessary;

- vi) follow the discussed schedule (made with the parent) of resolving the complaint and keep to any time-frame that has been decided upon;
- vii) inform the parent as soon as the complaint has been resolved or in regard to any general progress;
- viii) ensure that all communication is saved on the E-School system and can be referred to as and when necessary;
- ix) inform a member of the school leadership team if any situation escalates, as outlined by this policy.

If a class teacher or member of staff cannot resolve the issue independently, the Head of School should be informed as soon as possible. However, the staff member to whom the complaint was made should always be involved in any subsequent developments and discussions. This is to ensure that accuracy, in regard to the complaint, is maintained at all times.

Privacy: at Meridian International School, any concern or complaint will be kept in the strictest confidence. There will be no public discussion and only those staff members involved in the complaint will be involved. In regard to solving the complaint, care will be taken to ensure that staff are always honest and will not speak any mistruths.

Any complaint made against a staff member will be handled professionally, sensitively and thoroughly. Any resolution will be fair, clear and considered neutrally. At all times, staff members have the right to meet with a discuss the matter with the Head of School or School Director and have a right to appeal to any outcome.

### **3.3 Head of School**

If the Head of School is notified of a concern or complaint within Meridian International School, whether it be by a student, parent or member of staff, he/she should endeavour to investigate and resolve the issue in a professional and dignified manner. At all times, the concerns and protection of the students under his/her concern should be at the forefront of all developments.

The Head of Secondary & High School should:

- i) reply to parents in a prompt fashion (initially) via the E-School system, yet via email or telephone if necessary;
- ii) be polite and show respect to the complainant;
- iii) if requested, arrange a mutually-convenient appointment with the parent within an acceptable time period since the initial investigation started;
- iv) be educated in the remit of this policy and follow the guidelines as closely as possible with all complaints;
- v) attempt to resolve the complaint without interfering with the school-routine of any pupil and to ensure the child is protected as necessary;
- vi) follow the discussed schedule (made with the parent) of resolving the complaint and keep to any time-frame that has been decided upon;

- vii) inform the parent as soon as the complaint has been resolved or in regard to any general progress;
- viii) ensure that all communication is saved on the E-School system and can be referred to as and when necessary;
- ix) inform fellow members of the school leadership team if any situation escalates, as outlined by this policy.

If the Head of School cannot effectively resolve the concern or complaint, then the matter should be passed on to the School Director. Staff members and the Head of School are expected to co-operate with the School Director upon request, to ensure that any subsequent 'formal' process is handled accurately, fairly and professionally.

### **3.4 School Director**

The School Director has a responsibility to ensure that any parental concern/complaint is handled professionally and in accordance to the stipulations of this policy. Parents are able to contact the School Director via E-School and are encouraged to take this step, however – if a more formal request is made – they should do so in writing. Likewise, if a staff member or Head of School makes a complaint or informs the School Director of a concern, it will be handled impartially and professional discretion/judgement will be utilised.

As always, it is ultimately the concern of the School Director to ensure that needs of all students under the school's care are safeguarded.

The School Director should:

- i) reply to parents in a prompt fashion (initially) via the E-School system, yet via email or telephone if necessary;
- ii) be polite and show respect to the complainant;
- iii) be impartial in regard to any raised issue;
- iv) ensure that all of the events, contexts and actions of the individual(s) are treated fairly;
- v) be professional in how the guidelines stated in this policy are followed;
- vi) be fair in all judgements made;
- vii) maintain an E-School record and, if necessary, all written evidence when necessary.

### **3.5 Parents & Students**

Establishing and maintaining a happy school atmosphere is the primary concern of all staff and members of the leadership team at Meridian International School. Students and parents should not feel uncomfortable to raise any concern that they feel is important. If there is anything wrong with the positive function of the school, it is the responsibility of parents/students to



ensure that concerns are made to the appropriate teacher, whether it be class or subject, or – when appropriate – to the Head of School or School Director. Complaints made to all members of Meridian staff should initially be made via E-School, or – when necessary – in formal writing.

When a Parent or Student wishes to raise a concern or make a complaint, they are encouraged to do so in a way that:

- i) is always courteous and respectful;
- ii) understands the need to ensure the welfare of everyone in the school;
- iii) acknowledges the professionalism and integrity of the school staff and leadership team;
- iv) recognises that, during the school day, our teachers are busy and dedicated to their lessons – any response will be delivered as soon as is professionally possible;
- v) understands that any appointment made will be treated with quickly yet based on mutual convenience;
- vi) is not violent, abusive, aggressive or threatening;
- vii) does not encourage the involvement of others unrelated to the incident, concern or complaint – particularly students and children under the school’s care;
- viii) know Meridian International School will do its utmost to satisfy their concerns;
- ix) acknowledges the guidelines stated in this policy.

## **4. Procedures**

### **4.1 Step 1: Informal Procedures**

- i) Parents first contact the class teacher via the E-School system;
- ii) After an initial investigation by the class-teacher, the parents will be responded to in a prompt and efficient manner. If necessary, depending on the severity of the complaint, the Head of School may be notified of the complaint;
- iii) The class teacher will make sure that parents are always notified of any developments or actions related to the complaint;
- iv) If a timescale is agreed, at the informal stage of the procedure both the teacher and parent must do their utmost to adhere to what was agreed;
- v) If no solution to the complaint has been reached, parents should be notified and – if requested – teachers should follow the necessary procedure to take the complaint further;
- vi) Any E-School communication should be kept as a regard to the complaint. If necessary, the Head of School will be shown the messages as a matter of shared record.

## **4.2 Step 2: Head of School**

- i) If the complaint has not been resolved in ‘Step 1’, the complaint may be passed on to the Head of School. This can be done via E-School, in formal writing, or in person via a discussion with the concerned party (whether it be parent or member of staff);
- ii) The Head of School will respond to any complaint as soon as possible, with a commitment to do so within forty-eight hours;
- iii) The Head of School will take the next steps, reviewing all evidence in addition to speaking with all actors involved within the context of the complaint, including members of staff and – when appropriate – a student. If a student is spoken to, the parent will be involved and will be also invited into school if necessary.
- iv) Once the above steps have been taken, with results centred around the complaint investigation established, the Head of School is to give the parent a response. This can be via E-School, in person, through a telephone conversation, or in writing if requested.
- v) If necessary, the Head of School should make a record of the complaint and ensure that all relevant steps have been taken.
- vi) Following all of the above, if the parent, staff member or student whom lodged the complaint are still not satisfied, the offended party will be instructed to contact the School Director.
- vii) The Head of School will ensure that the School Director is informed of all the previous steps taken to address the complaint, including recording and identifying all relevant messages (particularly E-School messages).
- viii) If the complaint is made against the Head of School, the above steps are to be undertaken by the Deputy Head or by another trusted and respected individual within the school.

## **4.3 Step 3: School Director Review**

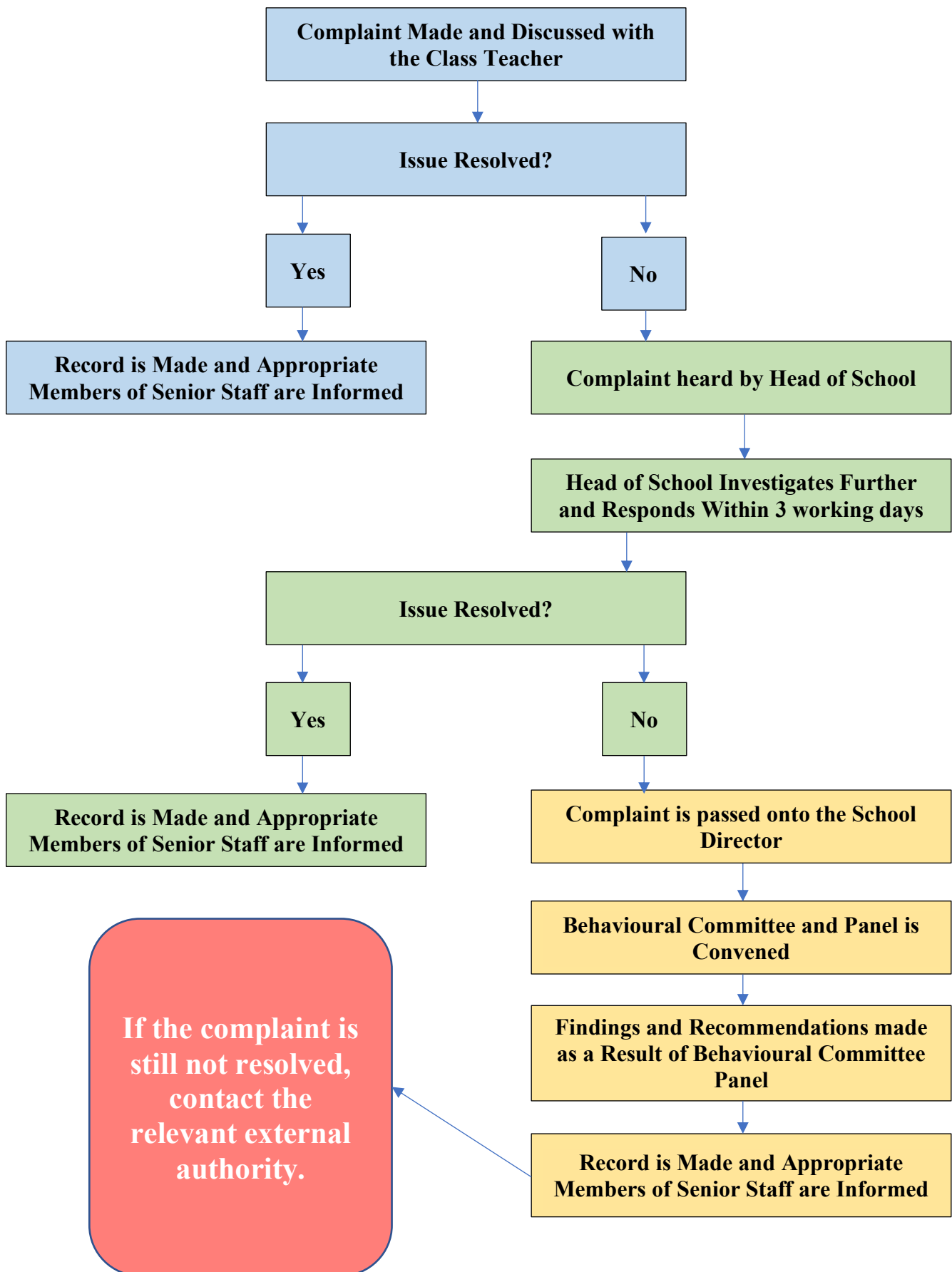
- i) Once the complaint has been passed on, the School Director will immediately contact the person that informed him of the issue (whether it be a parent, a staff member or a student).
- ii) As the complaint has now reached a formal stage, the offended party will be notified that the complaint will be discussed and heard by a Behaviour Panel.
- iii) The Behaviour Panel will not involve anyone involved with the complaint and should contain at least one member of staff completely independent from all of the preceding investigations. The Behavioural Panel will discuss the issue formally, in an organised meeting, being led by the School Director. It is the responsibility of the behavioural committee to ensure that all previous messages, discussions, as well as evidence, is known and treated fairly.
- iv) The parents or the individual whom made the complaint will be informed that a behavioural panel has been convened and additional information will be given about the date, time and who will be present during the discussion.

- v) The behavioural panel can be attended by the parent or individual whom made the initial complaint. If required, they can be accompanied by an individual of their choice, to ensure that they are comfortable during the proceedings.
- vi) Following the behavioural panel discussion, the School Director will prepare a written response based on all of the suggestions, counsels and conclusions. This will be delivered to the complainant, as well as all of the other individuals that featured in the aforementioned processes.
- vii) The School Director commits to sending this letter as soon as possible, certainly within one working-week (five days).
- viii) During the whole process, anything that has been previously discussed, documented – in regard to the complaint – will be kept confidential and anonymous.

#### **4.4 Step 4: External Authorities**

If the parent, student, or member of staff is still not satisfied, the complaint will be encouraged to take the matter to an external authority. This may be the local police or the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. At this stage, the complainant is notified that Meridian International School will cooperate in any way possible and will always be transparent when delivering evidence and in any further discussions.

**APPENDIX 1: CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS PROCESS FLOWCHART**



**APPENDIX 2: FORMAL COMPLAINT RECORD FORM**



<b>Name of Complainant:</b>		<b>Date Complaint Made:</b>
<b>Name of Student:</b>		<b>Class:</b>
<b>Nature of Complaint:</b>		
<b>Informal Procedure Followed (Stage 1/Stage 2):</b>		
<b>Evidence Supplied:</b>		
<b>Outcome &amp; Explanation:</b>		
<b>Decision Made By:</b>		<b>Date:</b>
<b>Date of Stage 3 Procedure:</b>	<b>Date of Behavioural Committee:</b>	<b>Behavioural Committee Members:</b>
<b>Outcome of Appeal &amp; Explanation:</b>		