



MERIDIAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

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Approved by: Meridian International School Administration

Meridian International School

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Concerns & Complaints Policy

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Concerns & Complaints Policy

1. Rationale

At **Meridian International School [MIS]**, 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. They will investigate the problem and discuss their 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 (99% of issues are solved amicably & in this manner)**
- 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.

1.1 Purpose of the Policy

At **[MIS]** it is our firm belief that all complaints, concerns and issues, can be solved simply through positive & friendly dialogue. For our parent(s)/guardian(s), students & staff, we warmly affirm the following through these core communication beliefs:

- ✚ Everyone with our school family are entitled to report and resolve issues in connection to educational matters
- ✚ All concerns and complaints should be recognised, acknowledged and dealt with via an organised procedure (outlined in this policy)
- ✚ Any and all communication from a parent, guardian, or student, must and will be addressed in an understand and non-discriminatory manner
- ✚ If anyone - parents / guardians / students / staff - are unhappy with the the manner in which a concern has been handled, or disappointed with the outcome of their complaint, they have the right to request a review

The following policy offers parents, as well as everyone associated with [MIS], an easy to follow and accessible guide in how to swiftly solve any concern or complaint they may have. Our aim is to not disturb the process of learning within the school and to resolved matters in a plite and professional manner.

This policy informs on the following:

- ✚ The roles and expectations of [MIS] and its staff
- ✚ The procedures that are to be followed (informal and formal)
- ✚ How to request a review of a particular complaint issue










1.2 Roles & Expectations

As a commitment to this policy, [MIS] 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 EduPage. Over the course of the academic year, measures will be taken to improve the concerns & complaints procedure, particularly at the 'formal level'. Feedback and suggestions from parents, students and staff is always sought and considered.

(1.2.1) Meridian International School Staff

If the concern is academic, we encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to first contact the subject teacher. If it is a behavioural or pastoral issue, then the appropriate Class Teacher should be contacted. If the academic matter is serious, for example plagiarism, then the Subject Teacher has the right to elicit the help of the Class Teacher or Head of School as they seem fit (parents, guardians and students also have this right).

There is an expectation that our teachers and staff are courteous and polite at all times. This forms the basis of any successful school system. As such, our teachers and staff are encouraged to approach complaints and concerns in the following ways:

-  Reply to parent(s)/guardian(s) in a prompt fashion via the EduPage system
-  Be polite and show respect to the complainant
-  If requested, a mutually-convenient appointment with the parent within an acceptable time period since the complaint was first made
-  Be aware of and educated in the remit of this policy and follow the guidelines as closely as possible with all complaints
-  Attempt to resolve the complaint without interfering with the school-routine of any students and to help ensure that the child is protected as necessary
-  Follow the discussed schedule (made with parents in cooperation with any senior administration members) which attempts to resolve the complaint; any time-frame decided upon will be kept to
-  Inform the parent as soon as the complaint has been resolved or in regard to any ongoing processes related to the original concern
-  Ensure that all communication is saved on the school's EduPage system and be referred to as and when necessary (this is the school's primary archiving system - it is electronic, safe and secure)
-  Inform a member of the school leadership if any situation escalates, as outlined in 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 [MIS], 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. The leadership of [MIS] have a duty to support out staff through all matters of complaint, up-until and including when an outcome has been determined.

(1.2.2) Head of School

Each section of [MIS] has a Head of School, a position designed to assist everyone-and-all when needed. In Early Years Ms. Radka Žaková is available to assist, in the Primary School Ms. Arianne Elbaum-Rejsek is ready to help you, whilst in the Secondary & High School Mr. Richard Jackson will assist with any concerns. If necessary, the Head of School can serve as a conduit between staff/teachr and parent/student, to ensure that the complaints procedure is upheld and that all complaints/concerns are dealt with in a professional manner.

If the Head of School is notified of a concern or complaint within [MIS], whether it be a student, parent, or member of staff, they should endeavour to investigate and resolved the issue in a professional and dignified manner. At all times, the concerns and protection of students under their management should be at the forefront of all developments.

The Head of School should:








-  Reply to parents in a prompt fashion (initially) via the EduPage system, yet via email or telephone if necessary
-  Be polite and show respect to the complainant
-  If requested, arrange a mutely-convenient appointment with the parent within an acceptable time period since the initial investigation started
-  Be educated in the remit of this policy and follow the guidelines as closely as possible with all complaints
-  Attempt to resolve the complaint without interfering with the school-routine of any pupil and to ensure the child is protected as necessary
-  Follow the discussed schedule (made with the parent) of resolving the complaint and keep to any time-frame that has been decided upon
-  Inform the parent as soon as the complaint has been resolved or in regard to any general progress
-  Ensure that all communication is saved on the E-School system and can be referred to as and when necessary
-  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.

(1.2.3) Deputy School Director & School Director

Both the Deputy School Director & School Director have 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 EduPage and are encouraged to take this step. **Further, the phone number and address of the School Director feature on the school's webpage, so they can be reached directly if there are any serious concerns.** However, if a more formal request is made, this should be done 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 Directorate to ensure that the needs of all students under the school's care are protected:











-  Reply to parents in a prompt fashion (initially) via the EduPage system, yet via email or telephone if necessary
-  Be polite and show respect to the complainant
-  Be impartial in regard to any raised issue
-  Ensure that all of the events, contexts and actions of the individual(s) are treated fairly
-  To be professional in how the guidelines stated in this policy are followed
-  Be fair in all judgements made
-  Maintain an EduPage record and, if necessary, all written evidence when required

The role of the School Directorate is to support everyone. If they need to be contacted directly, please use EduPage as a first point-of-call. However, they can also be reached via email. Details can be found on the school website.

(1.2.4) Parents, Guardians & 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 Teacher or Subject Teacher, or - when appropriate, to the Head of School or School Directors. Complaints made to all members of [MIS] staff should initially be made via EduPage or, when required, in formal writing (a type or hand written, signed and dated letter).

When a parent, guardian or student wishes to raise a concern or to make a complaint, they are encouraged to do so in a warm and positive way that:

-  Is always courteous, respectful and patient
-  Understands the need to ensure and safeguard the welfare of everyone in the school
-  Acknowledges the professionalism and integrity of the school staff and leadership team
-  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 (within 24-hours)
-  Understands that any appointment made will be treated with quickly yet based on mutual convenience
-  Is not violent, abusive, aggressive or threatening
-  Does not encourage the involvement of others unrelated to the incident, concern or complaint; in particular this applies to students under the school's care and, also, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of these children
-  Knows [MIS] will do its utmost to satisfy the concerns of parents and students
-  Acknowledges the guidelines stated in this policy
-  Will not involve other members of the [MIS] family; we strongly advise that, if a parent/guardian wishes to make contact with another about a complaint, that they do so with the school's cooperation

Maintaining a positive relationship with parents and guardians is at the forefront of any and all [MIS] policies. As a small, international family, we are proud and pleased that all matters in the past have been resolved in the above described manners. We endeavour to continue on this positive trajectory.

Concerns & Complaints Policy

2 Procedure & Steps

We encourage parents and guardians to contact us about anything they feel is important. “No concern is too small” and, in particular, no one should feel that any concern they raised will be treated in a dismissive fashion. On the contrary, all feedback is welcomed. If a parent is unsure about whether they should complain, or if they feel they are causing hassle and giving [MIS] staff additional work, please dismiss these thoughts and contact us. [We are here to help you.](#)

2.1 Confidentiality

As a British School Overseas & according to the confidentiality/GDPR laws of the Czech Republic, [MIS] is bound and committed to ensuring all sensitive information is safeguarded. Everyone should know that only those involved with the complaint will be aware of the details. If a complaint evolves into a Child Protection.& Safeguarding matter, then the Designated Safeguarding Lead will have to be informed. Likewise, senior members of the school’s leadership will have to be informed as required. However, information will never be shared with non-essential parties. In some cases, if a complaint escalates, a third “out of school party” such as the police, OSPOD, or legal representation, may have to sought. Of course, discretion will be assured at all times.

(2.1.1). Complaints Logging

[MIS] keeps an electronic record of any concern and complain via EduPage. Every message is preserved and can be referred to at any time. For serious concerns and complaints, this information is logged and recorded so it can be referred to at a later date if required. Likewise, any letters sent out, formal notices, are also preserved for future reference. In some cases these may be printed, filed and stored, in the office of the Head of School. Whenever the Head of School is not present in their office, the door will be locked.

2.2 Staff Training & Support

Before contacting the school with a complaint or issue, members of our **Meridian International School** family should know that our teachers and staff are trained/aware of the steps outlined in this procedure. A simple and structured system is often the best way to ensure that complaints/concerns are dealt with promptly, efficiently and sensitively. Warm and encouraging language is always advised. Staff are aware of the roles and responsibilities of other colleagues, for example the correct Class Teacher, to ensure that procedures are conducted correctly.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s), staff and students should know that, when it comes to a formal complaint, the school leadership will ensure that everyone is treated fairly. If a complaint cannot be dealt with in an informal manner and needs to be escalated to the Head of School, or to the Directors, then








impartiality is guaranteed. Parents should not think “the school is always on the teachers’ side” and staff should not think “the school is always on the parents’ side”. Such cases are, thankfully, very rare at [MIS], yet a guarantee of impartiality and support is always maintained.

If a serious complaint is made against a specific staff member, they will be supported by the [MIS] leadership. It should be known that any investigation conducted in regard to the complaint will be completed fairly and objectively. Both the individual who made the complaint and the individual against whom the complaint was made will be continuously notified of the steps and procedure.

2.3 Complaints Procedure (Steps)

If a complaint is made [MIS] asks that as much information is included as possible at the first point of contact. Please include time, location, who was involved, as well as a detailed description of the concern/incident/complaint-nature. This will greatly assist towards a thorough and quicker response. Similarly, in response, as much detail will be included. It is important that all messages, despite their length, are read in a thorough and meaningful manner. At the end of this document is a [Report a Concern Form](#) is presented. If an issue escalates and is not solved in Stage 1 (below), then this form can be completed by the parent/guardian if they so wish (this formally escalates the matter).

(2.3.1) STEP 1: Informal Stage (Subject & Class Teacher)

-  EDUPAGE: all first staff contact should be made via EduPage. This is the quickest and most direct route to the correct teacher.
-  ACADEMIC ISSUE: parents should first contact the correct Subject Teacher if they wish to raise an academic concern (homework / grade / student performance / information pertaining to an examination or anything else related to a particular subject)
-  BEHAVIOUR / PASTORAL ISSUE: parents should first contact the correct Class Teacher via EduPage.
-  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
-  The Class Teacher will make sure that parents are always notified of any developments or actions related to the complaint
-  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
-  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

- ✚ Any EduPage 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

(2.3.2) STEP 2: Referral (Head of School)

- ✚ EDUPAGE: all first safe contact should be made via EduPage. This is the quickest and most direct route to the correct teacher.
- ✚ 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)
- ✚ The Head of School will respond to any complaint as soon as possible, with a commitment to do so within forty-eight hours
- ✚ 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
- ✚ 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
- ✚ If necessary, the Head of School should make a record of the complaint and ensure that all relevant steps have been taken
- ✚ 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
- ✚ 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)
- ✚ 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

(2.3.3) STEP 3: Formal Review (Directorate)

- ✚ 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)

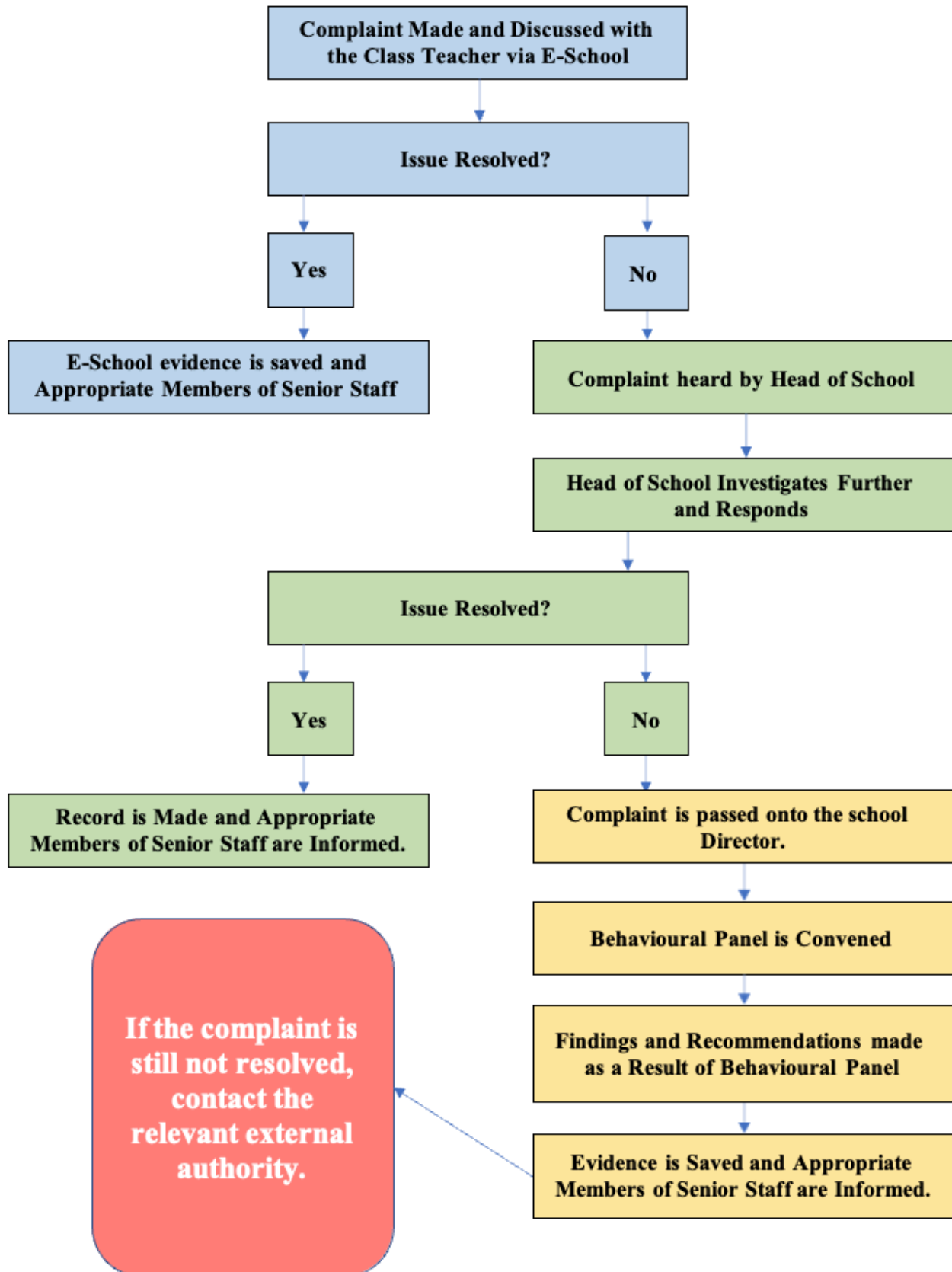
- ✚ As the complaint has now reached a formal stage, the offended party will be notified that the complaint will be discussed and heard by a *Behaviour Panel*
- ✚ The *Behaviour Panel* will not involve anyone involved with the complaint and should contain at least one member of staff completely independent 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
- ✚ 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
- ✚ 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
- ✚ 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
- ✚ The School Director commits to sending a reply as soon as possible, certainly within one working-week (five days)
- ✚ During the whole process, anything that has been previously discussed, documented - in regard to the complaint - will be kept confidential and anonymous

(2.3.4) STEP 4: External Referral

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, OSPOD, 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.

Concerns & Complaints Policy

3 Complaints Procedure Flow Chart



Concerns & Complaints Policy

4 Record of Complaint Form

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

