



BROMSGROVE
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
THAILAND

Concerns and Complaints Policy

Context

The School is here for parents, pupils and staff and we want to hear your views and ideas. We recognise and acknowledge your entitlement to complain or air a grievance and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care.

The School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, students and staff members and takes seriously any complaints and concerns they may raise. We encourage parents to bring their concerns to us as early as possible. This gives us the opportunity to try and rectify a problem or to explain the School's position before a matter becomes more serious. If in doubt about whether or not to raise a concern, we encourage you to contact us as we are here to help. What we do ask is that together we present a united front to students; otherwise children can receive damaging mixed messages.

A concern or complaint should be raised in accordance with the policy set out below. You may feel that it is a sufficiently sensitive or serious concern that you would like to raise it with the relevant Head in one of the three sections of the School. Any parent, student or member of staff has the right to contact the Headmaster, although on most matters any complaint would be firstly referred back to the relevant Head of School. They are usually best placed to investigate and resolve most complaints.

Please note: If a complaint is being raised by a member of staff they should also refer to their separate Staff Grievance Procedures policy.

Policy Aim and Statement

Aim: the aim of this policy is to ensure that a concern or complaint is managed sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level, and resolved as soon as possible. Doing so is good practice - it is fair to those concerned and it helps to promote staff, parent and pupil confidence in our ability to safeguard and promote welfare. We will try to resolve every concern or complaint in a positive way with the aim of putting right a matter which may have gone wrong and, where necessary, reviewing our systems and procedures in light of the circumstances.

Policy statement: we need to know as soon as possible if there is any cause for dissatisfaction. We recognise that a difficulty which is not resolved quickly and fairly can soon become a cause of resentment, which would be damaging to relationships and also to our school culture. Parents, pupils and staff members should never feel – or be made to feel – that a complaint will adversely affect a pupil or staff member or his/her opportunities at this school. The policy however distinguishes between a concern or difficulty which can be resolved informally and a formal complaint.

Three Stages of the Complaints Procedure

- Stage 1: Informal raising of a concern or complaint notified orally or in writing to a member of staff.
- Stage 2: A formal complaint in writing to the relevant Head of School or Headmaster
- Stage 3: A renewed complaint in writing to the Chairman of the Board of Governors

If a parent wishes to raise a formal complaint against the Headmaster, they should proceed directly to Stage 3 of the Procedure.

A concern about the safety of a child should be notified immediately to the Head of Section and/or a member of staff of your choice and should also be confirmed in writing to the Headmaster.

Management of Complaints

For staff making a complaint, complaints should initially be raised informally with the person involved. If a resolution cannot be reached following this procedure then the relevant Head of Section must be notified.

If the Head of School is unavailable or is the subject of the complaint, his/her duties will be carried out by the Headmaster or another senior member of staff. The main responsibilities of each Head of School with regard to complaints are to:

- be the first point of contact while the matter remains unresolved and keep records;
- coordinate the complaints procedures in the School;
- maintain an ongoing training programme for all School employees in relation to complaints
- monitor the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to complaints;
- report regularly to the Headmaster with respect to complaints.

Record Keeping: every concern or complaint notified to a member of staff by a parent or pupil will be noted by the member of staff to whom the complaint was made, together with the action taken.

STAGE 1: Concerns and Complaints

We expect that most concerns and complaints, where a staff member, parent or pupil seeks intervention, reconsideration or some other action to be taken, can be resolved using the

standard investigation procedure. Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to your concern or complaint. The Standard Investigation Procedure is outlined in full and attached to the end of this policy. Examples of a concern or complaint may include dissatisfaction about an aspect of teaching or pastoral care; about allocation of privileges or responsibilities; about a timetable clash or some other aspect of the School's systems or equipment; or a billing error from the finance department, though this is not an exhaustive list. It is important that you choose the person to whom you feel most comfortable talking, but for academic, pastoral and disciplinary matters we recommend talking to the Class teacher, Form Tutor or Head of Key Stage in the first instance.

Acknowledgement: we will acknowledge a written notification by telephone, email or letter within 24 hours of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable in the holidays.

Unresolved concerns: a concern which has not been resolved by informal means within 15 working days should be notified in writing as a formal complaint which will be dealt with in accordance with Stage 2 below.

STAGE 2: Formal Complaint

Notification: an unresolved concern under Stage 1, or a formal complaint or dissatisfaction with some aspect of the School's policies, procedures, management or administration should be set out in writing with full details and sent with all relevant documents and your full contact details in an envelope addressed to the Head of School and/or the Headmaster. Your complaint will be acknowledged by telephone or in writing within 24 hours during term time, indicating the action that is being taken and confirming that a response will be provided within 5 working days.

Investigation: the Headmaster may ask the relevant Head of School or a senior member of staff to act as "investigator" and/or may involve one or more Governors. The Standard Investigation Procedures will be followed. The investigator (s) may request additional information from you and will probably wish to speak to you personally and to others who have knowledge of the circumstances. Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to your complaint.

STAGE 3: Referred to the Chairman of the Board of Governors

Notification: if you are dissatisfied with the Headmaster's decision under Stage 2, your complaint may be renewed in writing to the Chairman of the Board of Governors. Your letter to the Chairman should give full details of your complaint and enclose all relevant documents and your full contact details. The Chairman will then review your complaint and respond in writing within 7 days.

Investigation Procedure

The relevant Head of School will be appointed by the Headmaster in the first instance to investigate any formal complaints. If the Headmaster is implicated in any accusation the investigating officer will be appointed by the Chairman of the Governing body. Steps should be

taken to ensure that the investigation is conducted in an impartial and objective manner, under the direction of the Headmaster.

Step 1: A written statement will be taken from the complainant/accuser. This will provide the investigator a framework from which the investigating officer can conduct the investigation. It also ensures that the allegations are coming directly from the accuser, and have not been “filtered” by anyone else. If the accuser is a young student and is not capable of drafting a complete and coherent written statement, an oral interview may be justified. Whoever conducts the interview should transcribe a written account of the interview as soon as the interview ends.

Step 2: A written statement will be taken from the person who is the basis of the formal complaint. Taking a statement from both parties will allow the investigator to cross reference both accounts and highlight any discrepancies. The incident should not be discussed with the accused before a written statement is taken so their interpretation of events is not influenced. After the statement is written, the accused has the right to ask for details of the complaint. This is decided at the Headmaster’s discretion.

Steps 1 or 2 are interchangeable to minimise disruption for both parties

Step 3: Discrepancies in written accounts will be investigated further. If there are any discrepancies in the written statements the investigator may seek further clarification from the complainant/accuser or accused. Although this must be recorded, at this point this does not constitute a formal interview. This is to ensure that the investigator fully understands both accounts and is able to draw their conclusions as to appropriate action.

At this point if, after reviewing the written statements, it appears that there are no reasonable grounds for concern, the investigation will be concluded and those persons involved informed.

Please note that all school records of an incident are confidential and will not be released to parents and any actions to be taken is at the school’s discretion. In addition, if disciplinary action is taken against the accused, the school will not enter into discussion as to the nature or the severity of the action being taken. If conclusions indicate that the accused deliberately caused harm to the accuser or were negligent in their role, an internal investigation will take place as per the relevant policy.

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Reviewer: DM

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