Parent Concern Escalation Policy

XCL Education Malaysia

Approved by:	**Cassie Fleming**	**Date: 01/09/2024**
Last reviewed on:	**01/09/2024**	
Next review due by:	**01/09/2025**	

Parental Concern Escalation / Complaints Policy

Contents

Purpose 1
Aim 1
Stage One: Informal Complaints 1
Stage Two: Formal Resolution: Investigations by a member of the Senior Leadership Team 2
Stage Three: Formal Resolution: School Principal 3
Stage Four: Appeal: Board of Governors/Complaints Panel 3
Confidentiality and Privacy 5
Supporting Documents 5
Responsibility 5
Promulgation & Implementation 5
Appendix A – Complaint Form 6

Purpose

- The purpose of this policy is to address and resolve parental concerns and complaints.
- This policy is intended as a good practice guide applying to most general complaints which the school is likely to receive from parents.
- One of the reasons for having various “stages” in a complaints procedure is to reassure complainants that their grievance is being heard by more than one person.
- As the Principal has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school he/she has responsibility for the implementation of a complaints system, including the decisions about his/her own involvement at various stages.

Aim

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- be easily accessible and publicised;
- be simple to understand and use;
- be impartial and non-adversarial;
- allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- respect confidentiality;
- address the concerns raised and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary; and provide information to senior leaders about where improvements can be made.

Stage One: Informal Complaints

- The vast majority of concerns and complaints can be resolved informally. There are many occasions where concerns are resolved straight away through the teacher head of year/subject, administration leader, student welfare leader, parent relations executive, senior leader.

- Parents must feel able to raise a concern with members of staff without any formality, either in person, by telephone or in writing/ email. On occasions, it may be appropriate for someone to act on behalf of a parent. At first it may be unclear whether a parent is asking a question or expressing an opinion rather than making a complaint. A parent may want a preliminary discussion about an issue to help decide whether he or she wishes to take it further.

- The normal response time to respond to these times is for an initial response or acknowledgement to be made within 24 hours. Where this is not possible, an explanation must be given for the reason for delay. A fuller response should be made and received within 72 hours.

- Members of staff dealing with these concerns should record the nature of the concern and steps taken to resolve.

- If the parent is not satisfied by the actions taken to resolve the issue they should follow the formal process.

- It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The school has a three stage formal process.

Stage Two: Formal Resolution: Investigations by a member of the Senior Leadership Team

- At this stage it has become clear that the concern is a definite complaint. In some cases the Principal has already been involved in looking at the matter; in most cases however the complaint will be delegated to a senior leader to respond to.

- The Head of Secondary, Head of Primary, Head of Operations (or another school leader) acknowledges the complaint orally, or in writing, within 3 school days of receiving confirmation that the complaint is now to be dealt with at Stage 2. The acknowledgement gives a brief explanation of the school's complaint procedure and a target date for providing a response to the complaint. This should normally be within 10 school days; if this proves impossible, a letter is sent explaining the reason for the delay and giving a revised target date.

- The Head of Secondary, Head of Primary, Head of Operations (or another school leader) provides an opportunity for the complainant to meet him/her to supplement information provided previously. It is made clear to the complainant that if s/he wishes, s/he may be accompanied to any meeting by a friend, relative, or representative, who can speak on his or her behalf and that interpreting facilities are available if needed. This meeting should be minuted.

- If necessary, the senior leader should interview witnesses and take statements from those involved. If the complaint centres on a student, the student should also be interviewed. Students would normally be interviewed with two staff members present. If a member of staff is complained against, the needs of that person should be borne in mind and confidential by all parties maintained.

- The senior leader keeps written records of meetings, telephone conversations, and other documentation. Once all the relevant facts have been established, the senior leader should then produce a written response to the complainant to discuss/resolve the matter.

- A written response includes a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, this includes what action the school will take to resolve the complaint. The complainant is advised that should s/he wish to take the complaint further s/he should notify the Principal within two weeks of receiving the outcome letter.

- If a complaint is against the action of a member of SLT, the Principal will designate another member of the

Senior Leadership Team to investigate.

- If a complaint is against the action(s) of the Principal, the Chair of the Governing Body should carry out the Stage 3 procedures.

Stage Three: Formal Resolution: School Principal

- The complainant must put the complaint in writing, addressed to the Principal of the School, setting out briefly the facts and stating what it is that the complainant considers should have been done or where the school has not met reasonable expectations. The Principal may delegate this to another Sri KDU principal, regional or corporate director.

- The complaint will be acknowledged with 2 working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable during school holidays.

- A Stage 3 complaint should be resolved within 30 working days of receiving the complaint. Where there are exceptional circumstances resulting in delays, the parents will be notified of this and informed of the new timescales as soon as possible.

- The Principal/CEO may include the offer of a meeting with the complainant, whenever reasonably possible, any meeting with the complainant will take place within 15 school days of the written complaint being received.

- Where the complainant remains dissatisfied he/she may request the complaint is dealt with at Stage 4 by completing Appendix A. Any such request must be set out in writing, stating where the complainant remains dissatisfied, what remedies are being sought and be lodged within 10 school days of the complainant receiving the findings in writing. The request must be addressed to the Board of Governors/Complaints Panel who will convene a hearing.

Stage Four: Appeal: Board of Governors/Complaints Panel

- If the complainant indicates, in writing, that they wish to appeal against the outcome of the investigation into their complaint, this is referred to the Board of Governors.

- It is important that this review is unprejudiced and impartial; therefore the school will ensure that at least one member of the Board of Governors is independent from the school and Sri KDU. The review is the last stage of the internal complaints process and is not there to merely rubber stamp previous decisions.

- Many complaints are inevitably seen by parents as being “against” a particular member of staff and their actions. However, all complaints that reach this stage will have done so because the complainant has not been satisfied at the earlier stages of the procedure. Therefore, the Board of Governors must at this point consider the complaint against the process carried out to resolve the initial complaint rather than against the member of staff whose actions led to the original complaint.

- Therefore, individual complaints that simply reiterate initial complaints that have been addressed at earlier stages should not be considered by the Board or its appointed Paenl as serious conflicts of interest can arise; for example in exceptional circumstances a complaint may result in disciplinary action against a member of staff, and senior leaders may be required to give an unprejudiced hearing to an appeal by the member of staff concerned. Similarly some members might have knowledge of the problem which led to the complaint and would be unable to give unbiased consideration to the issue.

- Upon receipt of a written request by the complainant for the complaint to proceed to stage 4, the procedures outlined below should be followed:

    - The Principal’s PA should write to the complainant within 3 school days to acknowledge receipt of the written request. The acknowledgement should inform the complainant that the complaint is to

be heard, within 10 school days of receiving the complaint. The letter should also explain that the complainant has the right to submit any further documents relevant to the complaint. These must be received in time for the documents to be sent to the Board of Governors.

- The Principal's PA should arrange to convene a Complaints Panel, comprising three governors and ensure that at least one member of the panel is independent from Sri KDU. All Panel members should have had no prior involvement with the complaint. The Chair or Vice-Chair of the Governing Board should chair the Panel. If s/he has previously been involved, a Chair must be elected for this purpose. The Panel will want to bear in mind the advantages of having a parent (who is also a Governor) on the Panel. The Panel will also be sensitive to equality issues.

- The Chair of the Panel will ensure that the complaint is heard by the Panel within 10 school days of receiving the letter. All relevant correspondence regarding the complaint should be given to each Panel member when the composition of the Panel is confirmed.

- The Chair of the Panel will write and inform the complainant, Principal, any relevant witnesses and members of the Panel at least 5 school days in advance, of the date, time and place of the meeting. The notification to the complainant should also inform him/her of the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend/advocate/interpreter. The letter will also explain how the meeting will be conducted.

- The Chair of the Panel should invite the Principal (or other senior, regional or corporate leader who responded to the complaint, referred to hereafter as 'the senior leader'), to attend the Panel meeting and prepare a written report for the Panel in response to the complaint. The senior leader may also invite members of staff directly involved in matters raised by the complainant to respond in writing, or in person, to the complaint. Any relevant documents including the Investigating staff's report should be received by all concerned, including the complainant, at least 5 school days prior to the meeting.

- The involvement of staff other than the senior leader is subject to the discretion of the Chair of the Panel.

- It is the responsibility of the Principal's PA (Clerk to the Panel) to ensure that the meeting is properly minuted.

- The aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it has to be recognised that sometimes it may only be possible to establish facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has at least been taken seriously.

- The Panel should remember that many parents are unused to dealing with groups of people in formal situations and may feel inhibited when speaking to the Panel. It is therefore recommended that the Chair of the Panel ensures the proceedings are as informal as possible.

- If either party wishes to introduce previously undisclosed evidence or witnesses, it is in the interests of natural justice to adjourn the meeting so that the other side has time to consider and respond to the new evidence.

- The meeting should allow for:

  I. The complainant to explain their complaint
  II. Panel to question the complainant
  III. The Principal or senior leader to explain the school's response
  IV. The Panel to question any other members of staff about the school's response
  V. Any party to have the right to call witnesses (subject to the approval of the Chair)
  VI. Final statements by both the complainant and the Principal/ senior leader.

- The Chair of the Panel will explain to all concerned that the Panel will now consider its decision, and a written decision will be sent to both parties within 4 school days (14 days in total).

- The Panel will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and (a) reach a unanimous, or at least a majority, decision on the complaint and (b) decide upon the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint and (c) where appropriate, suggest recommended changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again.

- The written statement outlining the decision of the Panel must be sent to the complainant and Principal.

- The school should ensure that a copy of all correspondence and notes are kept. These records should be kept separately from the student's personal records.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Refer to the School Data Security Policy.

Supporting Documents

- The Schools Terms and Conditions
- Data Security Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Home School Agreement Policy

Responsibility

- The School Principal is responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this policy and its accompanying procedure/s.

- The Head of Operations is responsible for maintaining the content of this policy as delegated by the School Principal.

Promulgation & Implementation

The Parent Escalation Policy and Procedure will be communicated throughout the School community in the form of:

1. An announcement notice via briefings and email;
2. Distribution of policy via e-mail to all staff to whom this may apply;
3. Inclusion on the school website and parent portal (where applicable) to ensure parents also know of the policy.

Appendix A – Complaint Form

Complainant

Name:	
Address:	
Tel/Mobile Number:	
Email Adress:	

Details of Complaint

Please insert full details, including dates, times, those involved

Signed	Date

For office use

Date received by clerk	Date of response to complaint