



The
British School
of Monaco

POLICY SECTION: Section 1 - THE SCHOOL AND ITS GOALS

POLICY NUMBER: 1.10

COMPLAINTS POLICY

EFFECTIVE FROM: 16/VI/22

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Our School Mission Statement

To provide Monaco families with a family-owned British curriculum school and an intimate nurturing community that motivates students to become grounded, passionate and aspirational learners. We want our students to enjoy each precious year of childhood as they grow into adults.

1. Introduction

The British School of Monaco prides itself on the quality of the education and pastoral care provided to its students as well as on the strength of relationships within the school community. If parents do have a complaint they can expect it to be treated with care and in accordance with this policy.

The school has adopted, made available to parents of currently enrolled students and applied a complaints procedure in order to comply with regulatory standards, best practice and as a vehicle to maintain strong relationships within the school community.

It is important that parents and guardians who have concerns should have the opportunity to express their views and feelings and they should obtain a fair hearing and prompt response to any matter that they raise.

This policy is available to download from the school website or is available on request from the school's reception.

2. Definition of a Complaint

Whereas a concern may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought,' a complaint may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

Concerns will normally be managed quickly, informally and easily with appropriate reassurance; these would not routinely be registered as a complaint under this policy.

A complaint may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly.

Parents can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The schools are here for our students and parents can be assured that their children will not be penalised for a complaint that is made in good faith.

Complaints can fall into a number of categories. Some examples are listed below but the list is not exhaustive.

- Complaints may be about operational or administrative matters such as school procedures, school finances or a breach of contract. These complaints can be specific or general.
- Complaints may be about the handling of a situation by staff or the management of the schools.
- Complaints may relate to the behaviour of a student or group of students.
- Complaints may be academic in nature and relate to areas such as the service provided by the school, the content of a course, the quantity of homework being given or the progress being made by a student in a particular subject.
- Complaints may involve a child who is unhappy at school, is being bullied or has received an inappropriate sanction for indiscipline.

3. School Days

For the purposes of this policy, school days are deemed to be Monday to Friday during school term time excluding holidays. Details of school term dates are available from the British School of Monaco website. The school will attempt to resolve complaints that are made during holidays as soon as is practicable, but this will depend on the availability of relevant members of staff.

4. Safeguarding

Any complaint or allegation that might be categorised as a safeguarding matter should be reported immediately in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Any complaint or allegation received that might be categorised as a safeguarding matter should be reported immediately by the employee who receives the complaint in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

5. Complaints by Employees

Complaints made by members of staff in their capacity as a parent will be covered by this policy, but complaints in respect of their employment by the school are covered by the staff Grievance Procedure set out in the Terms and Conditions of Employment for teaching and support staff.

6. Procedure

The basic procedure for complaints, either verbal or written is to deal with them promptly, thoroughly and professionally. All complaints should normally be acknowledged within 5 school days with the promise of an effective enquiry and action if appropriate.

Initially, it is important that the school and the complainant should endeavour to resolve complaints on an informal basis without undue escalation.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally and in the majority of cases they will be resolved by an appropriate member of staff such as a form teacher, the relevant Head of Year/Department or a member of the school's leadership or, exceptionally at this stage, by members of the Board. It is reasonable and important for the school's representative to seek to resolve a complaint on an informal basis where appropriate and complainants are expected to cooperate in this process with the aim of finding resolution and reinforcing strong relationships within the school community.

If a complaint is made about the Principal it should be addressed to the Board.

The school has in place a means of recording complaints and ensuring that they are dealt with promptly and effectively. Similarly, it will have mechanisms in place (such as standing agenda items in meetings) to monitor any emerging patterns so that suitable action might be taken to pre-empt causes of complaint.

Should the matter not be resolved within 10 school days of acknowledgement, or as soon as reasonably practicable if a complaint is made during school holidays (or equivalent), or in the event that the parents and the school fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then the parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

Formal complaints under Stage 2 follow Stage 1 and must be made in writing to the Principal. Notwithstanding the nature of the complaint, an informal meeting and attempt to resolve the matter remains important and Stage 1 should not normally be omitted. If the complaint has been made directly to the Board, then its representative will inform the Principal and send an acknowledgement to the parents within 5 school days.

The Principal (or Deputy Principal, where delegated by the Principal) will take steps to ensure that the complaint is fully and properly investigated according to the rules of natural justice and always with regard to the best interests of the student or students concerned. All steps taken should be recorded in writing, including interviews with individuals involved, and any evidence or documentation should be preserved.

Once the Principal is satisfied, as far as is possible, that all the relevant facts have been established, the Principal will inform the parents in writing of his decision and the reasons for the decision. The parents will normally be informed of the decision and the reasons for the decision within 20 school days of acknowledgement of the complaint by the school, depending on the availability of staff due to term dates.

After due consideration, the Principal will decide whether to:

- dismiss the complaint(s) in whole or in part
- uphold the complaint(s) in whole or in part; and / or
- make recommendations

If a complaint is made about the Principal, it should be addressed to the Board. The Chair of the Board (or any Governor nominated by the Chair to review the complaint) will request a full report from the Principal and all relevant documents. Other staff may be interviewed as required. Once the Chair of the Board is satisfied, as far as is possible, that the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed in writing of the decision and the reasons for the decision within 20 school days of acknowledgement of the complaint.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If the complaint has not been resolved under Stage 2 above, then the Board will scrutinise the procedures thus far and the outcome to determine whether it is in order to make provision for a panel hearing. Parents should submit formal written notice to the Chair of the Board within 20 school days of receiving the outcome to the Stage 2 formal complaint.

If appropriate, the panel will normally be convened to consider the complaint within 20 school days of receipt of the formal notice. The panel members will be appointed by the Chair of the Board (or by another Governor on behalf of the Chair) and shall comprise at least three members, two of whom should normally be serving Governors and have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The third member should be a person independent of the management and running of the school.

The remit of the panel shall be at the discretion of the Chair of the Board and the manner in which the hearing is conducted shall be at the discretion of the panel.

Parents may wish to supply additional information to the panel or the panel may request further information in advance of the hearing. In either case all relevant documentation must be submitted at least 7 days before the panel is scheduled to sit. Parents and other involved parties will be invited to appear before the panel to present information and/or answer questions. The panel will accept written submissions from any party who is not able to or does not wish to attend in person.

Parents or any other individuals not employed by the school who are invited to appear before the panel may be accompanied by one other person if they wish. This person may be a relative or friend but legal representation will not normally be appropriate. An employee of the school who is invited to appear before the panel may only be accompanied by a colleague.

The panel, in seeking to resolve the complaint, may adjourn the hearing or defer its decision if this is considered appropriate to promote conciliation or to obtain further relevant information.

After due consideration of the merits of the complaint and all facts they consider to be relevant, the panel will make findings as to whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and decide whether to:

- dismiss the complaint(s) in whole or in part
- uphold the complaint(s) in whole or in part; and / or
- make recommendations

The decision of the panel will be final and will be made within 7 days of the panel meeting. A copy of these findings and recommendations will be provided in writing within 10 days to the parents at their home address, and where relevant to the person(s) complained about. A copy of the findings and recommendations will be available for inspection at the school by the Governors or the Head.

Recording of Complaints and use of personal data

The British School of Monaco will keep a written record of complaints that have been handled under the procedures described at Stages 2 and 3 and action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld) will be recorded.

The school processes data in accordance with its Privacy Notice. When dealing with complaints the school may process a range of information, which is likely to include the following:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of student
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name and contact details of member(s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)
- Notes / minutes of the hearing; and
- The written decision

This may include “special category personal data” (potentially including, for instance, information relating to physical or mental health) where this is necessary owing to the nature of the

complaint. This data will be processed and retained in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.
