

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1 INTRODUCTION

This is a guide to the formal complaints policy and procedure for use by parents and students. If you have a concern or a complaint about any aspect of school life, including any decisions made regarding your child's schooling, please contact an appropriate member of staff as soon as possible. We will deal with any issue promptly and courteously.

This policy applies to all year groups and programs at École Jeannine Manuel ("the School").

2 STAGE 1: INFORMAL RESOLUTION

- 2.1 We hope that most complaints can be considered and resolved quickly and informally.
- 2.2 If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's teacher or homeroom teacher, whichever is most appropriate. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means. If the teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult the Head of Sector.
- 2.3 For serious subject-related or general academic concern, or for a pastoral or disciplinary matter, the Head of Sector should be contacted first.
- 2.4 In matters regarding finance, fees and non-academic services please contact the Head of the Accounting Department.
- 2.5 If the complaint relates to or involves a Head of Sector or IB Diploma Coordinator, the complaint should be addressed in writing to the Head of School.
- 2.6 If the complaint is related to appeals against IB programme decisions taken by the school or IB DP Coordinator, the complaint should be addressed in writing to the IB DP Coordinator and Head of School. Please note that IB rules and regulations are signed and agreed upon by students and families at the start of each academic year and that all IB programme decisions are in accordance with these.
- 2.7 If the complaint is related to the International Baccalaureate Organization, the complaint should be addressed in writing to the IB DP Coordinator and Head of School.
- 2.8 If the complaint relates to or involves the Head of School, the complaint should be addressed to the Director General by writing directly to Mrs. Elisabeth Zéboulon.
- 2.9 If the complaint relates to the Director General, the complaint should be addressed to the Chairman of the Board by writing directly to Mr. Bernard Manuel.
- 2.10 We will do everything we can to ensure that we respond to complaints in a highly professional manner. However, if you feel that an expression of concern has not been handled properly by a member of staff, please contact the Head of School.
- 2.11 The staff concerned will make a written record of every complaint, including the date on which the complaint was received. We will acknowledge receipt of an e-mail notification by telephone, e-mail or letter within five working days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable in the school holidays. Should the matter not be resolved within a reasonable period (one not

normally exceeding two weeks) or in the event that the relevant staff and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with the Formal Resolution procedure.

3 STAGE 2: FORMAL RESOLUTION

- 3.1 If parents remain unhappy, they may contact the Head of School in writing, by letter or e-mail. Parents should send full written details of the nature of the complaint, any relevant documents and full contact details to the Head of School, preferably by e-mail. Parents should also indicate what they envisage as an acceptable outcome.
- 3.2 The Head of School will decide, after considering the complaint, upon the appropriate course of action to take. In most cases, the Head of School, or Head of Sector, will speak to and/or meet with the parents concerned to discuss the matter, normally within ten school days of receiving the complaint, where a school day is defined as a day during term when the school is in session. The Head of School or Head of Sector may be accompanied at this meeting, as may be appropriate in the circumstances. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. It may be necessary for the School to carry out further investigations and members of staff or students involved may be interviewed. The Head of School may ask a senior member of staff to act as investigator and/or may involve the Director General, or one or more Board members.
- 3.3 Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- 3.4 Once the Head of School is satisfied that, as far as possible, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing within ten school days. The Head of School will also give reasons for the decision.
- 3.5 If a complaint cannot be resolved at the Head of School level, then the complaint may be referred to the Director General or to a panel convened by the Chairman of the Board.

4 STAGE 3: APPEALS PROCEDURE

- 4.1 The School takes complaints seriously and will strive to resolve any complaints as soon as possible and with an open and fair approach. If having discussed the matter with the Head of School, parents still feel dissatisfied then they may contact the Director General directly no later than 90 days after the incident giving rise to the complaint.
- 4.2 The Director General (or the Chairman of the Board) will convene a panel of at least two board members and one person independent of the management and running of the School to consider the complaint. No member of the panel may have any involvement with any matter detailed in the complaint. Parents can write to the Chairman of the Board and their request will be acknowledged within ten school days and a date for the hearing will be arranged within a further ten school days.
- 4.3 Whenever possible, the panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. The panel will make a decision concerning the appropriate course of action during their initial meeting so as to prevent any delays with the resolution of the complaint.

- 4.4 Where further investigation is required, the panel will decide how it should be carried out. If further documents or information are required, copies will be supplied to the complainant at least two days before the hearing.
- 4.5 At the panel hearing, the complainant(s) may be accompanied by one other person *e.g.* a relative or friend. Legal representation will not be permitted.
- 4.6 After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which they shall complete within seven days of the hearing or as soon as reasonably possible. The panel will write to the parents informing them of their decision and the reasons for it within seven days of reaching this decision. The panel's findings and any recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Chairman of the Board, the Director General and the Head of School, and, where relevant, the person(s) about whom the complaint was made. The decision of the panel will be final and incontrovertible.

5 RECORD KEEPING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 5.1 Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to the individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where any other legal obligation prevails.
- 5.2 Written records of all formal complaints and their outcomes (including at what stage they were resolved) will be kept (for at least 5 years where there are no safeguarding or other legal implications) and reviewed at least annually by The Head of School, as appropriate. The written record should confirm any action taken by the School as a result of the complaint, regardless of whether it was upheld. The record will enable the School to identify whether review or change in practice is needed so that patterns can be identified and so that appropriate intervention is made.
- 5.3 Records of Complaints Proceedings will be processed and retained in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

6 RECORD OF FORMAL COMPLAINTS

This section will contain a list of the **formal** complaints received by the School each year since the policy's implementation.
