



ICS Policy Document

Whilst all Policies have a minimum date for review as a guideline, policies are under constant review. Changes to policies will occur as required.

Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure

Approved by: Quality Assurance and Principal Committee Date: November 2019

Last reviewed on:

Date: N/A

Next review due by: 3 yearly

Date: November 2022

Overview and Aims

At ICS, staff are dedicated to giving all pupils the best possible education, whilst caring fully for their health, safety and welfare at all times. We are committed to working closely with parents/carers as we believe that staff and parents/carers must work together in partnership to help pupils gain the most from their time in school.

Communication, written or spoken, is valued as part of the partnership between home and school. Cooperation between parents/carers, staff and governors leads to a shared sense of purpose and a good atmosphere in the school.

ICS aims to provide as many opportunities to keep parents/carers informed and involved in pupil progress as it possibly can. However we recognise there may be times when parents / carers feel the school is not acting in the best interest of their child.

Aims

The aim of these guidelines is to achieve a resolution to concerns and complaints made by parents or members of the public. Most concerns can be resolved informally without any need to involve the governing body or ADEK. However, if a concern becomes a complaint then this four-stage process will be used. It is not possible to jump stages in the procedure; it is a fundamental principle that each party must be allowed the opportunity to resolve the complaint before it is escalated to the next stage.



The majority of parents of children attending ICS have a positive relationship with their child's teachers and other school staff; this relationship is based on mutual respect and an understanding that both parties have the child's best interests at heart. This is the basis on which ICS operates.

Any complaint raised will be treated seriously and courteously. You will be given the opportunity to make your concerns known and school staff must be given time to properly investigate them in order for the matter to be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. It is important that you have confidence in these procedures and know that the matter will be investigated impartially and dealt with as quickly as possible. Resolving concerns involves balancing the rights and responsibilities of pupils, parents and school staff; there should be recognition that responsibility rests with each of these parties.

Generally, the first point of contact should be the Class Teacher who will arrange a mutually convenient appointment to discuss the issue. If the matter is not resolved by the Class Teacher, Year Leader, Supervisor, then the Principal or Vice Principal will be informed of the matter.

We would recommend that you do not discuss your concerns on social networking sites (eg Facebook). This can be potentially damaging for both you and the school and / or its pupils, it can reach a much wider audience than you might have intended, and more importantly does not give the school the opportunity to resolve the issue as we will never comment publicly on your private matter.

To comply with equalities legislation schools ICS is sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of the complainant. No-one should be excluded from the complaints system because of any difficulties they may have in representing themselves either in writing or in person. If you need support in making a complaint, please speak to the Principal's Secretary who can guide and support you.

ICS's Parents Handbook contains basic information on how to access the complaints procedure. The procedure is easily accessible and well publicized, e.g. via the school office and website.

If at any time a child protection concern becomes apparent, the child protection process



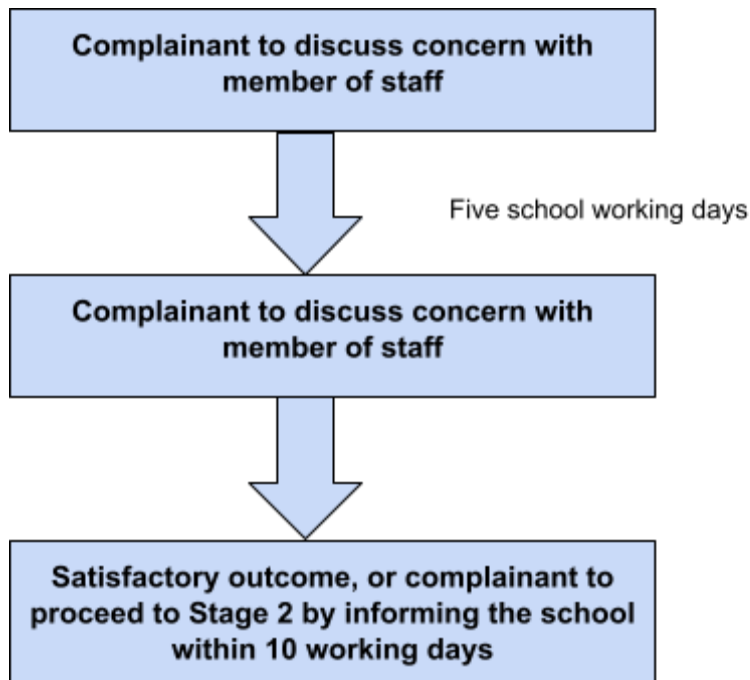
will take precedence over the complaints process, which will be halted until the child protection matter is resolved.

The investigation of a complaint will not deal with staff disciplinary matters. If, however, during the course of considering a complaint, it is concluded that disciplinary procedures should be initiated, the governing body will consider this as a separate action.

Confidentiality should be maintained at all times by all concerned. All conversations and correspondence must be treated with discretion. However, you will need to accept that some sharing of information within the school will be inevitable if the complaint is to be investigated fully and fairly. This will be done with sensitivity and will take into account confidentiality. You should feel confident that a complaint will not disadvantage your child.

Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 - Discuss your concerns with your child's class teacher or other appropriate member of staff. Most difficulties are resolved satisfactorily at this stage.



- You should be given an opportunity to discuss your concerns privately with the appropriate member of staff who can clarify the nature of your concern. The staff member should reassure you that the school wants to try and resolve the matter. It may also be helpful at this point to identify the outcome you are seeking.
- In many cases this will lead to immediate resolution of the issue but in some circumstances the staff member will need to have some time to investigate your concerns and get back to you.
- The member of staff will ensure that appropriate action is taken to deal with the matter speedily - **usually within five school working days**. Staff will also notify the Principal that a concern has been raised.
- Where the concern relates to the specific actions of a member of staff, you should initially meet with the Principal to discuss the problem (see Stage 2). In the rare

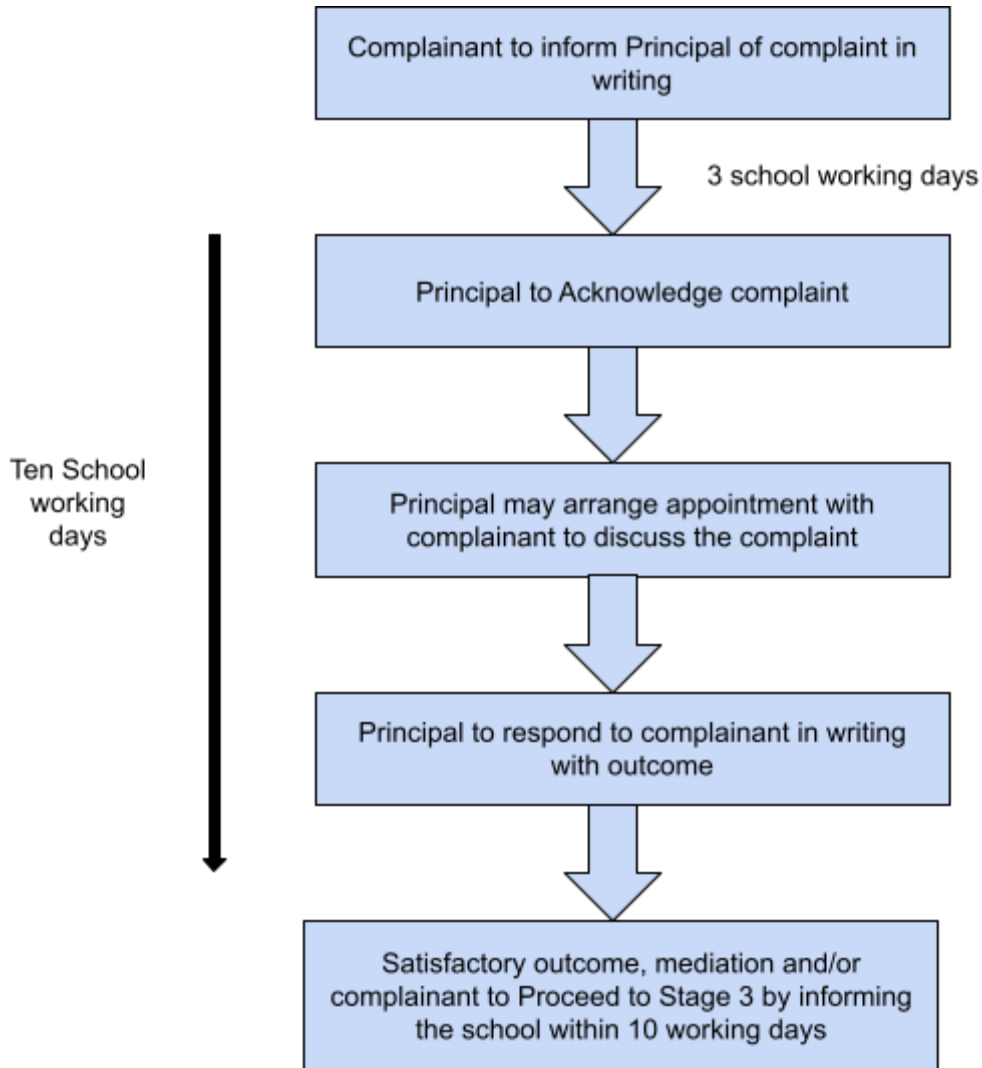


circumstances where the complaint is against the Principal, then you should contact the Vice Principal who will direct your complaint to the Principal's line manager.

- In most cases the member of staff who is dealing with the concern will respond to you verbally. This stage of the process seeks to resolve your concern as informally as possible. A written response will only be provided if this seems to be the best way of making the process or the outcome clear.
- Where a response (verbal or written) has been received but is considered to be unsatisfactory, then you should inform the Principal **within ten school working days** that you wish your concern to be considered further (Stage 2).

Stage 2 Consideration by the Principal or Vice Principal

Contact the Principal/Vice Principal by arranging an appointment to discuss the matter or put your concern in writing. The Principal/Vice Principal will investigate your concerns and respond.



- Stage 2 complaints should be in writing unless you are unable to express the complaint in writing. If this is the case a member of staff will be nominated to support you.
- Your letter should be acknowledged in writing **within three school working days** of receiving the complaint. The acknowledgement will include a copy of the school's complaints procedure and a target date for providing a response to your complaint. This will normally be **within ten school working days**. Where this is not possible, a letter will be sent explaining the reasons for the delay and giving a

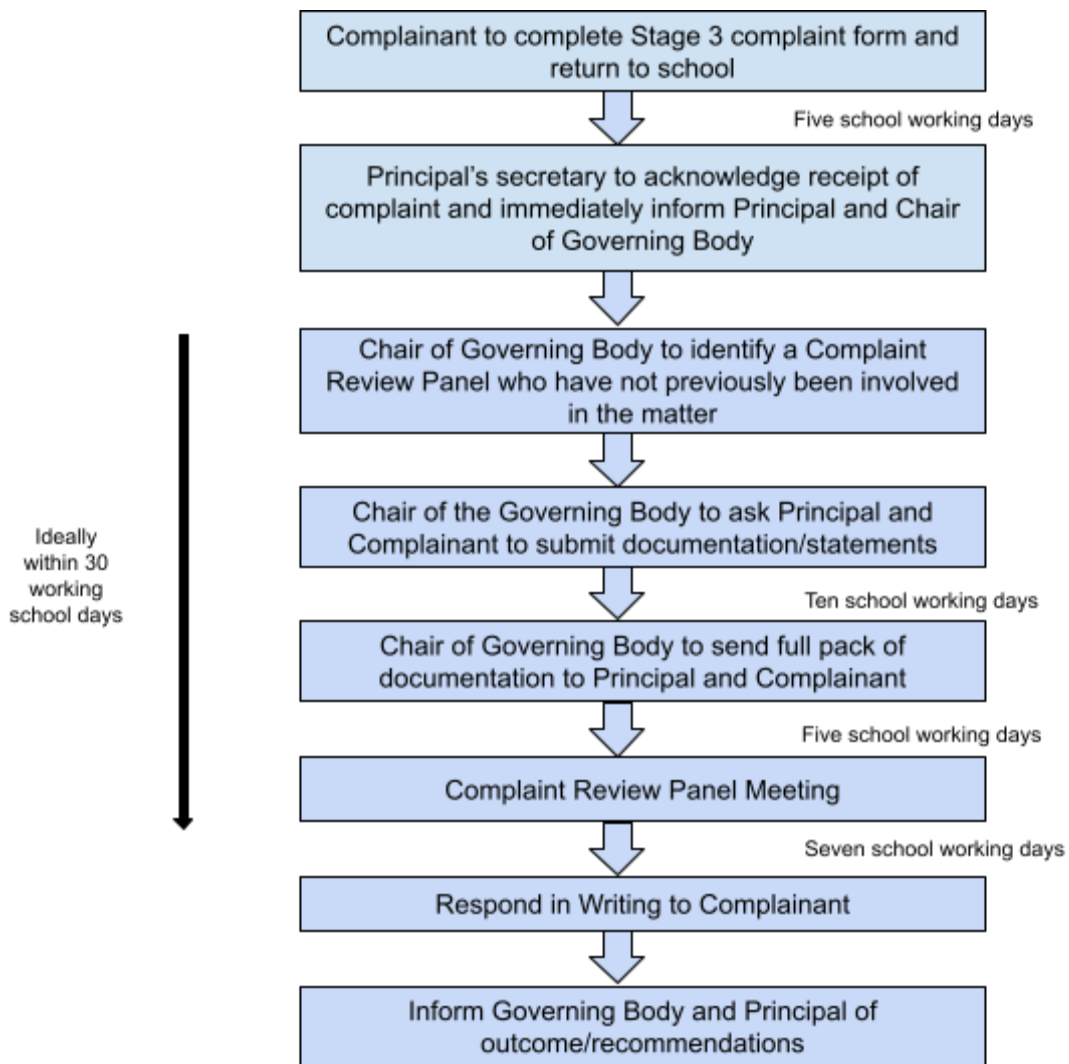


revised target date (if you need help understanding the letter contact ICS PA to the Principal.

- The Principal (or designated member of staff) will normally offer an opportunity for a parent of a student at the school to meet with him/her to discuss their concern and supplement any of the information provided previously. This may not always be necessary for complainants who have stated their concern in writing or by telephone or email. If you want a meeting with the Principal you should request this.
- If you meet with the Principal a note taker may be present to record the main points of the discussion; they will let you have a copy of the notes. You may, if you wish, be accompanied to this meeting by a friend, relative, representative or advocate who can speak on your behalf. You must, however, inform the school whom you intend to bring to the meeting. The school should facilitate interpreting facilities, if required, provided that you give notice of your requirements.
- Once all relevant facts have been established, the Principal will then write to you and may wish to meet you to discuss/resolve the matter directly. A written response will include a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, this will include what action the school will take to resolve your complaint.
- Where the Principal considers that disciplinary action, for either a staff member or a pupil is required, you will be informed that appropriate action has been taken, but the specific sanction will remain confidential and cannot legally be disclosed to you for reasons of confidentiality and the rights of individuals.

Stage 3 – Consideration by the ICS Branch 1/ 4 School Complaints Panel

If you feel that the school has not properly investigated your complaint or that it has not followed its published procedures, you are entitled to have all matters reviewed by a panel of stakeholders who have had no previous involvement. Complete a Stage 3 Complaint Form (available from the school office and website).





- You should write to the Chair of the Governing Body requesting that your complaint is reviewed by a Complaint Review Panel by using the Stage 3 complaint form. Following your request the procedures outlined below will be followed:
 - The Principal's secretary will write to you to acknowledge receipt of the written request **within five school working days**. The acknowledgement will inform the complainant that a Complaint Review Panel will review the complaint ideally **within thirty school working days** of receiving your request, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
 - The letter will also explain that both you and the Principal have the right to submit any further documents relevant to the complaint. Both parties should send further documentation to the Principal's secretary **at least ten school working days** before the review meeting. All concerned, including you, the complainant, should receive any relevant documents **at least five school working days prior to the review meeting**. Only in exceptional circumstances will new evidence be accepted after this time and this is at the discretion of the Chair of the Complaint Review Panel.
 - The date, time and venue should be at a convenient time for all parties. Up to three possible dates should be offered to you but if these all fail to be suitable then the review will be conducted in private. This will involve detailed consideration of all the written evidence by the Complaint Review Panel but will not require your attendance or that of the Principal. The Clerk to the Complaint Review Panel will be in attendance to minute the proceedings.
 - You should be notified in writing of your right to be accompanied to the review meeting by a friend/advocate/interpreter. The letter should also explain that the meeting will be conducted in line with the guidelines Guidance for the Conduct of a Complaint Review Panel.
 - The Clerk to the Complaint Review Panel will convene the meeting for the Stage 3 Complaint Review Panel and will distribute all the paperwork. The panel will elect a Chair for the review hearing. This must not be the Principal or other member of staff, nor can it be the Chair of the Governing Body.
 - The Complaint Review Panel may request that members of staff produce a written report, if appropriate. The panel will not interview children or invite pupils as witnesses to the review meeting.
 - It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Complaint Review Panel to ensure



that the Clerk to the Complaint Review Panel properly minutes the meeting and that the minutes are distributed to all parties involved at Stage 3. Please note that the minutes are the property of the governing body. A model procedure for the conduct of the meeting is included in this policy.

- The aim of the meeting will be to review how the school has managed the complaint and, if possible, to achieve reconciliation between you and the school. However, it has to be recognised that sometimes it may only be possible to establish facts and make recommendations as to future action in order to satisfy you that your complaint has been taken seriously.
- At the conclusion of the meeting the Chair of the Complaint Review Panel should explain that the panel would consider its decision and write to all parties with the outcome of the review within seven school working days.
- A report and any recommendations will be made to the school's governing body at the next full meeting.
- A written statement outlining the decision of the Complaint Review Panel will be sent to you and the Principal.

Guidance for the conduct of a Complaint Review Panel

- The Chair of the Complaint Review Panel will invite everybody into the room at the same time. He/she will facilitate introductions and clarify roles.
- The Chair of the Complaint Review Panel will explain to all present the purpose of the meeting, which is to:
 - Review evidence and outcomes from Stages 1 and 2
 - Evaluate whether the school has followed its policies and procedures
 - Consider ways to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant
- The Chair of the Complaint Review Panel will then outline the procedure for the meeting. He/she should listen to any concerns about the procedure but has the final decision about the arrangements:
 - The complainant will outline their complaint
 - The Principal will be given the opportunity to seek clarification from the complainant
 - The panel may seek clarification from the complainant
 - The Principal will state the school's case
 - The complainant will be given the opportunity to seek clarification from the Principal
 - The panel may seek clarification from the Principal
 - The Principal will be given the opportunity to summarize their position



- The complainant will be given the opportunity to summarize why they feel the school has not properly addressed their complaint
- The meeting will then close. The panel will then deliberate.
- The Complaint Review Panel will then arrive at its decision. This will cover:
 - Findings on the complaint
 - Appropriate action to be taken by the school
 - Any recommended changes to the school's systems or procedure.

The decision will be notified to all parties, in writing, **within seven school working days.**

Stage 4 – Complaint proceeds to ADEK

If you feel that the school has not properly investigated your complaint or that it has not followed its published procedures, you are entitled to have all matters considered by ADEK.

The below link provides the contact details and location of the ADEK complaints department, as well as an online complaints form.

<https://www.adec.ac.ae/ar/Pages/ContactUs.aspx>

ADEK Main Branch telephone: 02-6150000

This policy is written in conjunction with the following legislation:

- ADEK Policy and Guidance Manual (2014-2015)
 - Policy 3: Students Protection, Corresponding to Article () of the Organising Regulations
 - Policy 21: School's Complaint Committee: Corresponding to Article (26) of the Organising Regulations
 - Policy 26: Licensing and Qualifications, Corresponding to Article (31) of the Organising Regulations



Concerns and Complaints Policy - Appendix A

Stage 3 Complaints Form – for review by Complaints Panel

If you are not satisfied or feel that you have been unfairly treated, we would like you to indicate your concern. It is, however, important that you attempt to resolve any difficulties in the first instance by discussing your concerns/complaints with a member of staff or the Principal at the school.

If you have tried this and are still not satisfied with the response then please fill in all the sections of this form and return it to the Chair of Governors, c/o the Principal's secretary.

Please return to the Principal's secretary via the school office, marked CONFIDENTIAL.

Your name:	
Pupil's name:	
Relationship to Pupil:	
Daytime contact number:	Evening Contact number:
Please give details of your complaint:	
Page 1	

Have you completed Stage 1 – Discuss with teacher of the Complaints Procedure? YES / NO
Have you completed Stage 2 - Written complaint to Principal of the Complaints procedure? YES / NO
To whom at the school did you report the problem?
What was the response?
What steps do you feel should have been taken by the school to resolve this matter?
What steps do you feel should now be taken by the school to resolve this matter?
Signature:
Date:



INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
مدارس انٹرنیشنل کمیونٹی

Official Use Only

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint Panel date:

Complaint Panel attendees:

Outcome:

Complainant informed:

Page 3