

ITALIAN BILINGUAL SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Updated: 2020

For review: 2024

1.0 Rationale

Parents and other members of the school community may, from time to time, wish to complain about a school matter.

Complaints handling at the Italian Bilingual School is fair, efficient, and accessible. The school fosters a respectful and productive workplace culture where all members of the school community and staff can raise their concerns directly. All complaints will be dealt with sensitively and confidentially will be maintained. The matter must be resolved as soon as possible and in a way which treats all parties with dignity and respect. It is important to note that anonymous complaints are not normally accepted or acted upon.

Wherever possible, staff should attempt to directly resolve an issue or complaint raised by a member of the school community by providing feedback or relevant information. The vast majority of the concerns which arise from parents, students and others need never take the form of a formal complaint. The Principal and teachers are available to discuss and resolve these concerns in more informal ways.

The following procedures set out ways for resolving complaints in those few instances where a solution has not been reached by informal means and the person with a grievance wishes to make a formal complaint.

2.0 Definitions

A complaint can be:

an expression of dissatisfaction made by a community member or consumer about any aspect of a service provided (or contracted) by the school, the behaviour or decisions of staff, or about practices, policies and procedures.

a staff complaint about another staff member relating to a range of concerns, including interpersonal conflict, staff behaviour, disagreements about how work is allocated or managed, disagreements about the application of workplace policies or other perceived unfairness.

3.0 Aims

- To resolve issues and concerns with members of the school community and staff, face to face
- To provide a forum for dialogue and discussion
- To provide a mechanism for all concerned parties to communicate concerns and find a resolution.

4.0 Implementation

It is not appropriate for parents to approach other parents or their children with the intention of resolving any issues.

- The person making the complaint is referred to in the procedures as the 'complainant'.
- Complaints about school matters should be made to the Principal. In the case of a formal complaint against the Principal, the complainant should contact the Co.As.It. General Manager who represents the Co.As.It. Board of Directors.
- It is the responsibility of the school Principal to ensure that neither the parent making the complaint, nor the child involved is in any way victimised as a result of their actions and that the rights of teachers are not prejudiced in the investigation of complaints.
- The person managing the complaint should gather information, assess the issues raised by the complaint and consider reasonable outcomes.
- Where there is a risk of significant harm to a student, the matter must be referred to the Child Protection Helpline as advised by the Mandatory Reporter Guide.
- Allegations of criminal conduct must be referred to NSW Police.
- Complaints should be finalised within 20 working days and all parties will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint, the reasons for any decisions and the outcomes that will be implemented.
- A complainant can request a review of a complaint outcome, which should be done within 10 working days from the decision, and will be carried out by an independent person and a person of equivalent or more senior level within the department who has not previously managed the complaint.

5.0 Receiving a formal complaint

A formal complaint may be made in writing or verbally.

- Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Principal or appropriate officer will:
 - Provide a copy of the written complaint to the staff member who is the subject of the complaint;
 - Provide a copy of these procedures to the complainant and the staff member/s concerned.
- Upon receipt of a verbal complaint, the Principal or appropriate officer is to:
 - Discuss the complaint with the complainant to identify the key issues and desired outcomes (except in cases of allegation of child abuse – refer to Child Protection Policy);
 - Keep a diary of communication as a record of action taken;
 - Provide or arrange assistance to enable the complaint to be set out in writing;

- Ensure that the complainant signs this document to indicate agreement;
- Provide a copy of this document to the staff member/s concerned;
- Provide a copy of these procedures to the complainant and the staff member/s concerned.

6.0 Responding to a complaint

- At the time the staff member/s concerned receives the complaint, he/she is to be informed that a written response is to be provided within seven (7) working days and that an interim verbal response is not required.

7.0 Resolution of a complaint

- The focus of effective complaint resolution is conciliation.
- Conciliation may be achieved by facilitating a meeting between the relevant parties or by discussing the issue with the parties separately. Any other person who is able to assist should be consulted. A second staff member should be present during dialogue with complainant.
- All parties have the right to be accompanied by an observer during any discussions.
- Typically, the outcomes of successful conciliation may be that:
 - the parties resolve their differences; or
 - the complaint is withdrawn; or
 - a reasonable compromise is agreed upon.
- If a satisfactory outcome is not achieved further conciliation may take place in an effort to resolve any outstanding issues before moving to the next step.
- This process should be completed within twelve (12) working days of receiving a formal complaint.

8. Decision

Where the complaint has not been resolved through conciliation, the Principal or other appropriate officer must make a decision after considering:

1. the substance of the complaint;
2. conclude that the complaint has been substantially resolved;
3. issue of a directive or warning;
4. referral of the matter to the appropriate authority (Co.As.It. General Manager and/or Board of Directors) with a relevant recommendation.

The Principal or appropriate officer must provide a copy of the decision and reasons to the complainant and relevant staff member/s. The staff member/s must also be provided with a copy of all documents referred to the aforementioned authority.

9.0 Appeal

Should the complainant or any relevant staff member be unhappy with the decision, they may appeal to the appropriate authority (Co.As.It. General Manager and/or Board of Directors). Any such appeal must be made in writing within 14 days of receiving a copy of the decision.

Officers dealing with an appeal will:

- review all relevant material;
- discuss the issues with the person making the appeal and any other relevant parties as appropriate;
- attempt to resolve the complaint through further conciliation and, if this is not possible, determine a course of action;
- advise all the parties of the decision and the reasons for it
- deal with the appeal within 10 working days.

10.0 Roles and duties

Co.As.It General Manager:

- support a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution
- foster workplaces that are respectful and productive
- review systematic issues arising from complaints
- review complaints that could not be resolved in schools or in the workplace
- when requested, handle certain individual complaints in accordance with this policy and procedures

Principal:

- manages individual complaints in accordance with this policy and procedures, when appropriate
- review complaint outcomes and management
- escalate high risk and systematic issues arising from complaints
- identify and support complaint managers to manage complaints in accordance with this policy and procedures
- encourage staff to resolve concerns directly wherever possible
- support all staff involved in the complaints process.

All staff:

- treat all people with respect including people who make a complaint and any person who is the subject of a complaint
- read and comply with this complaints policy and procedures
- identify when complaints are being made and assist people to make complaints if they wish to do so
- respond to individual complaints, when requested
- escalate certain complaints and reviews of complaint handling to more senior staff, if necessary.

10.0 Review

This policy will be reviewed according to the Co.As.It. Records Management Policy.

The General Manager Co.As.It. and the Principal are responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and reviewing its effectiveness every three years, or sooner if necessary.

Related Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none">Any and all IBS policies	
Related Forms <ul style="list-style-type: none">Intake Form for Complaints	
Prepared by: Glenda Fegent	Date: March 2007
Reviewed by: Michelle Krikstolaitis	Date: April 2007
Reviewed by: Robert Ruggeri, Kim Irvine and Anna Formosa	Date: December 2009
Reviewed by: Colin May, Silvia Onorati, Sandra Johnston	Date: March 2015
Reviewed by: Giuseppina Pappalardo and Sara Villella	Date: April 2020
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