



Parent Complaints & Communication Policy

2015-2016

Communication Policy

Canadian International School strives to be an open, professional organization in which all members of the community feel valued and able to play a full and active part in its development.

Communications can take a variety of forms, including verbal (meetings/telephones) & written (through letters, notes in planners, email, website/school communicator). Occasionally a communication may be received second-hand. Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where staff members may be teaching full time and running extracurricular activities. Quite often, staff will be working with students at break, during lunch, and after school.

For this reason, the school is proactive in encouraging the use of modern communication networks. All staff email contacts are frequently publicized, with all parents being encouraged to give an email address for prompt and effective communication. Parent Surveys indicate that the majority of parents are satisfied with the communication they have with the school.

All communication should be acknowledged within two (2) school days. "Acknowledgement" is defined by a response from the recipient of communication that the communication has been received. It *does not* refer to a resolution or formal reply.

All communication must be professional, respectful and adhere to the cultural natures of our international make up. Communication will be acknowledged within two (2) school days with a full response within five (5) school days. If this is not possible, the school should continue to keep the parent updated and agree a final date.

It is agreed that the following means of communication will be used for the situations identified below. This is not an exhaustive list and common sense and professional courtesy should prevail.

All communications must be clear. Parents who wish to speak with members of staff should contact the individual teacher directly to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet.

Canadian International School believes that students achieve their best when the school and family work together. All parents will receive:

- Three (3) reports on their child's progress and performance in each subject, including evaluation at the end of the year
- Two opportunities to meet class teacher and the subject specialists
- Parents who are concerned for any reason about their child's progress/welfare need not wait for these meetings, but are encouraged to make an appointment to see their child's teacher as soon as possible
- Access to the school profile including inspection documents
- Communication regarding course lists.
- A monthly newsletter outlining forthcoming events, achievements, and general news items
- Weekly teacher updates with notices and important dates
- d6 School Communicator
- School website (www.cisabudhabi.com) and Facebook page ("Canadian International School Abu Dhabi")
- SMS and email updates from the school
- School Assemblies: Secondary (monthly) & Elementary (Weekly)

Complaints Policy

Canadian International School is committed to listening to the views of stakeholders in order to improve education.

Canadian International School believes that all complaints should be seen as positive as they help to resolve problems and improve our services.

The guiding principles behind the School's Communication and Complaints Procedure are:

- All communications are dealt with promptly, efficiently, objectively and professionally.
- We aim to respond to specific issues in an informal manner and resolve them quickly, sensitively and to the satisfaction of the person concerned.
- Communications can be received by post, by telephone, in person and by email.
- Below are some guidelines showing to whom the issue can be referred.
- Contact will be made with individuals within two working days.

Canadian International School generally enjoys professional relationships with parents, children and the community based on mutual respect and a willingness to listen to the views of others and to respond constructively.

An expression of dissatisfaction may be about an event that has happened or failed to happen, or the way in which something was handled. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the issues that develop into formal complaints.

In most cases concerns or issues raised can be resolved through discussion and good communication. Inevitably, however, some people may not be satisfied with the outcome and under such circumstances a formal procedure needs to be followed to ensure all involved are treated fairly and that the situation may be resolved amicably and in a timely manner.

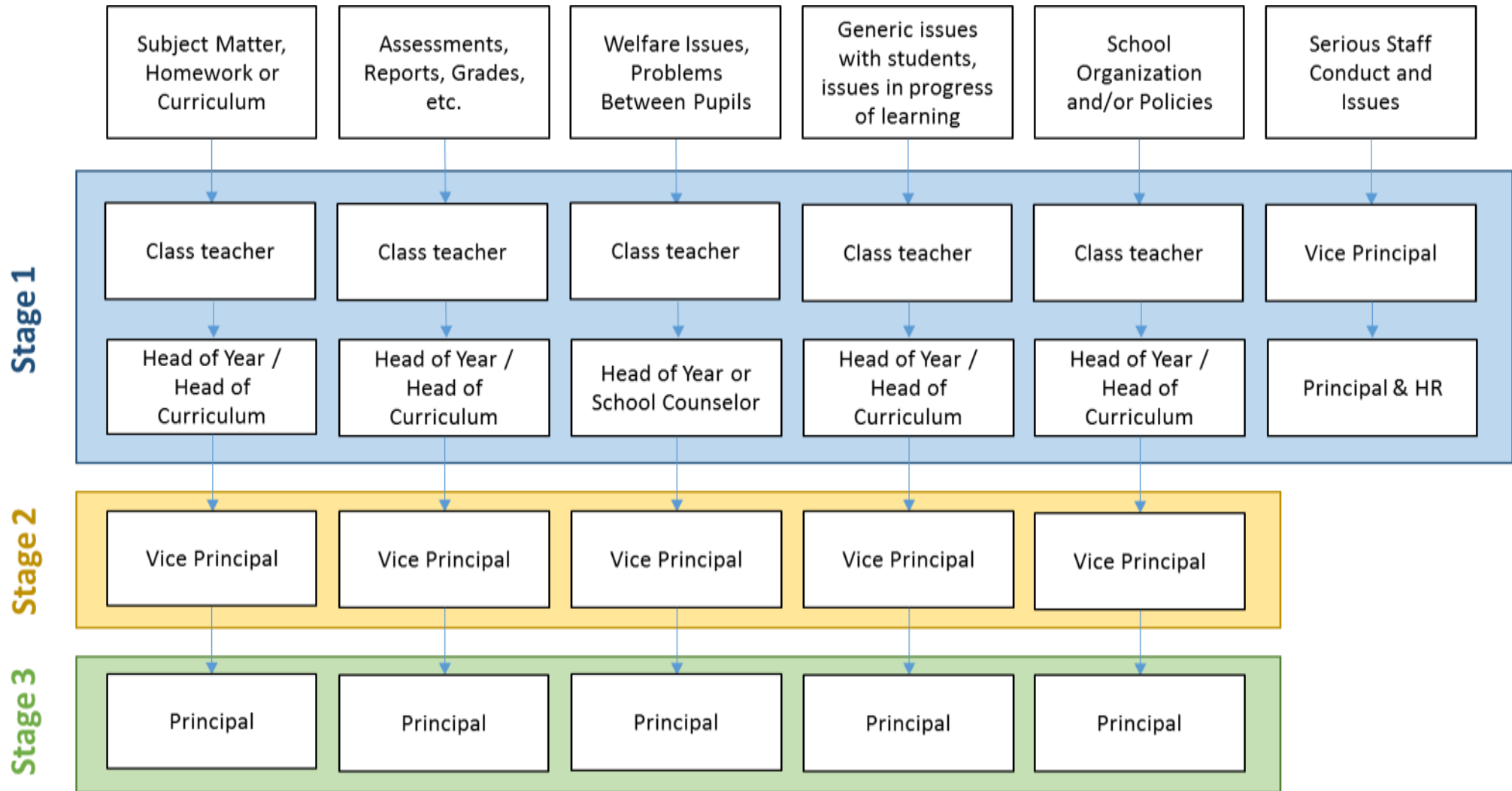
When a complaint has been made most people want:

- To be dealt with immediately and with a sense of urgency
- To have opportunities privately to discuss the matter
- To be listened to
- To receive a sincere apology
- To be told what action is to be taken
- To be reassured that all measures will be taken to prevent the concern happening again in the future

Complaints should only concern individual students and/or cases. If multiple parents have a singular concern, they may communicate these through one elected parent representative.

Records of complaints will be stored in the administration office.

Referral Routes and Progression for Parent Complaints and Concerns



Complaint Resolution Procedure

At each stage in the procedure, efforts must be made to keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology
- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again
- An undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint

It may also be the case however that the complaint may not have any substance and is therefore considered to be unfounded or unsubstantiated.

CIS follows a three-stage procedure:

Stage 1 – Informal and/or formal meeting with class teacher, year leader, or curriculum leader

Stage 2 – Formal written complaint to Vice Principal

Stage 3 – Formal written complaint to Principal

Please note that any complaints made out of order and not according to the procedures listed below will not be considered. There will be no walk-in meetings with the Vice-Principal or Principal at any time.

Stage 1 – Informal and Formal Meeting with Teacher

Most concerns can be easily resolved informally by discussion and good communication with the school staff. Clarity is necessary in ascertaining whether a parent is asking a question, or expressing an opinion, rather than making a complaint. Parents may approach the class teacher or year leader directly with a concern to attempt to resolve the matter.

If the parent wishes to meet with the class teacher, they must contact the teacher through email to set up an appointment. **No walk-in meetings with staff members will be accepted during school hours.**

Before the issue will be considered by the Vice Principal, a formal meeting must have taken place between the parent(s) and teacher(s). The contents, discussion, and participants of said meeting must be recorded on the “Parent/Teacher Meeting Form”, available on the school website. Should the issue remain unresolved, despite best efforts, they should be asked to state their views in a formal letter, attach the completed and signed Parent/Teacher Meeting Form, and submit via email to the relevant Vice Principal for review.

Stage 2 – Complaint to Vice Principal

The Vice Principal will investigate the complaint and will reply in full within five (5) school days, where practicable, of the receipt of all required materials. If it is not possible to reply within this timescale a letter will be sent to this effect with a brief explanation for the delay and an indication as to when the complaint is likely to receive a full response. The Vice Principal may provide an opportunity for the complainant to meet him/her to supplement any information provided previously.

Stage 3 – Formal Complaint to Principal

If the complainant feels compelled to escalate the issue to the Principal, he/she must issue a new formal letter containing:

1. A clear outline of why the resolutions offered by both the teacher(s) and the Vice Principal were not to their satisfaction.
2. Clear copy of record of Parent/Teacher Meeting Form

In order for the appeal to be considered by the Principal, all materials must be submitted to the school with five (5) working days of the Vice Principal's response in Stage 3.

Within three (3) days of a written appeal, the Principal will reply to the complainant to acknowledge receipt of the written request. The letter should also explain that the complainant has the right to submit any further documents relevant to the complaint. The Principal will investigate the complaint and will reply in full within ten (10) school days.

Investigating Complaints

The Investigating Officer appointed (as named by the Principal) will have no prior involvement with the case and must be objective and do the following:

- Establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- Meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information necessary)
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- Conduct an interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- Keep notes of any interview for record

Dealing With Unreasonable Persistent Complaints

It is vital that such incidents are dealt with effectively and where genuine complaints are raised they should be dealt with fairly, honestly and properly, but where behavior is characterized by:

- Actions that are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious and/or
- Any insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason and/or
- Any insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner,

the individual should be made aware of their behavior and processes to stem excessive and unreasonable complaints for such individuals.

Abusive Complaints

All parties have a right to be treated courteously and with respect. If staff feel threatened they should report their concerns to the Principal who will consider:

- Writing to the complainant requesting that the behavior ceases
- Setting restrictions for further contact with staff
- Reporting violent or aggressive incidents to the police

Please Note:

If there is an ADEC investigation the Principal will take direction from ADEC representation and abide by ADEC processes and timelines.