



STAFF CONCERNS PROCEDURE

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GUIDANCE FOR STAFF MEMBERS:

1. Points for consideration when using this procedure

- 1.1 A concern is something that is causing anxiety to a person with a legitimate interest in the school. It may be about school policies or procedures, the conduct or actions of members of staff employed at the school or the standards of teaching and learning.
- 1.2 This concerns procedure is intended to be used by those persons who have a concern relating to the school and no other alternative process exists for addressing that concern.
- 1.3 **INITIALLY, MOST CONCERNS WILL BE RESOLVED VERBALLY.** There should not be a requirement for the concerned individual to put their concern in writing at the informal stage. Where language could be a problem, then an interpreter will be provided.
- 1.4 MES Cairo will keep a record of all concerns made and the actions taken. When receiving anonymous concerns, in the majority of cases the only action the Head Teacher will take is to log the concern and a record of any actions taken in response to the concern. However, there may be exceptions to this where the Head Teacher feels further action should be taken and it is for the Head Teacher to use his/her discretion in making that decision and in deciding how to proceed in such cases.
- 1.5 There should be no attempt to deal with concerns outside of this procedure. If any member of the school is approached by a concerned individual they should direct them to the Head Teacher who will direct them to the appropriate member of staff. When the concern is about the Head Teacher or School Director, then it would be appropriate for the concerned individual to be advised to write to the Managing Director or Chairman of the Board.
- 1.6 It is important that all concerns are taken seriously. Children learn best when there is an effective partnership between the school and the stakeholders. All members of the school community are entitled to have their points of view properly considered and heard.
- 1.7 It is very important that all concerns are dealt with as swiftly and as fairly as possible. Failure to address concerns promptly frequently results in greater dissatisfaction.
- 1.8 Concerns relating to issues, which occurred more than three months before, will generally be ruled 'out of time'.
- 1.9 Head Teachers or Middle Managers should not investigate when a concern is about their own actions. These concerns will be dealt with by the School Director, Managing Director and/or Chairman of the Board.
- 1.10 When investigating a concern, the investigator officer should try to establish what happened, discover what the concerned individual feels would remedy the situation and interview those involved, keeping notes of the interviews. It may be appropriate to have another person present to take notes on occasions.

2. **Stage One: Local Resolution Of The Problem (the informal stage)**

- 2.1 In the vast majority of cases a problem can and should be resolved by contacting the member of staff directly involved with the problem. The initial communication with the member of staff may be by letter, email, telephone conversation or in person by appointment. Where this action does not lead to the problem being resolved, then the concern should be dealt with through the formal stages of this procedure.

The majority of concern cases will be resolved at Stage One.

3. **Stage Two: The Formal Stage**

- 3.1 If the concerned individual is not satisfied with the response from the member of staff at Stage One, they should be advised that the next stage is to put their concern in writing to the appropriate Head Teacher. Where the Head Teacher is the subject of the concern then Sections 4 and 5 of this procedure apply.
- 3.2 The Head Teacher will be responsible for carrying out an investigation or appointing another senior member of staff to carry out the investigation and report their findings to the Head Teacher who will then reach a conclusion based on the investigation. Notes should be kept of any interviews held as part of the investigation. In order to clarify the specific details of the concern, the nature of the concern and any background to the concern, the investigating officer may feel it necessary to meet with the concerned individual. The investigating officer should produce notes of this interview.
- 3.3 At the conclusion of their investigation the investigating officers will compile a report detailing their findings and any recommendations or actions they propose need to be considered by the Head Teacher.
- 3.4 When writing to the Head Teacher the concerned individual should seek to include details that might assist the investigation, such as witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of relevant documents.
- 3.5 The Head Teacher should write to the concerned individual within five school days of receipt of their letter, setting out who is conducting the investigation and that the Head Teacher will write again to the concerned individual within a further 20 school days, setting out the actions taken to investigate the concern and their findings (that is in total 25 school days from the date the letter of concern was received).
- 3.6 Before the Head Teacher (or senior member of staff investigating) interviews a member/s of staff, they must be informed that they can be accompanied by a colleague.
- 3.7 Once satisfied that the investigation has been concluded and they have reached a decision on the concern, the Head Teacher will notify the concerned in writing of their conclusions and any actions that will be taken as a result of the concern (except where this would involve taking any formal action against individual members of staff which would remain confidential). This should be done no later than 20 school days as set out in paragraph 3.5 above. The Head Teacher may feel it appropriate to meet with the concerned individual to communicate their findings.
- 3.8 The outcome of the investigation would usually be one of the following but not limited to:
- The evidence indicates that the concern was substantiated and therefore upheld
 - The concern was substantiated in part or in full (some details would be given of the actions the school will take in response to the concern except where they may be of a disciplinary or other such nature relating to an individual member of staff)
 - There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion so the concern is inconclusive
 - The concern is not substantiated by evidence and therefore not upheld
- 3.9 At this stage the concerned individual will be told that consideration of the concern by the Head Teacher is now concluded. The concerned individual will also be informed that if they are not

- satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, they may request that the Board of Directors review the process followed by the Head Teacher in handling the concern.
- 3.10 The concerned individual must be advised in writing of exactly who to contact and the timescale by which they should make contact, should they wish to pursue the matter to stage Three – The Concerns Review Panel. This stage is set out below in paragraph 6.
- 3.11 This request must be made in writing to the School Director within 10 school days of receiving the outcome from the Head Teacher and must include a statement specifying reasons for the request for the review and any perceived failures arising from the investigation process followed.

4. WHERE THE CONCERN IS ABOUT THE ACTIONS OF THE HEAD TEACHER

Stage One: Local resolution of the problem (the informal stage):

- 4.1 In the vast majority of cases a problem can and should be resolved by speaking to the Head Teacher directly in an effort to resolve the problem or concern. The initial communication with the Head Teacher may be by letter, telephone conversation, in person or by appointment. Where this action does not lead to the problem being resolved, then the concern should be dealt with through the formal stage of this procedure.

5. Stage Two: The Formal Stage (where the concern is about the actions of the Head Teacher)

- 5.1 If the concerned individual is not satisfied with the response from the Head Teacher at Stage One, they should be advised that the next stage is to put their concern in writing to the School Director, who will advise the Managing Director and/or Chairman of the Board.
- 5.2 The School Director be responsible for carrying out an investigation and report their findings to the Managing Director and Chairman of the Board . They will then reach a conclusion based on the investigation. Notes should be kept of any interviews held as part of the investigation. In order to clarify the specific details of the concerns, the School Director may feel it necessary to meet with the concerned individual.
- 5.3 At the conclusion of their investigation, the School Director will compile a report detailing their findings and any recommendations or actions they propose need to be considered by the Board of Directors.
- 5.4 When writing the initial letter to the School Director, the concerned individual should seek to include details that might assist the investigation, such as witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of relevant documents.
- 5.5 The School Director should write to the concerned individual within five school days of receipt of their letter, setting out who is conducting the investigation and that they will write to the concerned individual within a further 20 school days setting out the actions taken to investigate the concern and their findings (that is in total 25 school days from the date the letter of concern was received).
- 5.6 Before the School Director interviews a member/s of staff, they must be informed that they may be accompanied by a colleague.
- 5.7 Once satisfied that the investigation has been concluded and a decision reached, the School Director will notify the concerned individual in writing of their conclusions and any actions that will be taken as a result of the concern (except where this would involve taking any formal action against individual members of staff which would remain confidential). This should be done no later than 20 school days as set out in paragraph 5.5 above. The School Director may feel it appropriate to meet with the concerned individual to communicate their findings.
- 5.8 The outcome of the investigation would usually be one of the following, but not limited to:
- The evidence indicates that the concern was substantiated and therefore upheld

- The concern was substantiated in part or in full (some details would be given of the actions the school will take in response to the concern except where they may be of a disciplinary or other such nature relating to an individual member of staff)
 - There is sufficient evidence to reach a conclusion so the concern is inconclusive
 - The concern is not substantiated by evidence and therefore not upheld
- 5.9 At this stage the concerned individual will be told that consideration of the concern by the School Director is now concluded. The concerned individual will also be informed that if they are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, they may request that the Concerns Review Panel review the process followed by the School Director in handling the complaint. This stage is outlined in paragraph six below.
- 5.10 The concerned individual must be advised in writing of exactly who to contact and the timescale by which they should make contact, should they wish to pursue the matter to Stage Three – the Concerns Review Panel. This stage is set out below in paragraph 6.
- 5.11 This request must be made in writing to the Managing Director within 10 school days of receiving the outcome from the School Director and must include a statement specifying reasons for the request for the review and any perceived failures arising from the investigation process followed.

6. Stage Three: The Concerns Review Panel (All Concerns)

- 6.1 Review Panels are convened to review the school's response to a concern (Stage Two). If the concern has not been settled at the formal stage and the person with the concern or grievance is not satisfied with the outcome or the way it was dealt with, they can ask for the process to be reviewed by the review panel – the next stage on the process.
- 6.2 The Concerns Review Panel's purpose, in each case, is to reconsider (not to reinvestigate) the original concern and the school's response to it, including its investigation and to make recommendations with reason to all those involved. The Review Panel's role is not to undertake a reinvestigation of the case, nor to extend its reference beyond the above matters.
- 6.3 The role of the Concerns Review Panel is to review the actions and supporting evidence of the Stage Two investigation. The Panel is not permitted to do the following:
- To reinvestigate the complaint
 - To reach a definite view on a point of law
 - To criticise the concerned individual for any "contributory negligence" that may have contributed to the difficulties
 - To be an alternative to a disciplinary hearing, as far as staff are concerned
 - To hear any new concerns (except if they relate to the length of time taken to deal with substantive concern).
- 6.4 The Concerns Review Panel will consist of the School Director and at least two members of the Board of Directors.
- 6.5 The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written evidence but any requests received to make an oral representation should be considered sympathetically.
- 6.6 The panel will consider the letter from the concerned individual (outlined in paragraph 5.11 above) and if needed request that the concerned individual submit in writing (within a reasonable timescale) any further information needed by them relating to their reasons for requesting a review and any perceived failures arising from the investigation process followed. The School Director will be invited to make a written response to the concerned individual's submissions.
- 6.7 The Concerns Review Panel should have access to all records, notes or information considered during the investigation (unless prevented from doing so for reasons such as data protection).
- 6.8 The outcome of the investigation may be one of the following but not limited to:
- The evidence indicates that the concern was substantiated and therefore upheld

- The concern was substantiated in part or in full (some details would be given of the actions the school will take in response to the concern except where they may be of a disciplinary or other such nature relating to an individual member of staff)
 - There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion so the concern is inconclusive
 - The concern is not substantiated by evidence and therefore upheld
- 6.9 The Concerns Review Panel should communicate its findings to the concerned individual, Head Teacher and School Director within 25 school days of receipt by the Executive Secretary of the concerned individual's letter requesting a review.

Dealing with unreasonable or persistent concerns:

The school's definition of this type of concern is a concerned individual who persists in pursuing a grievance where the concerns procedure has been fully and properly exhausted. Their concerns have been thoroughly investigated and have received a comprehensive and full response to each of their concerns, but continue to pursue the matter (and/or any evolving issues) despite correspondence, apologies and/or meetings.

Concerned Individuals (and/or anyone acting on their behalf) may be deemed by the Head Teacher and/or School Director, to be unreasonable or persistent where previous or current contact with them shows that they meet any one of the following criteria (but this list is not exhaustive). The following are given as examples of behaviour by concerned individuals that may be described as unreasonably persistent. (In these examples a "contact" may be in person, by telephone, letter, email, SMS/Whatsapp/social media platform). The concerned individual:

- hinders objective consideration of a "live" concern by the frequency of contact with the school
- makes a string of further concerns about a "live" investigation or changes aspects of the concern during the investigation
- continues to pursue the matter despite having exhausted all stages of the school's concerns procedure
- who seeks an unrealistic outcome and persists in doing so despite being advised that this is the case

An additional consideration of the school may be to decide to deal with such concerns the following way:

- Notify the concerned individual in writing that the school has responded fully to the points raised and has tried to resolve the concern but there is nothing more to add and continuing contact on the matter will serve no useful purpose. The concerned individual should also be notified that the correspondence is at an end and that further communication about the same matters will be acknowledged but not answered.
- When a concerned individual is unreasonably persistent about a concern (and the concern has been properly exhausted) the Head Teacher will report their concerns to the School Director. If the School Director is in agreement that the persistence and behaviour of the individual is unreasonable then the Head Teacher and School Director shall jointly write to the individual setting out why they have come to this conclusion and what action the school is taking and the duration thereof.
- Where a concerned individual continues to behave in an unacceptable fashion the School Director may authorise staff to terminate contact with the concerned individual (except in matters directly related to the education and welfare of their child) and they may discontinue any further investigation being carried out. Any further contacts from the concerned individual in writing will be read and placed on file. Telephone calls relating to the concern will be terminated and logged.

Concerned individuals who behave in an unacceptable way:

The school recognises that some concerned individuals who feel dissatisfied may feel angry about their treatment. However, the school, and the Board of Directors has a duty of care towards the safety and welfare of its staff.

If a member of staff feels threatened by a concerned individual they will report those fears to the Head Teacher (or in the case of the Head Teacher to the School Director). The Head Teacher or School Director will complete an incident report form and as part of the action arising from his/her investigation may consider:

- Writing to the perpetrator requiring a guarantee of no repetition of the behaviour and, if necessary, setting out the conditions and restrictions for further contact.

Model Concerns Procedure – Flowchart

Stage One: Informal Stage

Concerned individual contacts the appropriate person

Concerned individual decides to proceed

Stage Two: Formal Stage

Concerned Individual writes

Head Teacher replies setting out in

The Concerns Review Panel (Stage Three)

Concerned individual writes to School Director
process followed in Stage Two

School Director receives concern

investigates concern

Note: If the concern is about the actions of the Head Teacher, then the School Director carries out the Head Teacher's role indicated above (section 5 in model procedure).

If the concern is about the actions of the School Director, then the Managing Director carries out the School Director's role indicated above.

Concerns Review Panel

School Director completes
panel

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