



PARENT COMPLAINTS POLICY

WRITTEN/LAST REVIEWED BY: MMd
RATIFIED BY: SLT

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OUR MISSION

LEADERSHIP THROUGH EDUCATION: CARE, CHALLENGE, INSPIRE

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS:

Students learn best when there is an effective partnership between the school and the students and you as parents. If we have any concerns about any aspect of your child's behaviour or performance we will contact you immediately. Likewise, if you have any queries or concerns about anything within the overall provision of the school there is always someone to contact at MES Cairo. We are all very approachable and take all concerns seriously. With over 2400 students, 200 teachers and more than 3000 parents there will be many points of view.

MES Cairo is a very busy school and it is important that you contact the appropriate adult to help respond to your concern so that whatever is causing anxiety can be dealt with swiftly and fairly.

If you have a concern about other people or agencies that are not directly connected to the school, we will try and advise you on the best way to deal with this.

Most concerns are minor and can be resolved through discussion quite quickly.

How is a minor concern different from a complaint which is more significant?

A minor concern is something that can be dealt with by an appropriate member of staff, such as a teacher or school leader, and does not involve anyone being at risk of harm either from another person, themselves, or a situation that they may put themselves in. Alongside this, other more significant concerns might be a view that there has been a lapse in what the school agrees to offer.

Who should a minor concern be relayed to?

Initially you should make an appointment through the relevant Administrative Officer to speak to the relevant member of staff about your concern. You may prefer to email details of your concern initially; send your email to mescairo@mescairo.com

How long will it take to deal with a minor concern?

We aim to resolve all minor concerns within two working days.

What will the relevant member of staff do about the concern?

They will work with you to resolve any issues causing anxiety.

- They may talk through the concern with you and ensure that you are provided with the full information so that you are able to make an objective judgement on the situation
- They may speak to other people connected to your concern (if applicable) and call a meeting between you and them so you can discuss the situation
- It may be that your concern is relevant to be discussed at a higher level meeting
- It may be relevant to refer your concern to a senior teacher: Assistant Head, Dean of Students, Deputy Head, Vice Principal or Head Teacher
- It may be relevant to refer your concern to the School Director, Managing Director or Chairman of the Board

What if, after meeting with the relevant member of staff, the concern is still causing you to worry?

You should follow the guidelines which follow.

Will all concerns be dealt with solely within the school?

Generally, yes, but it may be that the nature of the concern indicates that a person is at risk and that it needs to be referred to other agencies outside of the school.

What happens when a significant concern has been made?

Information will be collected from all involved parties in writing by a senior member of staff or, in the case of a complaint against a senior member of staff, by the School Director, Managing Director or Chairman of the Board. Once all this information is collected, a decision will be made on how to proceed and to consider what action may be taken if any. You will be kept informed throughout the process. If your concern has to be dealt with by others outside of the school, it may take longer.

How long will it take to deal with a significant concern?

The school will try to deal with concerns of this nature within five working days and you will be written to explaining how your concern was dealt with. This will however be dependent on how difficult it is to gather information from all parties and/or to arrange to meet with those involved.

What will happen if you are not happy with the way my concern has been dealt with?

If you are not happy with the outcome of your concern you may appeal against the decision to the School Director, Managing Director or Chairman of the Board. In response to this they will set up a hearing with a panel made up of two senior members of staff and a member of the Board of Directors. You may be present at the hearing and you may bring a responsible person to accompany you. At the end of the hearing you will be notified of the outcome in writing within five working days.

PROCEDURE FOR MANAGING PARENTAL CONCERNS**1. Points for consideration when using this procedure**

- 1.1 A concern is something that is causing you as a parent some anxiety. 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 only intended to be used by you if there is no other alternative process in place for addressing your concern.
- 1.3 **INITIALLY, MOST CONCERNS WILL BE RESOLVED VERBALLY.** There is not a requirement for you to put your 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 If any member of the school staff is approached by you as a concerned parent you will be directed to the Head Teacher who will either handle the matter themselves or put you in touch with the appropriate member of staff to best deal with your concern.
- 1.6 There will be some instances, for example when the concern is about the Head Teacher or School Director, where it would be appropriate for you to contact the Managing Director or Chairman of the Board of Directors instead.
- 1.7 When investigating a concern, the investigator will try to establish what happened, discover what you as a parent 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 class teacher/subject teacher or 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 you as a parent are not satisfied with the response from the member of staff at Stage One, you would be advised that the next stage is to put your 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 is 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 will 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 investigator may feel it necessary to meet with you. The investigating officer will produce notes of this interview. All documentation will be sent to the School Director who will decide if this is passed on to the Managing Director and/or Chairman of the Board.
- 3.3 At the conclusion of their investigation the investigator will compile a report detailing their findings and any recommendations or actions they propose will be considered by the Head Teacher.
- 3.4 When writing to the Head Teacher you 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 will write to you within five school days of receipt of your letter, setting out who is conducting the investigation and that the Head Teacher will write again to you within a further 20 school days.
- 3.6 Once satisfied that the investigation has been concluded and they have reached a decision regarding the concern, the Head Teacher will notify you 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 will 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 you to communicate their findings.
- 3.7 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
 - There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion so the concern is inconclusive
 - The concern is not substantiated by evidence and therefore not upheld
- 3.8 At this stage you as a parent will be told that consideration of the concern by the Head Teacher is now concluded. You will also be informed that if you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, you may request that the School Director review the process followed by the Head Teacher in handling the concern.
- 3.9 You will be advised in writing of exactly who to contact and the timescale by which they should make contact, should you wish to pursue the matter to Stage Three – The Concerns Review Panel. This stage is set out below in paragraph 6.
- 3.10 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 YOUR 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, email, telephone conversation, in person or by appointment. Where this action does not lead to the problem being resolved, then the concern will 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 you are not satisfied with the response from the Head Teacher at Stage One, you should put your concern in writing to the School Director, who will advise the Managing Director and the Chairman of the Board of the concern.
- 5.2 The School Director, Managing Director and Chairman of the Board will be responsible for carrying out an investigation and report their findings to the Board of Directors who will then reach a conclusion based on the investigation. Notes will be kept of any interviews held as part of the investigation. In order to clarify the specific details of the concerns, the Investigating Panel may feel it necessary to meet with you. The Investigating Panel will produce notes of this interview.
- 5.3 At the conclusion of their investigation, the investigating Stage Two Panel 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, you as a parent 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 will write to you within five school days of receipt of your letter, setting out who is conducting the investigation and that they will write to you 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 Once satisfied that the investigation has been concluded and a decision reached, the School Director will notify you 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 will be done no later than 20 school days as set out in paragraph 5.5 above.
- 5.7 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
- 5.8 At this stage you will be told that consideration of the concern by the School Director has now concluded. You will also be informed that if you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, you 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.
- 5.9 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 you the parent is not satisfied with the outcome or the way

it was dealt with, you can ask for the process to be reviewed by the Concerns 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 Managing Director plus two other 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 you the parent and if needed request that you 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 Managing Director will be invited to make a written response to the concerned individual's submissions.
- 6.7 **The Stage Three 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 will communicate its findings to you the parent, 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 parent 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.

Parents (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 parents that may be described as unreasonably persistent. In these examples "contact" may be in person, by telephone, letter, email, SMS/Whatsapp/social media platform. The concerned parent:

- 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 you as a parent 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. You will 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 parent 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 parent is unreasonable then the Head Teacher and School Director shall jointly write to the parent setting out why they have come to this conclusion and what action the school is taking and the duration thereof.
- Where a concerned parent continues to behave in an unacceptable fashion the School Director may authorise staff to terminate contact with the concerned parent (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 parent in writing will be read and placed on file. Telephone calls relating to the concern will be terminated and logged.

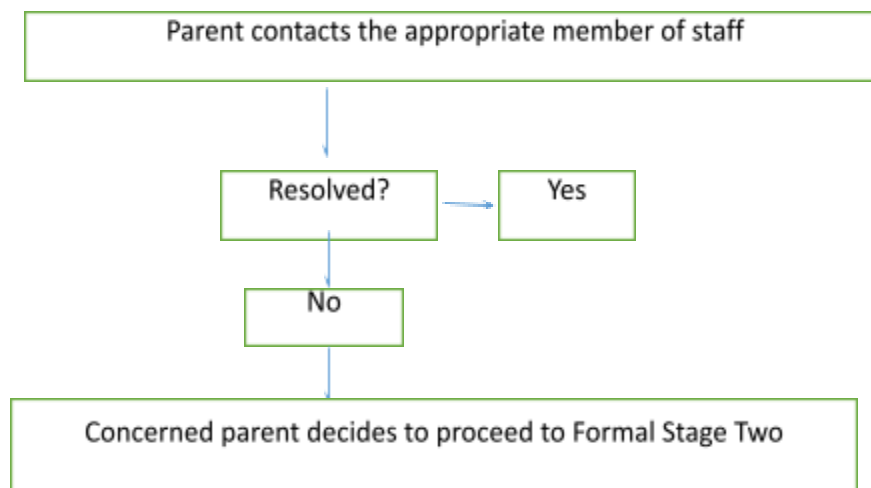
PARENTS WHO BEHAVE IN AN UNACCEPTABLE WAY

The school recognises that some parents 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.

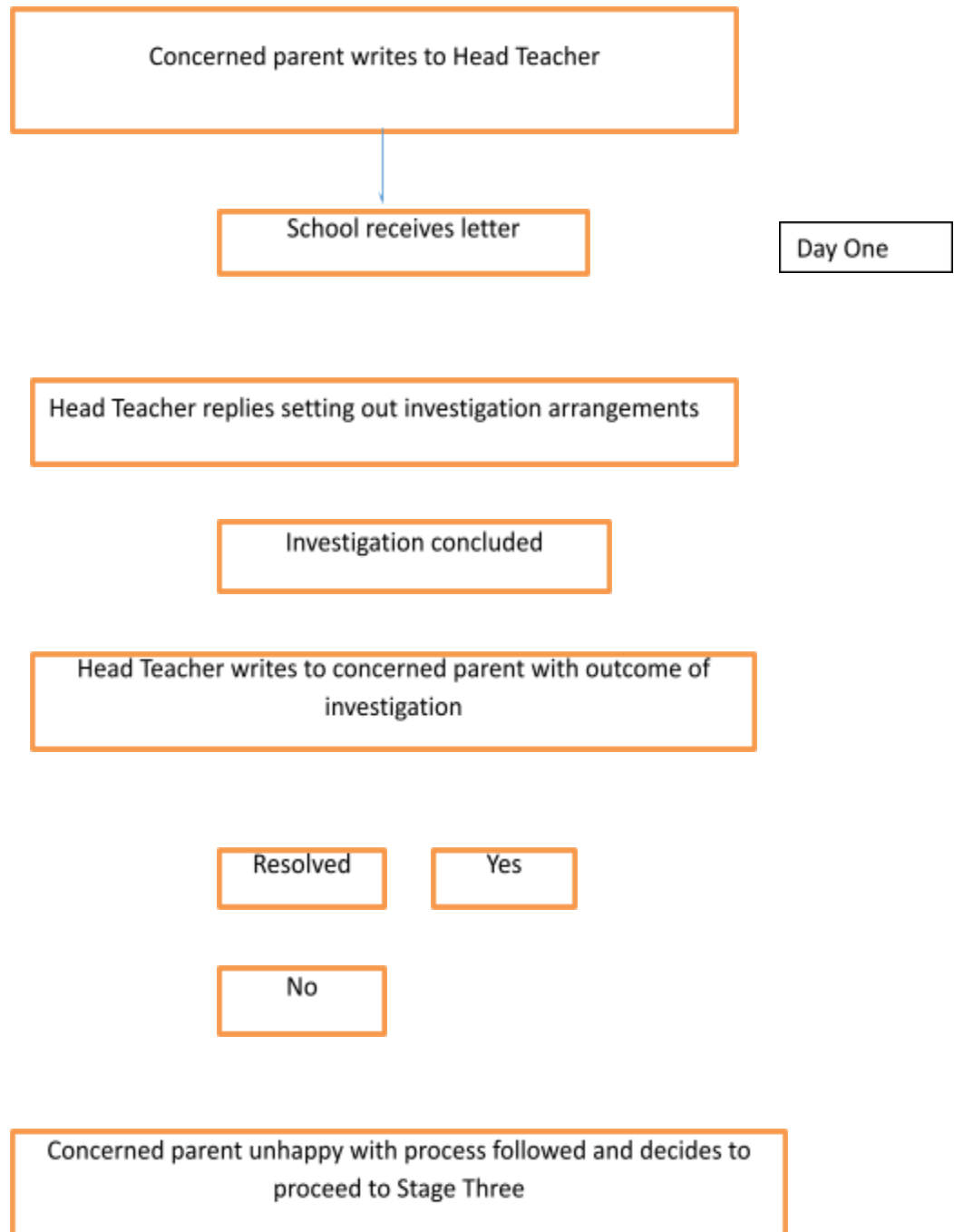
If a member of staff feels threatened by a parent they will report those fears to the Head Teacher (or in the case of the Head Teacher to the School Director). The Head Teacher or School Director will complete an incident report form and as part of the action arising from his/her investigation may consider:

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

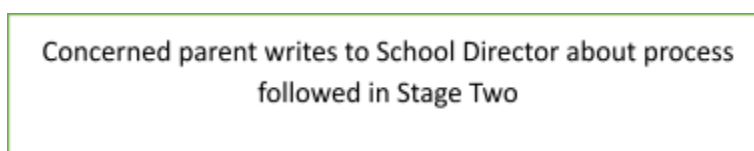
PARENT CONCERNS PROCEDURE – FLOWCHART **Stage One: Informal Stage**

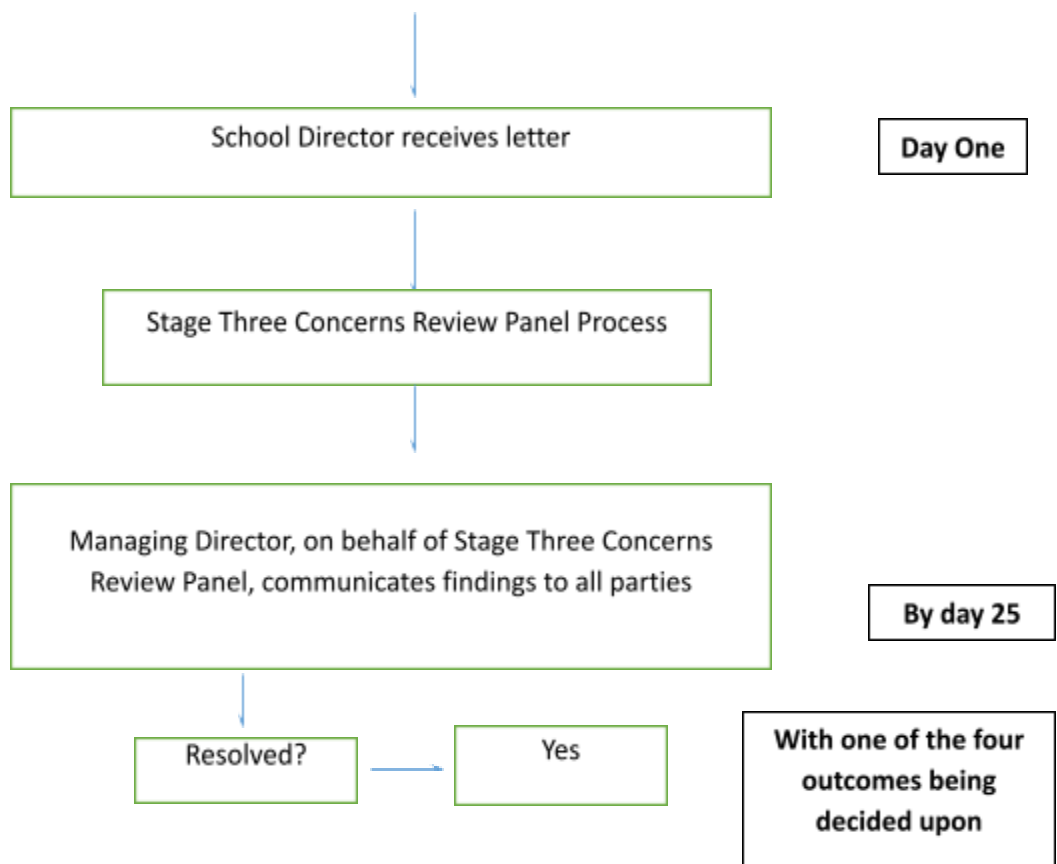


PARENT CONCERNS PROCEDURE – FLOWCHART
Stage Two: Formal Stage



PARENT CONCERNS PROCEDURE – FLOWCHART
The Concerns Review Panel (Stage Three)





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 Head Teacher's role indicated above.