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Embassy International School Grievance/Complaint Against Head Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a procedure to resolve any disputes that may arise between the Head and other people in the school community. It applies to all community stakeholders of the Embassy International School.

The Embassy International School has two Heads – one focused on educational issues and the other focused on administrative issues. The Heads can substitute and deputise for each other when necessary.

Context

The Embassy International School has a series of policies and procedures concerning quality control and conduct of staff and parents.

These policies are in the staff and parents' handbooks and on the school website.

This procedure is for use if a community stakeholder finds themselves with a serious grievance, or when other procedures and policies have been contravened.

Community stakeholders are protected against any form of retaliation should they raise a grievance.

Informal Resolution of Complaints

Many of the issues which arise in the context of an international school are due to cultural differences. Maintaining open-minded, respectful and frequent dialogue between all stakeholders will make it possible to resolve many issues without the need for escalation.

Any issues which cannot be resolved between stakeholders at this level should be brought informally to a Head of School, who will in the first instance seek an informal solution based on discussion.

Should informal attempts at resolution not succeed, the formal grievance procedure should be used.

Time Limits

All formal grievances should be raised in writing within two weeks of the failure of informal approaches to resolve them.

The time limits may be modified by mutual written agreement of the parties.

If an interested party should fail to observe the time limits in any particular step, the grievance will be considered to have been resolved to their satisfaction.

Grievance Procedure:

The interested party is required to represent themselves throughout the course of this procedure. All meetings will be minuted. If a staff member is involved and requires to have a meeting due to this procedure in time normally scheduled for other activities then that activity will be either rearranged or someone else will lead it, without financial repercussions on the staff member involved.

Step 1

If informal attempts to resolve grievances fail, the first step is to make a formal written complaint to a Head of School.

This:

- must identify the complaint, identifying the policy or right or dignity which is alleged to have been violated,
- must contain a non-judgemental, short statement of the facts surrounding the complaint, and
- must state the solution or outcome sought.

Grievances which do not include these elements will be dismissed.

Within five (5) working days from receipt of the written grievance, the Head of School will schedule a meeting with the interested party to discuss the contents. This will be minuted by a school administrative worker. This meeting shall be held within fifteen working days from receipt of the written complaint. The Head of School will formally respond to the interested party in writing within five working days of this meeting. A copy will be kept on file.

Step 2

If this is not resolved by step 1, then the staff member may raise the complaint with the permanent Complaints, Feedback and Suggestions Committee described in the Quality Control Policy Complaints chapter and the procedures followed there must be applied.

If this does not resolve the issue then step 3 must be followed.

Step 3 Arbitration

The interested parties involved will have the opportunity for their cases to be put to arbitration by the school psychologist as a neutral and unbiased arbitrator. The school psychologist may wish to call up an arbitration committee from outside the school. This will be an odd number of people of suitable professional background chosen by the school psychologist and if they require to be paid for their time, the school will meet this cost.

Each side in the dispute will have a fixed time to present their case, the written evidence from the previous steps will be considered. Each side will be given a chance for one response to allegations made after their initial presentation.

The time limits on these presentations will be set by the arbitration committee.

The committee will decide the solution by a simple majority vote and all sides will accept this solution as binding.

Action must also be recommended to avoid future disputes of a similar nature.

Dr Lindsay Davidson, Head of School
Embassy International School
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