

# **The Lebanese School - Qatar**

## **Complaints Policy**

**2019-2020**

## **Introduction**

The Lebanese School has the students' best interest at heart, and endeavors to provide the best education possible. However, grievances over specific matters occur, which may result in a complaint.

This policy sets out The Lebanese School's approach to dealing with concerns and complaints.

## **Aims and Objectives**

In operating this complaints policy, the school aims at:

- encouraging resolution of problems
- keeping people informed of the progress
- ensuring a full and fair investigation
- addressing all the points of the issue and providing an effective response
- respecting confidentiality

## **The Difference between a Concern and a Complaint**

A **concern** may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A **complaint** may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. The Lebanese School takes concerns seriously, and will make effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

## **The Complaints Process**

### **Stage 1 – Informal Stage**

The expression of concern should be made to the school at the earliest opportunity.

First, talk to the concerned teacher to clarify the facts and resolve the issue. A request for discussion with the Head of Section may also be desirable before making a formal complaint.

### **Stage 2 – Complaint Heard by the Head of Section**

If not satisfied with the outcome of the discussion with the teacher, the complainant may wish to make a formal written complaint (a letter or an email) to the Head of Section – see appendix 1. The complaint should be acknowledged within 1 school day.

An investigation will be carried out and the outcome will be communicated to the concerned person within 5 school days.

The Head of Section may delegate the task of gathering the information to another staff member, but not the decision taking.

Once a decision has been reached, the Head of Section will ensure that the concerned party is notified about the action taken.

If the complaint is about the Head of Section, the matter should be referred to the Superintendent directly (Please refer to Stage 3).

### **Stage 3 – Complaint Heard by the Superintendent**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision taken in stage 2, he/she can take it a step further to the superintendent, by submitting a written formal complaint. This can be handed in a letter form, sealed in an envelope to the executive secretary, or sent as an email directly to the superintendent.

### **Stage 4 – Complaint Heard by the Board of Trustees**

Complaints rarely reach this formal level, but should it happen, the complainant should make a formal complaint to the Board of Trustees within 10 school days of the decision

provided by the school. The complaint needs to be sent in a sealed envelope via the school office, to the Board of Trustees.

The letter to the Board of Trustees needs to detail the reasons of the complaint, including the reason of dissatisfaction and the desired outcome. The Board of Trustees will then decide on a suitable approach to deal with the complaint, and the complainant will receive their findings and recommendations within 15 school days.

### **Stage 5 – Complaint Heard by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education**

If all attempts to resolve the conflict are unsuccessful, the complainant may complain to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education via their online complaint system:  
<https://privateschools.edu.gov.qa/Complaints/Pages/addcomplaints.aspx>

## **Investigating Complaints**

It is suggested that at each stage, the person investigating the complaint makes sure to:

- interview those involved in the matter and/or those who complained about it;
- find out 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 him in case further information is needed;
- learn what the complainant feels would put things right;
- conduct the interviews with open-mindedness, and persist in the questioning until the situation is clarified;
- keep records of the interviews.

## **Withdrawing a Complaint**

If a complainant wishes to withdraw his complaint, he will be asked to confirm the withdrawal in writing - see appendix 2.

### **Unreasonable Complainants**

The Lebanese School is committed to deal with all complaints in a fair and impartial manner, and to provide a high quality service to those who complain. However, the school does not consent its staff to tolerate unacceptable behavior, and will take action to protect it from any abusive, offensive or threatening behavior.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable (invalid) when the person making the complaint:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds on which the complaint was based, or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to abide by the adopted complaints investigation process while still wishing the complaint to be resolved;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff members who are trying to deal with the issue, and seeks to have them replaced;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed;
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation, where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable (invalid) if the person making the complaint does any of the following either face-to-face, by telephone, in writing or electronically:

- behaving maliciously and aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- publishing unacceptable information on social media platforms, and/or newspapers.

Complainants should limit communications with the school while a complaint is under investigation. Constant and excessive correspondence, either by letter, phone, email or text can slow down, even impede reaching a resolution.

Whenever possible, the Head of Section or the Superintendent will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally. If the complainant keeps on contacting the school, the Head of Section will address him formally via writing, drawing his attention to his unreasonable behaviour, and asking him to change it.

In case the complainant persists in contacting the school, causing a significant level of disruption, the school may alter its communication methods, and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately, and the police will be informed. The sanctions may also include banning an individual from entering LSQ premises.

### **Social Media**

In order for the complaints to be resolved as quickly and fairly as possible, the school requests that the complainants do not discuss the complaints publicly via social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc...

The school will deal with the complaints in a confidential and respectful manner. The complainants are expected to do the same.

## Appendix 1

### Complaints Form

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Telephone Number:**

**Name of Child:**

**Details of the Complaint (please include whether you have expressed your concerns informally, and to whom and when).**

**Do you have a suggestion for change?**

**Please attach any piece of evidence to back up your complaint, such as letters or reports.**

**Date:-----**

**Signature:-----**

## Appendix 2

### Complaint Withdrawal Form

I, the undersigned, \_\_\_\_\_ do not wish to proceed with  
the complaint that I filed against \_\_\_\_\_ on  
\_\_\_\_\_. I hereby WITHDRAW the complaint that I submitted.

**Complainant's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix 3

#### Complaints Flowchart

