

Parent and Student Complaint Procedure

At Mahatma Gandhi International School, we are dedicated to cultivating an environment wherein all members of the school community feel welcome, safe and valued. The school's philosophy stems from the idea of non-violence, and hence our approach is to view "complaints" as feedback that help one grow. At the heart of all we do, is the value we place on our relationships and at MGIS, we strive to build deep, respectful connections between all. Maintaining mutual respect between and among all stakeholders is of utmost importance to us.

We understand that challenges may occasionally arise, and we are dedicated to addressing them promptly and effectively while maintaining our commitment to transparency and support. Our open-door policy encourages all members of the school community to share their concerns, and our grievance procedure ensures a fair and respectful resolution. As a small, close-knit school, most issues are resolved quickly and informally. Many issues are addressed through impromptu meetings with parents and students. We take pride in the strong relationships we foster with our parent community. Home visits by class teachers and student-parent-teacher meetings provide opportunities for interaction and mutual understanding. From time to time, parenting and other workshops are organized by the school, through which parents learn what is developmentally appropriate for their children, as well as the processes in the classroom that support their growth. Moreover, regular class council meetings (Appendix 1) give students an early introduction to conflict resolution skills and offer a platform for addressing grievances and resolving misunderstandings.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and respectful process through which parents and students feel supported and comfortable in raising concerns confidentially, without fear of reprisal or recrimination.

Scope:

The Grievance Policy and Procedure applies to all students and parents.

Procedure:

At any stage in the process, students and parents may request the presence of the counselor. Privacy of all parties will be maintained and anonymity if requested, will be respected.

Complaint between students

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

In cases of interpersonal disputes between students, the school prioritizes informal resolution as a first step. This approach involves direct communication between the students involved, facilitated by the class teacher or counselor. By providing a neutral space for discussion, the school encourages students to express their concerns, share perspectives, understand different viewpoints, and work towards a mutually agreeable solution. Additionally, class council meetings offer a platform in a democratic setup for students to address concerns collectively and foster a sense of community. These informal methods aim to resolve conflicts amicably and promote a positive learning environment.

Stage 2: Formal Grievance Procedure

If informal resolution proves unsuccessful, the student has the option to take the matter forward by submitting a written complaint to the program coordinator. This initiates the formal grievance procedure. The coordinator will then investigate the issue by gathering information from both parties involved. Following the investigation, the coordinator will work towards a resolution, which may include mediation or other appropriate measures to address the concerns raised in the complaint.

Stage 3: Appeal

If a student remains dissatisfied with the resolution reached in Stage 2, they have the right to appeal the decision in writing to the head of school. This final step in the grievance procedure provides an opportunity for a higher-level review of the case and a chance to seek a different outcome.

Complaint between student and teacher

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

Being a small, close-knit school, at MGIS, teachers and students work closely together. Small class sizes help teachers to understand their students and vice versa. In case of issues, students are advised to address their concerns directly with the teacher involved, with the support of the class teacher or counselor. This approach aims to foster open communication and find a mutually satisfactory solution. Additionally, class council meetings provide a neutral platform for discussing issues and promoting understanding between students and teachers.

Stage 2: Formal Grievance Procedure

If informal resolution proves unsuccessful, the student may take the matter forward by submitting a written complaint to the program coordinator. This initiates the formal grievance procedure. The coordinator will then investigate the issue by gathering information from both the student and the teacher, as well as any other relevant parties. Following the investigation, the coordinator will work towards a resolution, which may include mediation or other appropriate measures to address the concerns raised in the complaint.

Stage 3: Appeal

If a student remains dissatisfied with the resolution reached in Stage 2, they have the right to appeal the decision in writing to the head of school. This final step in the grievance procedure provides an opportunity for a higher-level review of the case and a chance to seek a different outcome.

Complaint between parent and school

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

In cases of conflicts between parents and the school, the school encourages informal resolution as a first step. Parents are advised to address their concerns directly with the teacher or program coordinator. If necessary, parents can request a formal meeting to discuss the issue in more detail, with the class teacher's mandatory presence. This approach aims to foster open communication and find a mutually satisfactory solution before taking forward the matter.

Stage 2: Formal Grievance Procedure

If informal resolution proves unsuccessful, the parent may take the matter forward by submitting a written complaint to the program coordinator. This initiates the formal grievance procedure. The coordinator will then investigate the issue by gathering information from the parent and relevant school staff. Following the investigation, the coordinator will work towards a resolution, which may include mediation or other appropriate measures to address the concerns raised in the complaint.

Stage 3: Appeal

If a parent remains dissatisfied with the resolution reached in Stage 2, they have the right to appeal the decision in writing to the head of school. This final step in the grievance procedure provides an opportunity for a higher-level review of the case and a chance to seek a different outcome.

Complaint between parent/student and the IB

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

When students or parents have concerns about assessment outcomes in an IB program, it's recommended to begin by addressing the issue directly with the student's teacher. This initial meeting

offers a chance to discuss the student's performance, clarify any misunderstandings about expectations, and identify potential areas for growth. By initiating open communication with the teacher, students and parents can often resolve concerns and gain a better understanding of the assessment process.

Stage 2: Formal Grievance Procedure

If informal discussions with the teacher fail to address concerns about assessment outcomes, parents may need to escalate the matter by submitting a written complaint to the program coordinator. The coordinator will then gather information from the relevant subject teacher or academic coordinator to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation. To seek clarification or request a remark, the coordinator will initiate contact with the IB, providing details of the parent's concerns and the steps taken so far.

Record Keeping: Records of grievances and their resolutions will be maintained confidentially by program coordinators.

Review: This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and relevance to the needs of the school community.

Approval and Implementation: This policy is approved by the Senior Leadership Team and is effective from July 1, 2024.

Points of Contact

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Appendix 1

MGIS Class Council Guidelines

Introduction

At MGIS, class council meetings are a cornerstone of our philosophy and belief that children should have a voice and be heard. To ensure the smooth functioning of these meetings, it is essential to establish clear roles, rules, and procedures.

Purpose

The class council empowers students to take on classroom responsibilities and participate in democratic decision-making. It fosters collaboration, enabling students to discuss activities, plans, and concerns effectively. The council provides a structured environment for productive conflict resolution, strengthening interpersonal relationships and mutual respect. By addressing grievances and resolving misunderstandings, the council promotes a positive and inclusive school environment. Through active participation, students develop essential life skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication.

Roles and Responsibilities

Every two weeks, a council chairperson and secretary are appointed. This may occur through nominations and voting or through direct appointment by the class initiator. The chairperson is responsible for enforcing rules, conducting meetings, ensuring the agenda is followed, and holds one vote without veto power. The secretary records discussions, prepares minutes, and distributes them after the meeting.

Meeting Procedures

- **Agenda:** The chairperson should create an agenda based on member requests.
- **Speaking Order:** Members should indicate their desire to speak by raising their hands, with the chairperson recognizing them in order.

- **Time limits:** Time limits set by the council will be enforced by the chairperson, who will use a watch to monitor speaking times.
- **Recording of Minutes:** Minutes should be taken at each meeting to accurately record discussions and decisions.
- **Review of Previous Minutes:** Meetings should begin with a discussion of the minutes from the previous session.

Ensuring All Members Feel Heard

To create a safe environment, it is crucial to foster an atmosphere where members feel comfortable expressing their opinions without fear of judgment or retribution. This can be achieved by setting ground rules for respectful communication and emphasizing the importance of diverse viewpoints. Practicing active listening is also essential; demonstrating attentive listening through eye contact, nodding, and summarizing points made by others shows that contributions are valued. Following up on feedback after meetings reinforces the idea that members' voices matter and encourages future participation. Additionally, implementing regular check-ins through one-on-one meetings or small group discussions can help those who may feel intimidated in larger groups express themselves more freely.

Conclusion

By following these guidelines, the class council can establish a solid foundation for effective decision-making, collaboration, and democratic practices. This structure not only empowers students but also fosters an inclusive environment where every voice is valued.