



SHREWSBURY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

BANGKOK

Policy Title: Complaints

Policy Section: Section B – Governance, Leadership and Ownership

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Policy Compendium

Website

Parent Portal

Staff Handbook

Introduction

In its Mission Statement, Shrewsbury International School prioritises “its commitment to continuous improvement” and affirms the value of “its innovative, ambitious, dynamic international community.” Furthermore in its School Values, Shrewsbury states that it is “people centred”, is “engaged in a process of continual improvement” and “engages parents as part of the learning process.” If students and parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with the following procedure. Any such complaint will be treated as a serious expression of dissatisfaction which requires a response within a reasonable time frame, and in a courteous and efficient manner.

All concerns and complaints will be treated seriously. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where disclosure is required by law or School policy. The School may decide not to pursue anonymous complaints. Disciplinary action against staff as a result of a complaint will be handled confidentially by the School.

Objectives

The school understand that for the complaints policy and procedure to be effective, it will:

1. Encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
2. Be easily accessible and publicised, including to third parties who hire school premises;
3. Be simple to understand and use;
4. Be impartial;
5. Be non-adversarial;
6. Allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and will keep people informed of the progress;
7. Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary;
8. Respect the need for confidentiality as appropriate;
9. Address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary.

Key Features

The school will:

1. Keep a written and confidential record of all formal complaints and the stage at which they are resolved;
2. Allow for a complaint to be made and considered and considered initially on an informal basis;
3. Make this policy available to parents;
4. Set out a clear timeline to the management of a complaint;
5. Make provision, where a complainant is not satisfied with the response to a complaint, for an appeal;

Complaints made by Students

Students at Shrewsbury International School have a right to be heard if they are concerned about any matter that affects their education or welfare. It is important that students feel believed and that they understand that in coming forward with a complaint they are most likely to achieve a proper resolution. It is also important that students understand that stepping forward is the correct course of action.

Whilst discord amongst students can usually be resolved by the School, there are some occasions when a complaint has been made by one student about another or others when parents will be contacted – primarily when the School's disciplinary policies have been breached. The School will work closely with both children and families to resolve the matter with a record kept in the files of all students directly involved. Under no circumstances should families respond directly to another child's family in respect of a

school-based complaint. The matter will be dealt with by the School authorities with fair and prompt communication to all parties.

It is likely that serious concerns already surface in conversations with trusted friends and adults. However, if students feel the need to express themselves more fully, or if they are concerned, worried, or upset about any matter that affects their education or welfare, then there are two possible courses of action:

1. The Internal Informal Procedure

In the first instance, it is recommended that they make a face-to-face contact with the most appropriate responsible person such as: a parent, a School prefect, class teacher or form tutor, trusted member of the Listening Team or Year Team Leader. If the complaint relates to routine matters of facilities and resources, it is recommended that they make a face-to-face contact with a teacher or Head of Department.

In this first conversation, it is important that students feel that they have been listened to and verbal outcomes and time frames have been agreed and fully understood.

2. The Internal Formal Procedure

If they are dissatisfied with the results of the Informal Procedure, or feel that informal discussion is inappropriate to the situation, then they may make a formal complaint (verbal or written) to a Year Team Leader, Assistant Principals, Vice-Principal or The Principal. Such a complaint will receive a written reply or a face-to-face noted meeting if deemed to be more age appropriate within 48 hours, and if necessary may be referred to the Internal Review Panel, which may ask to hear the case. The Panel will consist of one Vice-Principal, a School governor and an Assistant Principal (or Senior Teacher if appropriate) selected by the Principal.

All Internal Formal Procedure complaints are recorded in the Complaints Register.

Complaints made by Parents

The latest version of the the Complaints Policy and Procedures is permanently hosted on the School website and the Parent Portal. Attention of all new families is drawn to the Complaints Policy in the Information Pack and Parent Handbook.

1. Advice for Parents

Shrewsbury International School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes seriously complaints and concerns parents may raise. This policy shows parents / carers how to use the complaints system.

A complaint will be treated as a serious expression of dissatisfaction which requires a response.

The school will ensure that:

- parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so;
- there is a response to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way;
- appropriate action is taken and properly communicated.

2. The Procedure for making a Complaint

Parents are encouraged to talk directly to a member of staff, write a letter, send an e-mail, or telephone. Concerns should be raised as clearly as possible. Whilst a member of staff will be happy to help, it is likely that the best starting point will be a communication with the person most closely involved – for example, class teacher or form tutor. They may be able to resolve matters quickly and effectively. However, parents may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff such as an Assistant Principal, Vice Principal or the Principal.

If a complaint is raised face-to-face or by telephone, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and satisfactorily. If a complaint has been made in writing, the school will contact the parent during term time within 5 school days to respond to the concern and explain the next steps. In some circumstances, the person contacted will need to discuss the matter with a colleague before responding. Parents will be given a date by which a considered response will be sent. If the issue needs to be investigated, a letter or report will be sent as quickly as possible. This will inform the parent of the outcome of the complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed. It may well be that you prefer to make your complaint in Thai First Language. If so, please follow the above procedure and make your complaint to the appropriate Thai First Language speaker. The School will respond in English or Thai as requested.

All formal written complaints raised by parents are recorded in the Complaints Register.

Outcomes

The following outcomes identify the ways in which complaints can be resolved:

1. Acknowledgement that the complaint is valid in full or in part;
2. A rejection of the complaint;
3. An apology;
4. An explanation;
5. An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
6. An assurance that every attempt will be made to ensure that the situation will not recur with an explanation of the steps taken; this is not an admission of negligence.
7. An undertaking to review school policy and procedure in the light of the complaint.

In communication with the school, complainants are encouraged to state what actions might resolve the situation at any stage.

Guidelines for Making a Complaint

Level		Senior School	Junior School	Thai Language	First
1	Minor Concern	Form Tutor	Class Teacher	Subject Teacher	
2	Medium Concern	Year Team Leader	Year Team Leader	Head of Thai Studies (Junior)	
		Assistant Principal	Assistant Principal (Pre-Prep)	Head of Thai Studies (Senior)	
			Assistant Principal (Prep)		
3	Serious Concern	Vice Principal (Head of Senior)	Vice Principal (Head of Junior)	Director of Thai Studies (Whole School)	
		Principal		School Manager	
4	Complaint	Chair, Board of			

	about the Principal	Governors		
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Confidentiality

All complaints or concern will be treated in a respectful manner and only shared with people on a need-to-know basis. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Principal, Vice Principals, Assistant Principals and to those directly involved. The Chair of the Board of Governors may also need to be informed. It is Shrewsbury International School's policy that complaints made by parents should never impact adversely on their children. Similarly, all students should know that he/she will not be adversely affected or unfairly treated after making a complaint.

The school cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the School aware of the complaint and of the identity of those involved. This would happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police. Parents would in normal circumstances be fully informed.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, the school makes clear that it is not obliged to pursue anonymous complaints. Disciplinary action taken against staff as a result of a complaint will be handled confidentially within the School.

The Appeals Procedure

The school ensures that all complaints are fully and fairly considered. If a person (student or parent) is not satisfied with the outcome, the Principal will offer formally to refer the matter to the Chairman of Governors. Alternatively, a person making a complaint who is not satisfied with the outcome may wish to write directly to the Chairman. The Chairman will call for a full report from the Principal, and will examine matters thoroughly before responding. This may result in a positive solution, but if it does not, the Chairman will invite the person making a complaint to a face-to-face meeting. The person making the complaint may wish to be supported by a friend, although legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage. If the meeting does not bring about a resolution, the matter would be referred to the School's Appeal Committee. This committee comprises three governors who have had no involvement with the case in question. It is the task of the Appeal Committee to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner and to consider all relevant evidence. The decision of this committee will be final. The School recognises and acknowledges the entitlement

of students and parents to complain and always places the best interests of the students as the first priority.

Conclusion

All formal complaints will be stored by The Principal in The Register of Complaints which will be reviewed termly by the Principal and a formal report written to the Board of Governors. The complaints will be treated in confidence. This process will allow the Board of Governors and the Principal to identify areas for improvement.