

PARENT CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

Document Control	Details
School	Richmond International School Doha
Policy Owner	Executive Principal
Applies to	EYFS, Primary, Staff, Volunteers and Visitors
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Next Review	September 2027



PARENT CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

1 Policy statement and purpose

Richmond International School Doha welcomes concerns and complaints as an important source of information about pupils' experiences and the quality of school provision. RIS will listen, establish the relevant facts, respond fairly and take appropriate action. The school aims to resolve concerns at the earliest suitable level while protecting the pupil's best interests, the rights of all parties and the integrity of any safeguarding, regulatory or employment process.

A pupil or family will not be disadvantaged because a concern or complaint is raised in good faith. The school will not agree to an outcome merely because it is requested; decisions must remain consistent with Qatar law, Ministry of Education and Higher Education requirements, approved school policies, available evidence and the school's authority.

2 Scope

This policy applies to concerns and complaints raised by parents or legal guardians of current pupils and, where relevant, applicants. It covers the conduct or actions of the school, its employees, services, decisions, omissions and application of school policy.

The policy may also guide the handling of a complaint raised by a pupil, with communication and support adapted to the pupil's age, maturity and needs. Staff employment grievances, whistleblowing, data-subject requests and contractual disputes follow their dedicated procedures.

3 Regulatory and policy framework

RIS will apply current Qatar laws and MoEHE policies, circulars and complaint requirements. Key references include:

- the Student Protection and Care Policy for Private Schools and Kindergartens, First Edition 2025-2026 and Circular No. 15 of 2025;
- Law No. 23 of 2025 regulating private schools and its executive requirements, as referenced by the Student Protection and Care Policy;
- the Professional and Ethical Charter for Nurseries, Kindergartens and Private Schools, Second Edition 2025 and Circular No. 13 of 2025;
- current MoEHE guidance requiring clear mechanisms for receiving views, resolving complaints, protecting confidentiality and responding promptly; and
- relevant RIS safeguarding, behaviour, admissions, assessment, attendance, fees, data protection and staff-conduct policies.

Where a Ministry requirement changes, the current official requirement takes precedence and the school will update this policy as soon as practicable.



4 Definitions

Term	Meaning
Concern	An expression of worry, question or dissatisfaction that may be resolved through clarification, discussion or prompt corrective action.
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction about an action, omission, decision, service or failure for which the complainant seeks a response or remedy.
Formal complaint	A complaint submitted in writing for investigation and a written outcome under Stage 2 or above.
Complainant	The parent, legal guardian, pupil or authorised person raising the matter.
Working day	A day on which the school is open to pupils or administrative staff, excluding weekends, public holidays and school closure periods.
Complaint lead	The person appointed to manage or investigate a complaint at the relevant stage and who has no material conflict of interest.

5 Principles for handling complaints

- The pupil's safety, dignity, rights and best interests are prioritised.
- Complaints are addressed impartially, respectfully and without discrimination or retaliation.
- The person complained about is informed appropriately and given a fair opportunity to respond, unless doing so would create a safeguarding or investigation risk.
- The investigator considers relevant evidence and distinguishes allegation, fact, opinion, finding and recommendation.
- No person investigates or decides a complaint where they are directly involved or have a material conflict of interest.
- Information is shared only with those who need it for resolution, safeguarding, legal, regulatory or employment purposes.
- Reasonable communication support is provided for disability, language, literacy or access needs.
- Deadlines are followed where practicable. If additional time is needed, the complainant is told the reason and the revised response date.
- The school may use early resolution or mediation where all parties agree and it is safe and appropriate. Mediation does not replace safeguarding action or remove the right to continue the procedure.



6 Matters requiring a different or immediate route

Matter	Required route
Immediate danger or medical emergency	Contact emergency services or the school immediately. The complaints timetable does not delay urgent protective action.
Safeguarding or student protection	Report immediately to the Executive Principal. The school follows safeguarding and Ministry reporting procedures; the concern must not first be investigated as an ordinary complaint.
Allegation of abuse or neglect by a staff member	The internal complaints committee and safeguarding leadership act immediately in accordance with the Student Protection and Care Policy. Administrative investigation, documentation and referral to relevant authorities are coordinated as required.
Complaint about the Executive Principal	Submit directly to the Board of Directors through the school office, marked confidential. The Executive Principal will not investigate or decide it.
Police Ministry or legal investigation	RIS will preserve evidence and coordinate with the appropriate authority. The internal process may be adapted or paused to avoid prejudicing an external investigation.
Anonymous concern	The school will assess available information and risk. Limited detail may prevent a finding or direct response, but safeguarding information will still be acted upon.
Issue under another policy	Admissions, fees, assessment, behaviour, attendance, data or employment procedures may apply first. A complaint about how that procedure was followed may still be considered under this policy.



7 How to raise a concern or complaint

- Use the appropriate contact in Appendix A and arrange a suitable meeting rather than approaching staff during teaching, supervision, arrival or dismissal duties.
- Routine concerns may be raised in person, by telephone, through the approved school communication platform or by email.
- Formal complaints must be submitted in writing to ask@richmondqatar.com or delivered to the school office, clearly marked "Formal Complaint".
- The complaint should identify the pupil, describe what happened and when, name relevant people or witnesses, explain action already taken, attach relevant evidence and state the outcome sought.
- A complainant who needs help to put a complaint in writing may request reasonable assistance from the school. The staff member providing assistance must record the complainant's own account accurately and neutrally.
- Parents should not confront another pupil or family, circulate allegations, record meetings without agreement or publish the matter on social media. These actions may harm pupils, breach confidentiality or interfere with a fair investigation.



8 Complaint stages and timescales

Stage	Lead	Normal timetable
Stage 1 Informal resolution	Class teacher or relevant operational lead	Acknowledged within 2 working days. The school aims to resolve within 5 working days and normally no later than 10 working days.
Stage 2 Formal investigation	Complaints Committee or uninvolved senior leader appointed by the Executive Principal	Acknowledged within 2 working days. Written outcome normally within 10 working days after acknowledgement and no later than 15 working days unless complexity requires more time.
Stage 3 Executive Principal review	Executive Principal or an uninvolved delegate where necessary	Request within 5 working days of the Stage 2 outcome. Acknowledged within 2 working days; written review outcome normally within 10 working days.
Stage 4 Board panel review	Three-person panel appointed by the Board, with members not directly involved and at least one independent of day-to-day school management	Request within 10 working days of the Stage 3 outcome. Hearing normally within 20 working days; written outcome within 5 working days after the hearing.
External route	MoEHE or other competent authority	Available after the internal process or sooner where the law, Ministry procedure, urgency or nature of the matter permits.

School closure periods may affect meeting and response times. Urgent safeguarding and safety matters are not delayed. The school may move a complaint directly to a later stage where seriousness, conflict of interest or previous involvement makes this necessary.

9 Stage 1 Informal resolution

Most concerns should first be raised with the member of staff closest to the issue. The staff member will listen, clarify the concern, check available information and agree any immediate next step. They may consult a Key Stage Leader or other specialist member of staff.

- A brief record is made of the concern, contact, agreed action and outcome.
- The parent receives an update or resolution within the normal timetable.
- If the concern is unresolved, sufficiently serious, about the first contact or unsuitable for informal handling, it progresses to Stage 2.
- Use of Stage 1 does not prevent immediate safeguarding referral or urgent action.



10 Stage 2 Formal investigation

The Executive Principal appoints the School Complaints Committee or an uninvolved senior leader to investigate. The acknowledgement confirms the complaint issues, the complaint lead, the evidence or clarification required and the expected response date.

1. Define the complaint: identify the specific issues to be investigated and the outcome sought.
2. Check independence and risk: identify conflicts of interest and whether safeguarding, Ministry, police, employment or legal procedures apply.
3. Gather evidence: review relevant policies, records and communications and obtain separate accounts from appropriate people. Pupils are spoken with only where necessary and in an age-appropriate, safeguarded manner.
4. Give a fair opportunity to respond: provide the person complained about with sufficient information to answer the relevant issues, subject to safeguarding and confidentiality limits.
5. Evaluate: assess evidence on the balance of probabilities for the school's internal findings, unless another required standard applies. Lack of evidence is not the same as proof that an allegation was false.
6. Decide and act: determine whether each element is upheld, partially upheld, not upheld or cannot be determined, and identify corrective action, support or recommendations.
7. Issue the written outcome: summarise the issues, process, finding and reasons; identify action that can lawfully be disclosed; and explain how and by when to request Stage 3 review.

The school will not disclose confidential employment action, another pupil's personal information, safeguarding information or legal advice. This does not prevent the school from confirming that appropriate action has been taken.

11 Stage 3 Executive Principal review

A Stage 3 request must state why the complainant believes the Stage 2 outcome should be reviewed. A review is not a complete reinvestigation simply because the complainant disagrees with the conclusion. The Executive Principal will consider whether:

- the procedure was followed fairly;
- relevant evidence was overlooked or significant new evidence has become available;
- the findings were reasonably supported by the evidence;
- the response was proportionate and consistent with policy and Ministry requirements; and
- further investigation, corrective action or a meeting is necessary.

The review outcome may confirm, vary or set aside the Stage 2 outcome, request further investigation or refer the matter to the Board. The written response explains the decision and Stage 4 route.



12 Stage 4 Board panel review

Where the complainant remains dissatisfied after Stage 3, a written request may be submitted to the Board of Directors through the school office. The request must identify the grounds for panel review and the unresolved outcome sought.

- The panel consists of at least three people who were not directly involved in the complaint. At least one member is independent of the day-to-day management and running of RIS.
- The complainant receives reasonable notice of the hearing and the documents to be considered. Relevant documents should normally be submitted at least three working days before the hearing.
- The complainant may attend and may be accompanied by one supportive adult. Legal representation is not normally necessary, but the panel may permit it where fairness or complexity requires.
- The school may also be represented. The Chair controls the meeting, ensures respectful participation and may pause or end unsafe or abusive conduct.
- The panel may hear the parties separately where safeguarding, pupil welfare or fairness requires. Pupils will not normally attend a panel hearing unless their participation is necessary, agreed and appropriately supported.
- The panel reviews whether the complaint was handled fairly and may examine additional evidence where necessary. It may uphold, partially uphold or reject the complaint and may make recommendations.
- The written outcome states the decision, reasons and any recommendations that may be disclosed. The panel decision is final within the RIS internal procedure.

13 External complaint or grievance route

After the internal procedure has concluded, or earlier where permitted by the nature or urgency of the matter, a complainant may contact the MoEHE through its current official complaint or grievance channel. Under the Student Protection and Care Policy, a person who believes there has been injustice in applying that policy may complain to the Administration of Private Schools and Kindergartens in accordance with Law No. 23 of 2025 and its executive requirements.

The school will cooperate with lawful Ministry enquiries and provide requested records. Use of the Ministry route does not permit confidential information about another pupil or employee to be disclosed directly to a complainant.



14 Possible outcomes and remedies

- an explanation, clarification or confirmation that a policy was correctly applied;
- an apology for an identified failing without attributing liability beyond the established facts;
- correction of inaccurate information or completion of an omitted action;
- review of a pupil's support, safety, communication or educational arrangements;
- staff guidance, training, supervision or management action;
- review or amendment of a policy, procedure, risk assessment or communication process;
- referral for safeguarding, disciplinary, legal, Ministry or external-agency action; or
- a finding that the complaint is not upheld or cannot be determined on the available evidence.

The school cannot offer a remedy that breaches law or Ministry requirements, exceeds approved capacity or fees, discloses another person's confidential information, predetermines an employment process or requires an educational decision unsupported by evidence.

15 Safeguarding staff allegations and pupil participation

15.1 Safeguarding and staff allegations

Any complaint indicating abuse, neglect, exploitation, violence, bullying, serious humiliation, sexualised harm or immediate danger is referred without delay to the Student Protection Officer and Executive Principal. Where abuse or neglect is attributed to a member of staff, the internal complaints committee must act immediately under the Student Protection and Care Policy, document the administrative investigation and coordinate reports to relevant authorities and the Ministry as required. Ordinary complaint fact-finding must not compromise the safeguarding response.

15.2 Pupil voice

Pupil views may be relevant but pupils must not carry the burden of proving a complaint. Any conversation is necessary, proportionate, age appropriate and conducted by suitable staff. Communication needs and SEND are considered. A pupil is not required to attend a parent meeting or panel hearing, repeat an account unnecessarily, confront an adult or another pupil, or agree to mediation or an apology.



16 Confidentiality data protection and recordings

- Complaint information is shared on a need-to-know basis and stored securely.
- Confidentiality cannot be absolute where information indicates risk of harm, a legal or Ministry reporting duty, a fair-investigation requirement or a lawful request from an authority.
- Parents are asked to protect the privacy of pupils and staff and not circulate confidential correspondence, allegations or outcomes.
- Meetings must not be audio- or video-recorded without prior agreement from the school and all participants, except where a lawful accessibility adjustment is agreed.
- The school may prepare written minutes or a meeting note. Participants may identify factual corrections, but disagreement with a conclusion does not require the record to be rewritten.
- CCTV, digital communications and personal data are accessed or disclosed only where lawful, relevant and proportionate.

17 Complaint records and monitoring

RIS maintains a secure central complaints register and supporting files. The record includes:

- date received, complainant, pupil and complaint category;
- issues raised, stage, complaint lead and any conflict-of-interest check;
- evidence considered, meetings, communications and safeguarding or external referrals;
- finding, outcome, actions, responsible persons and completion dates;
- whether the complaint was resolved, escalated or referred externally; and
- follow-up, lessons learned and closure authorisation.

Records are retained in accordance with the school's records-retention requirements and any longer safeguarding, legal, insurance or Ministry requirement. Complaint records are separate from the pupil's ordinary academic record unless information is relevant to the pupil's education, welfare or protection.

SLT reviews anonymised complaint information at least termly to identify recurrence, delays, equality concerns, safeguarding themes, communication weaknesses and required improvements. The Board receives an anonymised summary. Individual identities are included only where necessary and lawful.



18 Respectful communication and unreasonable conduct

RIS will continue to consider the substance of a genuine complaint even where communication is difficult. A complaint is not unreasonable merely because it is persistent, strongly expressed, not upheld or escalated to the Ministry. However, conduct may be restricted where it becomes abusive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, excessively repetitive or significantly disrupts school operations.

- The school will first explain the concern about the communication and the behaviour expected.
- Where necessary, the Executive Principal may introduce a proportionate communication plan, such as one named contact, written communication only, scheduled contact or limits on repetitive correspondence.
- A matter may be closed where the full procedure has been completed, a final response has been issued and repeated contact raises no material new evidence or issue.
- Any restriction is confirmed in writing, gives reasons, is reviewed periodically and does not prevent a new complaint, safeguarding report, legal right or Ministry contact.
- Threats, violence or unlawful harassment may be referred to the relevant authorities. Access to the site may be restricted to protect safety, while preserving appropriate communication about the pupil.

19 Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Executive Principal	Ensures compliance, appoints complaint leads and committees, decides Stage 3 reviews, authorises external reporting and ensures improvement action.
Complaints Committee	Conducts or oversees formal investigations, maintains impartiality, documents findings and recommends action.
Vice Principal and Key Stage Leaders	Support early resolution, investigate when appointed, monitor actions and ensure pupil welfare.
Student Protection Officer	Receives safeguarding referrals, coordinates protective action and records, and advises on Ministry or external reporting.
All staff	Listen respectfully, record concerns accurately, preserve confidentiality, avoid promises about outcomes and refer matters promptly.
Parents and guardians	Raise concerns through the correct route, provide relevant information, communicate respectfully, protect confidentiality and cooperate with reasonable enquiries.
Pupils	May express concerns safely and truthfully and receive age-appropriate explanation and support without retaliation.



20 Training communication and review

- Staff receive induction and periodic training on complaint routes, safeguarding referral, impartial investigation, confidentiality and record-keeping.
- Parents are informed of the complaint route through the policy, handbook or school communication channels.
- The Executive Principal reviews implementation termly and the policy annually.
- The policy is reviewed earlier following a serious complaint, identified weakness, Ministry direction, legal change or material change to school structure.

21 Related documents

- Student Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy;
- Admissions Policy;
- Assessment Policy;
- Attendance Policy;
- Fee Policy;
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct and Professional and Ethical Charter; and
- Whistleblowing and Staff Grievance procedures.



Appendix A Contact route

Nature of matter	First appropriate contact
Class learning, homework, progress or routine classroom matter	Class teacher
Matter unresolved with class teacher or affecting a phase	Relevant Key Stage Leader
Pastoral, behaviour, bullying or pupil wellbeing	Class teacher or Key Stage Leader; serious or unresolved matters to the Vice Principal or School Counselor
Arabic, Islamic Education or Qatar History	Relevant subject coordinator or academic leader
Admissions, registration or transfer	Admissions Manager; review by the Executive Principal
Fees or account administration	Finance Team; review under the approved Fee Policy and by the Executive Principal where appropriate
Transport or site operations	Relevant operational manager; safeguarding or unresolved concerns to SLT
Safeguarding or allegation against staff	School Counselor or Executive Principal immediately
Formal complaint	ask@richmondqatar.com or the school office, marked Formal Complaint
Complaint about the Executive Principal	Board of Directors through the school office, marked Private and Confidential



Appendix B Formal complaint form

Section	Information to provide
Complainant details	Name, relationship to pupil, telephone and email.
Pupil details	Name, year group and class, where relevant.
Complaint	What happened, when and where; people involved; each issue requiring a decision.
Previous action	Who has already been contacted, dates of contact and the response received.
Evidence	Relevant emails, messages, documents, photographs or witness information. Do not submit or redistribute unlawful or harmful content.
Impact	How the matter affected the pupil or family and whether any immediate safety or access need exists.
Outcome sought	What reasonable action or resolution is requested.
Access support	Language, disability, communication or meeting support required.
Declaration	Confirmation that the information is accurate to the best of the complainant's knowledge; signature and date.

Appendix C Investigation and closure checklist

- ☐ Receipt acknowledged and complaint issues confirmed.
- ☐ Complaint lead appointed and conflict-of-interest check completed.
- ☐ Immediate safeguarding, safety, legal and Ministry reporting needs assessed.
- ☐ Relevant policy, records, communications and previous actions reviewed.
- ☐ Appropriate parties given a fair opportunity to provide separate accounts.
- ☐ Pupil participation assessed and supported appropriately.
- ☐ Evidence, findings and reasons recorded clearly.
- ☐ Outcome, corrective action, owners and deadlines approved.
- ☐ Written response issued with the next-stage route and deadline.
- ☐ Actions followed up; lessons learned recorded; file securely closed.
- ☐ Complaint register and termly monitoring data updated.