



TUIS Complaints Procedure

Introduction

Your views are welcomed. In the spirit of true partnership between home, school and the community, you are encouraged to say what you think should go on within the school. Schools aim for high standards but sometimes things can go wrong or expectations are not met.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet which may be about an event that has happened, failed to happen or the way in which something was handled.

The vast majority of concerns can be resolved informally. It is in everyone's best interests that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. This can usually be achieved through discussion and good communication. However, if you are not satisfied with the outcome, a formal procedure (as outlined in this policy) would then need to be followed when attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful.

For complaints to be investigated fully you need to give full information and not make them anonymously.

What can you expect?

- Each stage of the complaints procedure will be dealt with swiftly.
- A complaint register is maintained for formal complaints.
- Conversations and correspondence should be handled with discretion, but you need to be aware that some information may have to be shared with others involved in the complaint procedure.
- Raising a concern or making a complaint should not affect the relationship between the school and you or your child.
- When investigating your complaint the school should talk to your child, witnesses and others involved quickly.
- The school has a duty to act properly and investigate complaints impartially. Once investigations are complete the person making the complaint should receive a written response.

Advice

- Many concerns can be resolved quickly with goodwill, often by making early contact with the class teacher.
- Remember the more information you have the better able you will be to discuss the matter. Fact find by asking the school for information. Obtain copies of relevant policies from the school e.g. behaviour policy (including anti-bullying and exclusion), home school agreement, health and safety policy etc.
- Please make an appointment for discussion through the school office. It helps to outline the purpose and how long you think you may need with the staff member/director. Cover all the relevant points, but be as brief as you can. Avoid writing long letters or emails. Make it easy to read by using bullet points or headings. Include dates, times, names etc and explain clearly what your complaint is, what effect the issue is having on your child or you and what you would like to see happen. Keep it factual and avoid making judgments or hearsay. If more information is needed from you the person investigating your complaint will contact you.
- Sometimes it helps to take a friend with you. You may forget something if you are doing all the talking, they can do the listening for you and record main points and agreed action.
- Try to keep calm! Avoid confrontation – it will cloud the issue.
- Remember to ask "what happens next?".

Complaint against a member of staff

- The complaint procedure is distinct from any formal disciplinary proceedings for staff. If a complaint did result in a disciplinary procedure, then the complaint would be put on hold and you should be advised of the delay and updated.
- If a complaint is made against a member of staff they will be informed and have the opportunity to respond.

The director will form a complaints panel as described below:

- Parents, carers or pupils who wish to pursue a complaint regarding a school issue can refer the complaint to a complaints panel. This should be formed from at least three people who have had no prior involvement with the complaint.
- At least one member must be a parent of a pupil at the school
- The director should not be a member of the panel.
- **The director** should be mindful of equality issues when looking at the composition of a complaints panel.

Complaint Procedure

Stage 1. Informal

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

First talk to the teacher most closely concerned to clarify the facts and resolve through discussion. A request for discussion with the headteacher or senior staff member may also be desirable before making a formal complaint.

Stage 2: Complaint

If you are not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 you may wish to make a formal complaint. This should be done in writing to the director.

The investigation should be carried out and the outcome communicated to you. The written response should include a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. Where appropriate the response should include what action the school will take to resolve it.

The director may delegate the task of collating the information to another member of staff but not the decision on the action to be taken.

Once a decision has been reached, the director should ensure that you are clear about the action taken and what to do if you remain dissatisfied (see below).

When the director receives your written complaint, he may decide to refer the matter immediately to a complaint panel.

If the complaint is about the director, the matter should be referred to the MOE

Stage 3: Final complaint stage

If all attempts to resolve the complaint have been unsuccessful, you may refer your complaint to the Ministry of Education

The MOE is unlikely to investigate individual issues but can inspect the school's policies and procedures and make sure these have been followed.