



## Rygaards International School Complaints Policy

### **Introduction:**

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints. Rygaards International School is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, parents may wish or be asked to follow the school's formal complaints procedure. For the school to be able to investigate a complaint, it needs to be made within one year of the incident occurring. If a complaint is older than a year, it will not be investigated.

**General concerns** can be raised through the class parent representative. Concerns raised in this way will be discussed at a meeting with the officers of the IPC (International Parents Committee) and reported on at the following IPC meeting by the school's leadership.

**Specific concerns** should follow the procedure outlined below.

The prime aim of Rygaards International School's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by the school.

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

### **The Rygaards International School Policy has five main stages.**

These are outlined in the school's communication policy.

1. In the event of a student experiencing a problem at school, the first action should be to try and solve the difficulty by confronting those immediately concerned.
2. If the problem continues, the class teacher should then be consulted.
3. Should the problem persist, it must be reported to the Head of the Secondary School or the Head of the Primary School.
4. Should the problem continue then the Principal of the school should be approached.
5. Only if all these levels of authority fail, the Board of Governors should be approached. This is done by presenting the complaint in writing, for the attention of the Board, first to the Principal of the school, who will then further the letter to the Chairperson of the School Board.

### **Stage 1 – Raising a concern**

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. The school requests that parents make their first contact to the person(s) immediately involved in the concern. On some occasions, the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case, an informal but informed response will be given within a day or two. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if a parent is not satisfied with the result at stage 1, one should write to or call the class teacher within ten school working days and state what the teacher is requested to do.

### **Stage 2 – Concerns heard by the class teacher**

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 1, the class teacher will arrange for a further investigation. Following the investigation, the class teacher will normally give a written response within ten school working days. If the parent is dissatisfied with the result at stage 2, the school should be notified within ten school working days of getting the response. The school will then look at the complaint at the next stage.

### **Stage 3 – Complaints heard by the appropriate Head of School**

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2 then it can be raised with the appropriate Head of School. Complaints concerning Primary students should be addressed to the Head of the Primary School and complaints concerning Secondary school students should be addressed to the Head of the Secondary School. If the parent is dissatisfied with the result at stage 3, the school should be notified within ten school working days of getting the response. The school will then look at the complaint at the next stage.

### **Stage 4 – Complaints heard by the Principal**

Formal complaints should be put in writing and addressed to the Principal of Rygaards School. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The school will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within two school working days of receiving it. In many cases this response will also report on the action the school has taken to resolve the issue. Alternatively, a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. This meeting will normally take place within ten school working days. The aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible. If the parent is dissatisfied with the result at stage 4, the school should be notified within ten school working days of getting the response. The school will then look at the complaint at the next stage.

### **Stage 5 – Complaint heard by the Board of Governors**

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 4, then the Chair of the Board of Governors should be informed giving details of the complaint. This is done by presenting the complaint in writing, for the attention of the Board, first to the Principal of the school, who will then further the letter to the chairperson of the School Board. The Chair or a nominated Board member will convene a hearing with appropriate members. The hearing will normally take place within ten school working days of the receipt of the written request for Stage 5 investigation.

The aim of the hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Board's decision in writing within three school working days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what should be done to take the matter further.

\* N.B. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the Principal, the Principal and Chairman of the Board will be informed of the complaint. The Chairman of the Board will arrange for the matter to be investigated. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of a member of the Board of Governors, the member will be informed of the complaint.

The Board of Governors hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.

**Approved by the Board of Governors in September 2014**