



JEDDAH PREP AND GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Communications and Dealing with Concerns - Staff

Jeddah Prep and Grammar School is committed to a continuous programme of rigorous self-evaluation in order to make the best possible provision for the pupils entrusted to our care. Parental feedback therefore is to be welcomed. Where the school's policies, or the implementation of them, are open to criticism parents must be able to express criticism without fear or favour, provided only that complaints are addressed in a constructive tone and spirit.

Communications with adults e.g. adults, parents, outside agencies, etc. should be:

- Professional, polite and courteous;
- Written on official School headed notepaper and in standard font – Palatino Linotype, font size 12;
- Emails to be addressed to Mr and/or Mrs [surname], undersigned by staff name and title, and only via professional email address.
- Normally, the line manager should be cc'd e.g. Head of Department; Head of School should be cc'd or bcc'd into the conversation;
- Measured in tone, and should never criticise a parent for raising an issue, even where the complaint has proved unfounded. We should not adopt a defensive stance when faced with a concern;
- Shown to and approved by the author's Line Manager before despatch to reduce the possibility of errors or inappropriate tone;
- If a colleague is acknowledged to be at fault, then that colleague should also be shown the letter, or should be aware of what has been communicated to parents orally.

Complaints and Concerns

Initial communication should always be made first with Class Teachers/Form Tutors regarding any informal enquiries. Where a parent feels that it would be beneficial to register a formal complaint after first making informal enquiries with Class Teachers/Form Tutors then the nature of the complaint should be expressed in writing. The complaint should be addressed in the first instance to the relevant responsibility holder such as the Head of Department, Key Stage Coordinator or Head of School. A record will be taken of any meetings and/or conversations. A member of staff is always

accompanied by a colleague or, ideally, a line manager. The responsibility holder, having duly considered the issue and acted on it at his or her discretion, will then notify the parent in writing, confirming that the matter has been investigated and informing what action has been taken in the light of the concern. If the parent remains dissatisfied, he or she should next approach the Headmaster.

A formal complaint to the Headmaster should commence with the parent briefly setting out in writing the concern together with a statement as to why it is believed that the investigation and or action taken at a lower level was unsatisfactory. The Headmaster will investigate the matter further and independently of conclusions arrived at an earlier stage. The outcome of their investigation will be communicated to parents in writing or in a meeting.

All complaints should receive a response of some kind within 24 hours. We should aim to complete a full reply to all complaints within a week.

- Complaints about teaching should be dealt with by the Head of School or Department.
- Complaints about school academic policy should be dealt with by the Head of School or Headmaster.
- Complaints about sports provision should be dealt with by the Head of PE.
- Complaints about tutoring should be dealt with by the appropriate Head of School whilst arrangements in Houses should be dealt with by House Coordinator.

Where a meeting is arranged, colleagues should be accompanied by their Head of School or Department. All letters sent to parents must be approved by the Head of School or Department and Headmaster and filed by the member of staff who despatched them. A copy should be sent to the Headmaster for retention on School files.

Rationale

A complaint that is well handled and that produces an outcome that is satisfactory to all parties will enhance the school's reputation. The following comments are offered to colleagues by way of advice when dealing with a complaint. There is no ideal way in which to handle such situations, since all parents are individuals, as are all children. Effective complaint handling, however, can play a key role in improving our relations with the parent body. What follows is directed towards improving our methods of dealing with complaints, whether formal or informal.

- No school is perfect and so we should have the confidence to investigate complaints fairly in an open and self-critical way.
- Staff must always be professional and measured in their dealings with parents, particularly if they are aware of a potential complaint or concern. They should take care not to criticise colleagues to parents until any investigation is complete. The language used should be supportive, proportionate and professional.
- The speed of a response is critical to achieving a satisfactory outcome from the complainant's point of view; things should not be allowed to drag on.
- It is better to bring parties together face-to-face and avoid lengthy, time-consuming correspondence wherever possible. However, a written allegation requires a written response. Full notes of all such meetings must be kept and filed.
- Complaints should be dealt with, at least in the first instance, by the teacher responsible for the criticised activity.
- Line managers become involved so as to support and provide advice.
- In all correspondence; pejorative language should be avoided. Calmness and fairness should be the keys.
- Individual complaints should be placed in a broader context. Is there a widely shared concern?
- Calmness and fairness are the keys to bringing about a satisfactory resolution.

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