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## PROCEDURE

### 0. Introduction

These procedures and protocols are to be followed by The Burundi English School, in response to complaints and issues raised by students, staff, parents and/or community partners.

The Burundi English school is committed to responding and addressing complaints and issues brought to the school's staff and administration, in a timely and efficient manner.

The aim of these procedures is to:

- encourage peaceful resolution of problems at the earliest stage
- address the concerns/issues raised effectively and appropriately
- maintain confidentiality when dealing with an investigation
- follow a fair and an impartial approach to respect the integrity of the process
- respect and honour all parties involved in the process
- provide accurate and relevant information to those assigned to the case
- maintain effective communication with all individuals involved in the case
- Ensure that everyone is treating others with dignity, respect and courtesy

### 1. Complaints.

#### 1. Raising a concern and dealing with it informally:

- Burundi English school will seek to address and resolve complainants/issues, at the earliest stage, with the aim to find satisfactory resolutions to the parties involved.
- The normal response time for the initial response should not go over 24 hours. If the response is not provided within this time, the issue can be raised formally.
- Many complaints/issues can be resolved informally. It is in everyone's interest to resolve this at the earliest stage. There are many situations where a complaint/issue can be addressed and resolved immediately, by low level interventions such as, personally speaking to the staff member, student, parent or other on the concern/issue.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the actions taken to resolve a complaint/issue he/she can follow the formal complaints procedure.

#### 2. Raising a concern /complaint and dealing with it formally

Burundi English School will follow four stages to deal with the formal process.

##### 2.1. Stage 1. Complaints reported to a member of B.E.S staff.

- Parents, students and staff have the right to raise a complaint/issue directly with the person with whom there is a concern.
- The parties involved should attempt to address and resolve a complaint/issue among themselves (informally).



- If the parties are not able to resolve a complaint/issue, he/she/they can scale it up to the appropriate individual or school's administration, following this protocol.
- The staff assigned to deal with a complaint/issue, must follow and respect the protocols set by the school, maintain accurate documentation, regarding the raised complaint/issue; what is the complaint/issue, who is involved, how issue impacting the parties involved, is there a need for further investigation, what action plan can be taken in order to resolve this matter, is there a need for further follow up, etc.
- The report must be written, signed and dated. A copy of the report should be kept in office and with the School's Principal.
- Depending on the severity of the complaint/issue, the Principal may need to deal with it immediately. However, the stage and timing of the principal's involvement is stage number 3.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution, he/she can appeal, within 2 days in writing, to the school's administration.
- The Principal will assign a school leader to address the complaint. The complainant will be informed, in writing, if the appeal is successful.

## 2.2. Stage 2. Complaints reported to a senior leader

At this stage, the complaint /issue must be submitted to the school's administration in writing. The Principal will assign a senior leader to investigate, document and resolve the complaint/issue.

### Stage 2 Procedures

- The school will acknowledge the request to appeal, in writing within 2 working days. The response will be given by the assigned senior leader. The complainant will be informed on the next stage of the process, including date and time of the hearing.
- For minor complaints/issues, will be addressed within a period of 1 working day.
- For serious complaints/issues, where an external investigation may be required, will be addressed within 5 working days.
- If the resolution takes more time than expected, the Appointed Senior Leader must provide a written explanation to the parties involved, with explanations for the delay and the expected date for a response.
- The Appointed Senior Leader will contact the complainant in writing to meet him/her and provide the complainant with the opportunity to present his/her case.
- The Appointed Senior Leader should follow a formal investigation, which may include: interviews, written witness reports, and gather any other relevant information. (these may involve - students, teachers, or other staff. Parents may be contacted, when it is deemed necessary.)



- In an investigation, the ASL must gather and document all relevant information. Once this has occurred, the senior leader must submit a written report, this should include: the complaint/issue, individuals involved, supporting facts, action taken.
- The complainant will meet with the ASL to review the findings and conclusions.
- The report should be submitted to the Principal.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision made, he/she will be advised to notify the school within 5 working days, before taking his /her complaint to the next stage. At this level, the concern will be taken to the School Principal.

### **2.3. Stage 3. Request to review the decision made by the Appointed Senior Leader on stage 2**

- At this stage, the Principal will investigate the matter.
- The Principal acknowledges receipt of the written request to appeal within two school days. The principal will also inform, in writing, the complainant the process and time to respond.
- The Principal will assess the findings documented at stage 2 to check if a fair and transparent investigation has been conducted. If necessary, the Principal will gather further relevant information to ensure due process takes place. This includes, meet with parties involved to hear from them.
- After the review, the principal is responsible for determining and reporting the findings, with the goal of bringing this stage to a satisfactory conclusion.
- The principal will set up a meeting with the complainant to inform of the outcome and resolution.
- A written report will be prepared. That response should contain explanations to the facts that support the resolution and the action that the school will take to resolve the matter, if further action is required.
- The Principal will also advise the complainant, that in case he/she is not satisfied with outcomes, he/she can appeal by notifying the school within 5 working days before taking the complaint further.

### **2.4. Stage 4 reported to the School's Board of Directors.**

- As this is the last stage of the internal process, it is important that the review is done by impartial individuals, who have not been involved previously. The Board representative may involve parent representatives or any other person assigned to review the case.

## **Procedures**

Upon the receipt of a written request by the complainant to proceed to stage 4, the Board Directors representative will,



- acknowledge receipt of the complainant within 2 working days. The acknowledgement must inform the complainant that the issue will be heard in 10 working days. The Board of Directors representative will invite the complainant to provide further evidence and witnesses, if it is deemed necessary.
- The Board representative will arrange to convene an appeal panel. The panel members should be a Board representative, a parent representative and a school representative, who has not been involved in the case previously.
- The Chair of the panel will ensure the complaints are heard by the panel within 10 working days of receiving the letter. All relevant documentation, including reports from previous investigations, should be given to the panel members.
- The chair will inform the Principal, the complainant and witnesses, at least 5 days prior, including the day, time and place of the review meeting.
- The chair can also invite members, who were involved in stage 1, 2 and 3 to attend the review meeting and submit their reports.
- The aim of the meeting is to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant.
- The meeting should allow both parties to attend and present their case. It will also allow the panel to question the complainant, witnesses, and Principal to gather all relevant facts.
- The Chair of the panel will consider all facts provided, and submit a report that includes an explanation for his/her conclusions regarding the complaint. A copy of report must be shared with the complainant and Principal.
- All copies of the report must be kept.
- Complainants should respect, collaborate and comply with requests to ensure staff have access to all records necessary to ensure a fair process.

Note: Sometimes, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, a complainant may not be satisfied with the outcome. In that case, B.E.S may not respond as the complainant has completed the complaint process.