



Concerns and Complaints Procedures for Parents and Guardians

International Montessori School of Albania



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Guiding Principles

The International Montessori School of Albania (IMSA) is committed to fostering an environment of open communication, mutual respect, and transparency between staff and families. We acknowledge that, from time to time, parents and guardians may have concerns regarding their child's experience. These procedures are designed to ensure all concerns and complaints are handled fairly, respectfully, and in a timely manner, in alignment with Montessori principles of collaboration, empathy, and respect for the child and family.

Definition:

A complaint is any matter that a parent or guardian of a child aged 0–5 is unhappy about and which requires action or clarification from the school. All complaints will be taken seriously, handled confidentially, and parents will not face repercussions for raising concerns.

2. Common Concerns

The following are examples of concerns that may arise in a Montessori early childhood context:

- **Montessori Curriculum & Practice:** Concerns about classroom activities, alignment with the Montessori approach, use of materials, or child-led learning methods.
- **Child Wellbeing & Development:** Matters relating to social-emotional development, attachment, behaviour guidance, or physical safety.
- **Teacher & Staff Conduct:** Concerns about the professionalism, communication, or interactions between staff and children or parents.
- **Parent-School Communication:** Issues with clarity, tone, or timeliness of communication; lack of information about the child's progress or daily routine.
- **Policies & Procedures:** Disagreements about the interpretation or application of school policies (e.g. toilet training, naptime, separation, illness policy).
- **Environment & Facilities:** Concerns regarding the cleanliness, safety, or suitability of materials and indoor/outdoor environments.

3. What Is Not Typically Handled Through This Policy

- **Daily Questions or Clarifications:** For example, inquiries about snacks, rest time, or a child's day should be addressed informally with the child's Guide (Teacher).
- **Montessori Philosophical Differences:** Questions or disagreements about pedagogy are welcomed as part of ongoing dialogue but may not always lead to procedural changes.
- **Anonymous Complaints:** These are not normally pursued unless they raise serious safeguarding concerns.
- **Interpersonal Disputes Between Parents:** These are outside the school's scope unless they impact the school community.

4. Complaint Procedure

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- Most concerns can be resolved informally by speaking with the child's **Montessori Guide**.
- Guides are encouraged to listen empathetically and respond within **2 working days**.

- For more complex issues, the **Pedagogical Coordinator** or **Early Years Lead** may be consulted.
- If a resolution is not reached within **10 working days**, the parent will be advised to move to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

Stage 2A – Written Complaint to the Early Years Coordinator or Pedagogical Lead

- Complaints should be submitted in writing via email or a written form available at the office.
- A written acknowledgment will be provided within **2 working days**.
- An investigation will follow, including any meetings with relevant staff and a review of documentation.
- A formal written response will be given within **14 working days**.
- If unresolved, the parent may escalate the complaint to Stage 2B.

Stage 2B – Final Resolution with the Head of School

- The complaint is submitted in writing to the **Head of School**.
- A response and meeting will be arranged within **3 working days**.
- All prior documentation must be forwarded before the meeting.
- A final written decision will be issued within **5 working days** of the meeting.
- If unresolved, the parent may choose to proceed to Stage 3.

Stage 3: Independent Panel Review

If the complaint remains unresolved:

- Parents may write to the **Regional Head of Schools (RHoS)** at [Insert Contact Email].
- A panel of **at least three impartial members**, including one not involved in daily school operations, will be convened.
- A hearing will be scheduled within **28 days**.
- Parents may be accompanied by a family member or support person (not legal counsel).
- A written decision with any recommendations will be provided within **10 working days** of the hearing.
- This decision is final within the school's internal procedures.
If still dissatisfied, parents may contact the **Albanian Ministry of Education**.

5. Recording Complaints

- Records of all **formal complaints** will be kept in the Head of School's secure office.
- Records include the outcome (resolved, unresolved, escalated) and any actions taken.
- **Informal concerns** will also be logged in order to track trends and systemic issues.
- Records will be retained for a **minimum of 3 years**.

6. Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled with the highest level of confidentiality, in line with child protection and data privacy obligations. Only those directly involved will be informed.

If a complaint concerns the **Head of School**, it should be directed in writing to the **Regional Head of Schools** and/or the **CEO of the School Group**, as applicable.

Parents are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding the process and outcomes.

7. Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head of School and/or Regional Head of Schools, and adjustments may be made based on changes in law, regulation, or community feedback.

8. Vexatious or Unreasonably Persistent Complaints

While IMSA welcomes feedback and concerns from all families, repeated or unreasonable complaints that are not grounded in new evidence may be considered **vexatious**. A complaint may be classified as vexatious if it:

- Has been repeated multiple times with no new information.
- Contains abusive or defamatory language.
- Seeks outcomes beyond the school's authority.
- Continues after a final resolution has been communicated.

The **Head of School** or **School Board** may determine when a complaint is vexatious. In such cases, IMSA reserves the right to:

- Cease responding to further communications on the matter.
- Limit communication to a single staff contact.
- Take further action if communication becomes threatening or harassing.

The school will still consider **new and distinct concerns** separately.

9. Our Commitment to Montessori Values

IMSA's approach to complaints reflects our core Montessori values:

- **Respect for the child and family**
- **Transparent and empathetic communication**
- **Collaborative problem-solving**
- **Continuous improvement of our environment and practices**

We view every concern as an opportunity to grow in service of the children in our care.

