UWC Thailand Disputes, Grievances and Complaints Procedures (4.6)

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1. General Principles

1.1 UWC Thailand rests on the commitment, belief, and generosity of all the people involved in the UWC Thailand community, whether staff, teaching or other, student, parent, Board or Committee Member. UWC Thailand hopes that everyone who meets the organisation will have a positive experience. In that regard UWC Thailand aims to provide the very best services in all its areas of responsibility.

1.2 UWC Thailand holds to its core mindfulness, peace and sustainability; yet misunderstandings, differences and outright disputes are bound to occur. UWC Thailand's emphasis will always be that any grievance should be solved amicably. This process is established for those cases in which further intervention is deemed necessary or required to arrive at a solution among the parties to a grievance.

1.3 In these instances where tensions and conflict are inevitable, we want to recognise that conflict can be the means to achieve positive change, growth, and learning, as long as the conflict is dealt with constructively and with good intent. We want to encourage all members of our community to approach disputes, grievances and complaints from this perspective.

1.4 These procedures deal with policy disputes, grievances or complaints ("**Grievances**") at UWC Thailand as they fall under the Community Grievances Policy (6.5) in the UWC Thailand School Policy Manual. This document does not encompass Board Member Misconduct, Safeguarding, Harassment or Whistle-Blowing concerns.

1.5 Any member of the School Community is entitled to raise a Grievance concerning an operational or policy matter, or the behaviour of any other member of the School Community.

1.6 In dealing with grievances, UWC Thailand applies the subsidiarity principle; this means that a grievance should always first be raised by the aggrieved party with the person responsible for the grievance and preferably in a face-to-face setting i.e. the teacher, the student, the Principal or the Head of School. This may not always be possible and at times a more serious matter may have to be urgently directed towards the direct supervisor or the Principals of Primary and Secondary respectively.

1.7 In dealing with a grievance the rights of all parties will be respected. Aggrieved parties should not be victimised for raising a Grievance. Individuals against whom Grievances are reported have a right to reply in a fair and unbiased process.

1.8 Grievances which are made in bad faith, which lack any reasonable basis or are initiated with the primary purpose of defamation, harassing or embarrassing the complainee will be subject to UWC Thailand's Community Expectations of Behaviour and/or Harassment Policy (6.6).

1.9 Please note that this process only pertains to Grievances. Matters pertaining to harassment should refer to the Harassment Policy (6.6). Matters pertaining to safeguarding should refer to the Safeguarding Policy. Matters pertaining to Staff Grievances should refer to the Staff Handbook. Finally, grievances that are in the public interest should be dealt with through the Whistle-Blowing Policy (6.7).

The following complaints would fall under the category of Whistle-Blowing:

- Legal Compliance and Criminal Activity
    - Breaking the law: Non-compliance with Thai laws, including non-employment contractual obligations, health and safety regulations, and procurement policies.
    - Criminal or civil offences: Any action that constitutes a violation of criminal or civil law in Thailand.
    - Failure to protect personal information and/or data under Thai law: Breaches of data privacy laws and regulations.
    - Examples:
        - Theft: Unauthorised taking of property belonging to the School, colleagues, students, or other stakeholders.
        - Document Falsification: Altering, forging, or creating false records, including academic, financial, or employment documents.
        - Financial Misconduct: Engaging in fraudulent activities such as misappropriation of funds, unauthorised financial transactions, or deliberate misrepresentation of financial records.

- Health, Safety, and Well-being
    - Threats to an individual's health and safety: Situations that endanger the physical or mental well-being of students, staff, or visitors.
    - Failure to properly rectify a serious issue: Inaction or insufficient action taken after a serious health or safety concern has been identified and communicated.

- Environmental Protection
    - Potential or actual damage to the environment: Activities that harm the environment, including failure to adhere to the school's sustainability policies or Thai environmental regulations.

- Integrity and Ethical Conduct
    - Damage to reputation: Actions that compromise the school's standing in the community, locally or internationally.
    - Cover-ups: The belief that someone is deliberately concealing misconduct, negligence, or other breaches listed in this policy.
    - Conflict of Interest: Participating in activities or relationships that conflict with the best interests of the School or compromise impartiality.

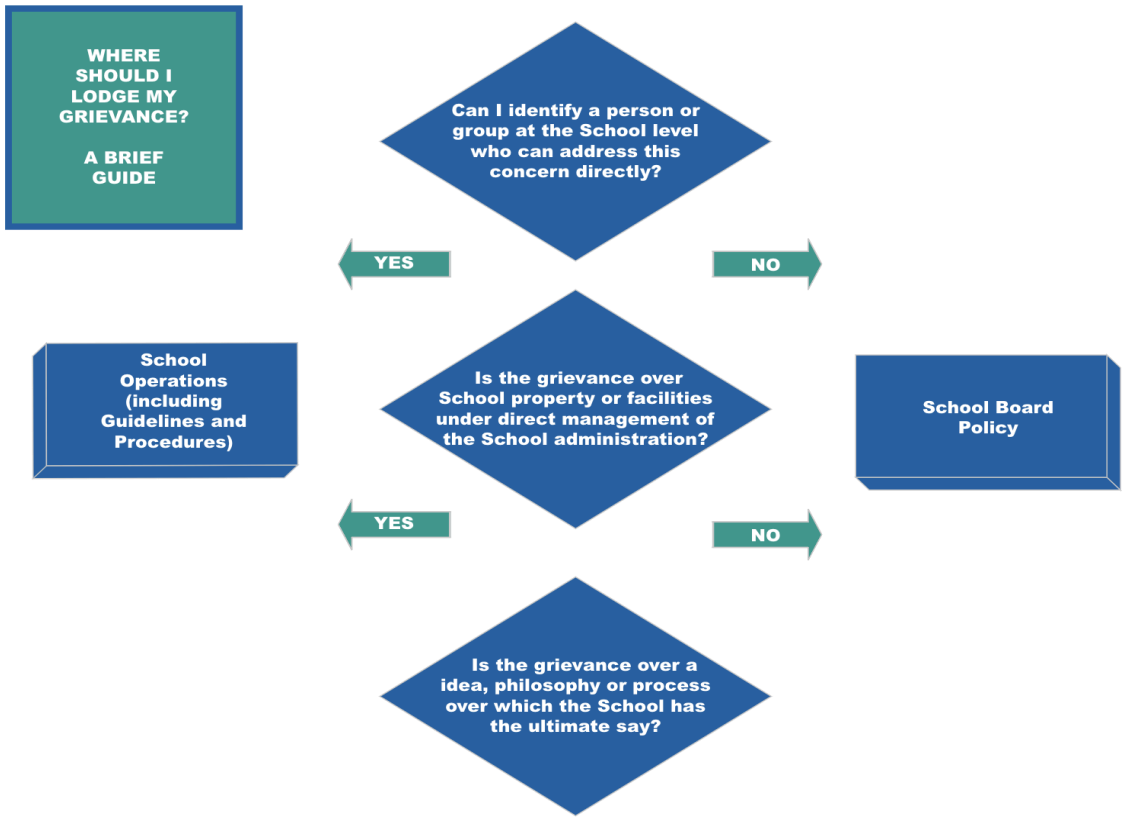
- Accountability and Governance
    - Failure to act on identified issues: Neglecting to address serious problems or concerns after being made aware of them.
    - Breach of governance policies: Violations of internal policies, such as those related to ethical leadership, decision-making, or oversight.

2. Addressing a Dispute, Grievance, or Complaint ("Grievance") at UWC Thailand

These procedures are designed to help Community members understand how best to address a Grievance. The School differentiates between School Operational Grievances (including School Guidelines and/or Procedures) and Grievances concerning School Board Policy. While all Grievances should be addressed initially with the parties directly involved or their direct superiors, UWC Thailand recognises that there are instances where this will not result in a solution that is satisfactory to all parties or that there is no one party directly responsible for the issue of concern. In those instances, the parties will need to assess if their grievance is related to School Operations, School Guidelines and/or Procedures (both of which are Operation Grievances), or School Board Policy.

The Head of School is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all interested parties are aware of any Grievance Policy and procedure(s).

2.1 How to decide if a Grievance concerns School Operations (including School Guidelines and/or Procedures), or School Board Policy



2.2. Addressing an Operational Grievance

All Operational Grievances will be addressed at the School level according to the procedures communicated to the members of our community by the School's administration.

3. Addressing a Grievance concerning School Board Policy

If a matter concerns School Board Policy, it may be addressed by the School Board. Any such Grievance must be lodged using the School Board Grievance Form**.** The School Board Secretary will receive this form and respond to it according to the procedures outlined in section 3.1 below.

The School Board has a standing agenda item at School Board Meetings regarding policy grievances where School Board level Grievances will be addressed. It is the Chair's responsibility to present the Grievance to the rest of the Board and appoint a Grievance Panel. The Grievance Panel will investigate the issue and propose a solution and next steps to the board. If the Chair cannot appropriately be responsible for the issue, or if the Grievance concerns the Chair, another member of the Steering Committee may be appointed to lead on the matter of the Grievance.

If the matter is not resolved earlier, the School Board will discuss the Grievance and will vote on a solution and next steps. The Chair (or the appointed member of the Steering Committee) will communicate the response to the aggrieved person and the Head of School after the School Board Meeting Minutes have been approved. The School Board's communication is final. There is no option to appeal.

UWC Thailand's School Board recognises that a response will not always be in favour of the aggrieved person. We seek the understanding that a school always has multiple competing priorities and hope that the aggrieved party will understand that, even if a solution cannot be found or accommodated, their Grievance will form part of the School Board's broader understanding of the School and may serve to support future policy reviews and/or changes.

Any Grievance made will need to meet certain requirements, described below, in order to be considered by the School Board.

3.1 Addressing a Grievance concerning School Board Policy step by step

The steps below outline the procedure to follow when Grievances rise to the School Board level:

Step 1	The aggrieved party fills in the School Board Grievance Form, setting out the nature of the Policy Grievance, the parties involved and the contact information of the aggrieved party. The School Board Secretary will serve as ombudsman and direct the Grievance to the Chair or the Deputy Chair as appropriate.

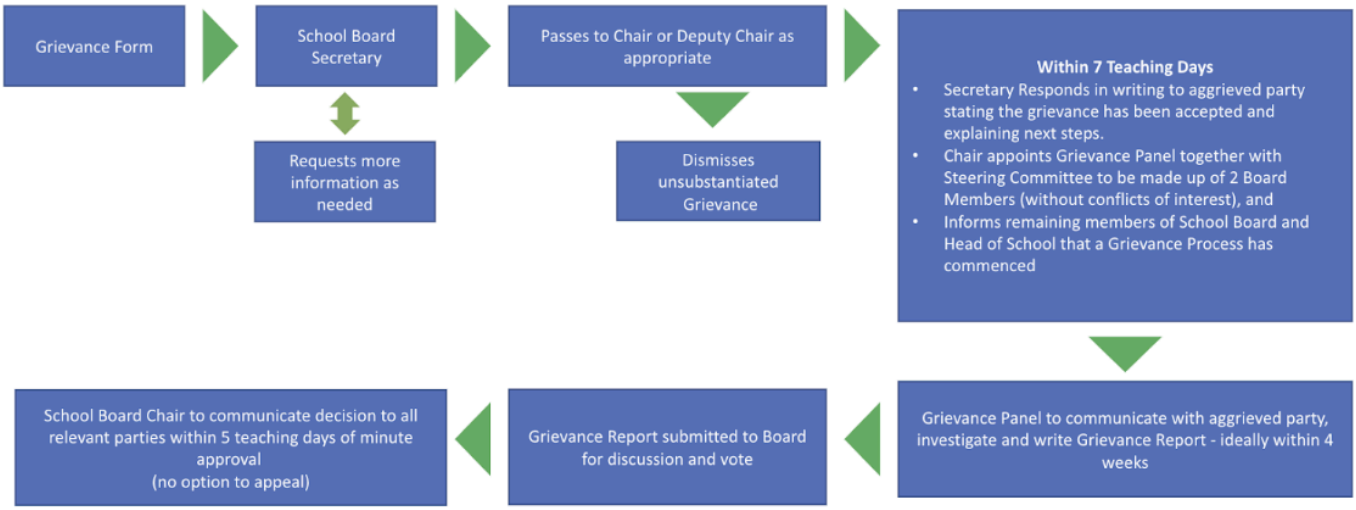
Step 2	Within 7 teaching days the School Board Secretary will respond in writing. When a Policy Grievance is accepted, the Chair together with the Steering Committee will appoint 2 to 3 members of the School Board to assess the Grievance (the Grievance Panel) and will notify the School Board, the aggrieved person that a Grievance process has commenced, as well as identifying the members of the Grievance Panel. The Grievance Panel will proceed to seek additional information and advice as necessary to understand the Grievance and propose a solution and/or next steps. The Grievance Panel will fill in a Grievance Report. The Grievance Report will be submitted to the School Board at the next School Board Meeting. The Grievance Report will include the nature of the grievance, the parties involved, the proposed solution and proposed next steps. The Grievance Panel will inform the aggrieved party on a timeline for addressing the Grievance. The Grievance Panel will aim to resolve a Grievance within 4 weeks.

Step 3	The School Board will discuss the Grievance Report and vote on a solution and next steps at a School Board Meeting.

Step 4	The School Board Chair or the appointed Chair of the Grievance Panel will communicate the School Board's response within 5 teaching days of the approved minutes of the meeting where the Grievance Report was deliberated.

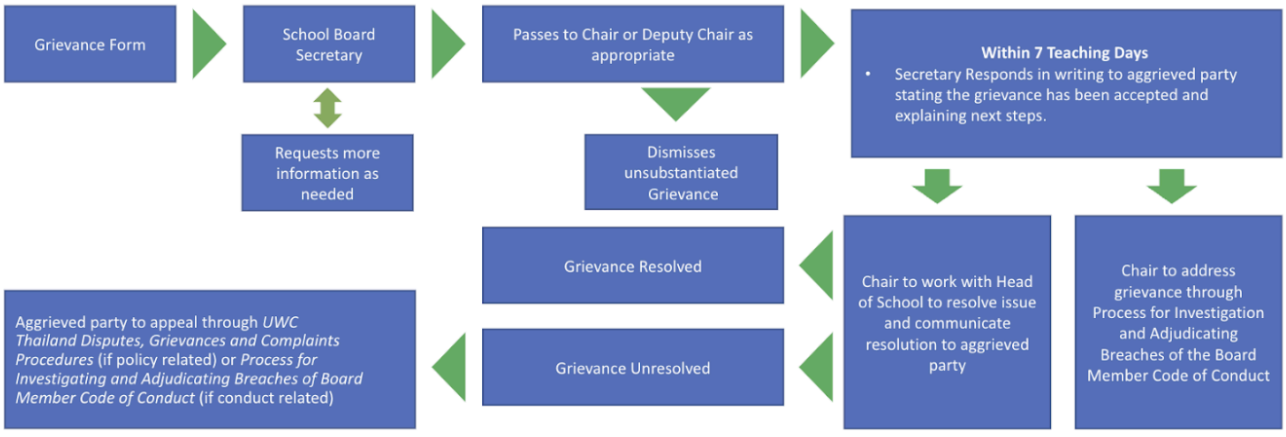
3.1.a Flow Charts of Grievance Procedures

Grievances concerning Board Policy



Note: School Board Secretary can also dismiss grievances if sufficient information has not been received in a reasonable time frame.

Grievances concerning the Head of School



Note: School Board Secretary can also dismiss grievances if sufficient information has not been received in a reasonable time frame.

3.2 Withdrawing a Grievance at the School Board level

If the aggrieved party withdraws the Grievance before the Grievance Panel has completed their Report, all relevant parties will be informed within seven teaching days.

3.3 Contents of the Grievance

All Grievances must be lodged using the School Board Grievance Form. The School Board Secretary has the responsibility of receiving and responding to this form.

The completed Grievance Form must include:

- The name, electronic signature and contact details of the aggrieved party.
- The date of submission.
- A factual description of the Grievance and evidence in attachments.

3.3.a If the provisions of paragraph 3.3 have not been complied with, the Secretary will notify the aggrieved party of the outstanding matters, and the aggrieved party will be given the opportunity to rectify the default within two weeks. If after two weeks the provisions of paragraph 3.3 have not been complied with, the Grievance may be declared inadmissible.

3.3.b If the Grievance is declared inadmissible, notification of this is sent by the School Board Chair or the Deputy Board Chair to the aggrieved party, the Head of School and the School Board.

3.3.c A Grievance may also be declared inadmissible if it is found to be untruthful, defamatory, or a form of harassment. Any Grievance that is found to be defamatory or of malicious intent will be addressed under UWC Thailand's Harassment Policy.

3.3.d When the Grievance Form includes all mandatory items, the School Board Secretary will accept the Grievance and refer the matter to the Chair of the School Board. In instances where the Chair of the School Board is conflicted, the matter will be referred to the Deputy Chair of the School Board.

3.4 Composition of the Grievance Panel

When a Policy Grievance is accepted, the Chair, supported by the Steering Committee, will appoint 2 to 3 members of the School Board to assess the Grievance (the Grievance Panel). The Steering Committee will consider potential conflicts of interest when selecting School Board members for the Grievance Panel.

3.5 Investigation, Hearing and Grievance Report Preparation

3.5.a In preparing a Grievance Report, the Grievance Panel is authorised to obtain all the required information. It can call upon experts and if necessary, invite them to the Board Meeting where the matter will be addressed. If there are costs involved, prior authorisation from the Head of School is required, which shall not be unreasonably withheld.

3.5.b The Grievance Panel may set a time to hear or meet with the aggrieved party and any other relevant parties. The Chair will seek to find a mutually convenient time for the meeting(s). Anyone called to such a meeting may bring a confidential adviser or supporter to the meeting.

3.5.c The various parties to the Grievance will not be heard in one another's presence, unless the Grievance Panel determines otherwise, and the parties agree.

3.5.d The Grievance Panel may invite a confidential adviser or confidential advisers to attend the meetings. Minutes will be taken of these meetings and any parties present have the right to review and correct these minutes. The minutes will remain confidential to the parties concerned.

3.5.e A Grievance Report will be drawn up based on the Grievance Panel's investigation. The report will contain:

- A summary of the Grievance, the name(s) of the aggrieved party / parties and any other persons, policies, guidelines or procedures relevant to the grievance,
- A summary of the investigation and its findings,
- Proposed solution(s),
- Proposed next steps,
- The members of the Grievance Panel that have undertaken the investigation,
- A list of dates of all correspondence and meetings held,
- An appendix containing the grievance email(s) and minutes from meetings held in connection with the investigation of the Grievance.

3.6 Grievance Report

The School Board will deliberate and come to a decision based on the Grievance Report at a School Board meeting. Any Grievance related discussions at any School Board meetings are only open to School Board Members. Any Board Members with conflicts of interest may be asked to recuse from the discussions and must recuse from the voting.

The School Board Secretary will keep the parties to the Grievance informed of the timeline for the School Board's response, i.e., the date of the next School Board meeting and the timeline for approving the minutes of such meeting.

In its advice, the Grievance Panel provides a substantiated opinion about whether the Grievance is well-founded or not, and informs the aggrieved party, the Head of School and the School Board in writing about the opinion.

In its advice, the Grievance Panel may also make a recommendation about measures to be taken by the Head of School, where relevant.

The Grievance Panel may, if necessary, ask the School Board Chair to call for a Special School Board Meeting to discuss and vote on a Grievance recommendation.

3.7 Decisions based on the Grievance Report

Within five teaching days of approving the minutes of the School Board meeting, the School Board Chair will notify the parties to the Grievance and the Head of School in writing of the decision. The Chair will provide a summary of the basis for the decision and which measures should be taken, if any.

This period can be extended, in which case the parties to the Grievance will be informed of the extension in writing.

4. Addressing a Grievance which concerns the Head of School

Where the Grievance concerns the Head of School, efforts should be made to find a mutual resolution via face-to-face communications between the Head of School and the aggrieved party. If there is no possibility of direct communication or a resolution has not been found, the issue may be raised with the Chair of the School Board by following Step 1 in section 3.1.

Due to the nature of the Head of School's role and the reality of his/her/their responsibility to ensure all members of the School Community and areas of the School are well served, Grievances at this level must be considered seriously, compassionately and fairly.

The Chair of the School Board will, in the first instance, aim to find a solution to the Grievance. If the Chair of the School Board cannot resolve the issue or the aggrieved party does not think the Chair has resolved the issue satisfactorily, the issue may be addressed under the Process for Investigation and Adjudicating Breaches of the Board Member Code of Conduct.

5. Evaluation / Follow up

At the conclusion of the Grievance process, the Board Lead or Chair of the Compliance and Risk Committee will follow up with both the aggrieved party and complainee to evaluate the impact of the process. They will also assess whether any infringement of section 1.7 (above) has taken place and if so, bring the matter back to the Board with a recommendation for any necessary reparations. This evaluation will be added to the final report.

6. Confidentiality

To protect the integrity and interests of all parties involved in an Operational Grievance or School Board Policy Grievance, the Head of School and Chair of the School Board will work to ensure the appropriate level of confidentiality of any Grievance proceeding. Members of UWC Thailand's staff, parents, students, and members of the Board or Committees shall uphold confidentiality as it concerns Operational and Policy Grievances to encourage rich discourse and protect those who have been aggrieved.

No member of the School Community is bound by confidentiality if maintaining such confidence would be a violation of applicable law or if the Grievance involves matters related to Safeguarding, Harassment or Whistle-Blowing, in which case the confidentiality obligations of the relevant policy would supersede these Grievance Procedures.

7. Contact details

Inquiries can be made regarding School Board level Grievances via the address below:

boardsecretary@uwcthailand.ac.th

This contact can be used if a member of the School Community would like to discuss a possible Grievance and how to best enter into a Grievance process.

School Board level Grievances may be lodged using the form below:

School Board Grievance Form