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Kassim Darwish Grammar School for Boys

Complaints Policy & Procedure

Introduction

The partnership between the parent/carer and the school is integral to the ethos and mission of the MIET schools, where Muslim values are at the heart of everything that we do, and should be characterised by a mutual respect by which parents/carers feel they are able to bring their concerns to the attention of someone in the school, at any time, with the expectation they will be listened to and their concerns addressed.

What constitutes a complaint?

We shall treat as a complaint any instance where a parent tells us that we have done something wrong, failed to do something that we should have done, or where we have acted unfairly. A complaint may be made about the School as a whole, a specific department or activity, or an individual member of staff. This list is not exhaustive and we shall treat any expression of dissatisfaction, whether real or perceived, as a complaint. In doing so we hope to see where we may be getting things wrong, with a view to preventing the same problems re-occurring.

Not all concerns are complaints. A concern is an issue raised by a parent, student or other person that is resolved quickly and informally. Most concerns are resolved by the person to whom the concern is addressed e.g. the form tutor or the Head of Year. Every effort should be made to allay concerns at this level and with the least possible formality. The ideal is that no concern should ever become a formal complaint.

Occasionally, however, a concern will be too serious to be handled in this way, perhaps needing greater investigation; or the person concerned may not feel that the answers given so far have been acceptable or adequate. In such circumstances the concern will become a complaint and this document outlines the formal procedure that should be followed in such cases.

This policy applies to parents of current students.

We make every effort to ensure that any complaint is treated seriously and sensitively; parents can be assured that their son will not be penalised in any way for a complaint that is made in good faith.

Who to contact?

- If parents have a concern or complaint they should normally contact their son's form tutor.
- Where the complaint is about the form tutor, a parent should take their concerns directly to the Head of Year. Parents may also wish to follow this route where the issue is particularly serious or sensitive.
- If a complaint relates to a senior member of staff concerns should be taken directly to the Executive Head or the Deputy Head in her absence.
- Where a complaint is against the Executive Head, parents should make their complaint to the Chairman of Trustees by emailing the Trust office:
trust.office@miet.org.uk

Procedure

The procedure that the School will follow has three distinct stages, each of which will be conducted by a different person to ensure fairness. The three stages are:

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

Stage 3: Panel Hearing

Our experience is that, in most cases, problems are satisfactorily dealt with at stage 1. A record of the number of complaints which proceeded beyond stage 1 last academic year is available on request from the Executive Head.

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

On receiving a complaint in person, in writing, by email or by telephone, a relevant staff member (form tutor, HOY or Deputy Head) will make a written record of the concerns raised and the date on which they were received. If the complaint is made in writing or by email, it will normally be acknowledged within **3** working days.

In the vast majority of cases we hope that matters will be resolved quickly to the parents' satisfaction. We shall in all cases investigate the matter fairly and appropriately with any relevant staff. We shall do so as quickly as is practicable without compromising the outcome.

If the matter is not resolved within **10** working days, or in the event that the School and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed to Stage 2, (formal resolution).

Stage 2: Formal Resolution

If a complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Executive Head. The Executive Head, or someone on her behalf, will acknowledge receipt of the written complaint within **3** working days and will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases the Executive Head, or another senior member of staff not so far involved with the complaint, will meet the parents concerned to discuss the matter. This will be within **10** working days of the receipt of the written complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the Executive Head or another senior member of staff to carry out further investigation. In this case, once he or she is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed in writing of the decision and reasons underpinning it.

If the complaint is against the Executive Head, the Chairman of Trustees will call for a full report from the Executive Head and for any relevant documents. The Chairman may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will, in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. This will be within **10** working days from the receipt of the written complaint (unless there is an unforeseen absence). Once the Chairman is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chairman will give reasons for his decision.

Timescales for stages 1 and 2

We would always hope to complete stages 1 and 2 within **28** working days; complex issues or complaints received within 28 working days of the start of school holidays may take longer. In all cases we shall aim to complete the process as soon as is practicable, whilst allowing sufficient time for a thorough investigation to take place.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to stage 3, the panel hearing.

Stage 3: Panel Hearing

A panel hearing cannot normally be requested unless stages 1 and 2 of this procedure have been completed. If parents wish to request a panel hearing they should write to the Trust office within **five** working days of the stage 2 decision. The Trust office will notify the Chairman.

The parents should state the outcome they desire and all of the grounds of the complaint. The panel will not normally accept any new areas of complaint which have not been previously raised during stages 1 and 2.

The matter will then be referred to a complaints panel ("the Panel") for consideration. The panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the School. The Trust office Manager, on behalf of the Panel, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable, and normally within **14** working days of the parent's request for a panel hearing.

If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further details of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such details shall be supplied to all parties not later than **3** working days prior to the hearing.

The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by the student(s) concerned and one other person, if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not be permitted.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. The hearing may be adjourned for this purpose. On completion of the hearing the Panel will consider all of the facts they consider relevant. They will then make findings and may make recommendations.

Findings:

The Panel may dismiss or uphold the complaint.

Recommendations:

The panel may make recommendations to the Executive Head or the full Board of Trustees, as appropriate. It is not within the powers of the Panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, students or parents, although they may recommend these actions to the Executive Head or the Trustees.

The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it; barring any unforeseen absence, this will be within **7** working days of the hearing. The decision of the Panel will be final.

A copy of the Panel's findings and any recommendations will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, any person who may be the subject of the complaint, as well as the Chairman of Trustees and the Executive Head.

Record of complaints

Following the resolution of a complaint, the School will keep a written record which will include (a) the nature of the complaint and (b) whether it was resolved at one of the first two stages of this procedure or if it proceeded to a panel hearing, and (c) any action taken

by the School as a result of the complaint. Normally the record will contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of student
- Description of the issue
- Records of the investigation (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member(s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)
- Action(s) taken by the School as a result of the complaint

This record is kept securely in the **Executive Head's** office, and will only be made available, as and when required, to the Secretary of State or an inspection body, in line with the **School's** obligations under the Education and Skills Act 2008.

Data protection

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are normally kept for **three years** after the resolution of the complaint and will be kept confidential except when the School is required to disclose information by:

- the Secretary of State for Education under paragraph (k) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2010
- the ISI under Sections 108, 109 and 110 of the Education and Skills Act 2008
- other legal authority

Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of this policy and its implementation will be carried out by the Executive Head. Stage 1 complaints are kept under on-going review by the Deputy Head.

Number of complaints at Stage 2 (Formal Resolution) or above in last twelve months: None

Date	June 2023
Reviewed by	Dr D Ghidaoui
Next Review Date of this Policy	Summer Term 2024