



St. Mary's Catholic High School, Dubai – Muhaisnah

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

Written by:	HR Team	Reviewed:	June 2019
Endorsed by:	SLT	Next Review:	June 2020
Approved by:	Board of Governors		



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

SUMMARY

It is one of the KHDA's Rules for every School to establish procedures for dealing with complaints from parents, students, members of staff, governors, and members of the local community and others. This includes complaints about the School and any community facilities or services that the School provides.

The Role of a Complaints Procedure

A complaints procedure is a way of ensuring that anyone with an interest in the School can raise a concern, with confidence that it will be heard and if well founded, addressed in an appropriate and timely fashion.

Purpose

The school's values are concerned with meeting the needs of students, parents and other stakeholders. The governing body believes that feedback is an important ingredient in self-evaluation and raising standards. All stakeholders should feel that their concerns or complaints can be voiced and will be considered seriously. The school takes informal concerns seriously and aims to resolve them at the earliest stage in order to reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.

The underlying principle is that concerns will be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. The requirement to have a complaints procedure will not in any way undermine efforts to resolve the concern informally. Staff will endeavour to resolve issues on the spot.

Formal procedures will be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

Applicability

The policy shall apply to all employees and governors of the school. It is the shared responsibility of the Principal and the Chairman of the Governing Body to ensure that these groups are made aware of the policy and procedure.

The Complaints Procedure will:

- Encourage resolution of problems by **informal** means wherever possible.
- Be easily **accessible** and **publicised**.
- Be **simple** to understand and use.
- Be **impartial**.
- Be **non-adversarial**.



- Ensure a full and **fair** investigation by an independent panel where necessary.
- Respect people's desire for **confidentiality**.
- Address all the points at issue and provide an **effective** response and **appropriate** redress, where necessary.
- Provide **information** to the school's senior leadership team so that services can be improved.

A complaints procedure provides a framework so that:

- Anyone with an interest in the School (Parents, members of staff, governors, students, members of the local community and others) is clear how they can express complaints, and how they will be responded to at each stage.
- School Staff and governors are clear about their roles and responsibilities in responding to complaints.
- School can learn lessons and improve procedures as a result of individual cases and monitor long – term trends.

Investigating Complaints

At each stage the person dealing with the complaint makes sure that they:

- Establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved.
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved.
- Meet with the complainant or contact them if unsure or further information is necessary.
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.
- Talk to those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish.
- Approach matters with an open mind and keep records.

Staff Grievance Procedure

Informal Stage

1. Where a staff member has a grievance which involves other members of the staff, he or she shall first of all endeavour to resolve the matter by direct approach to the staff member involved or in discussion with an appropriate senior person, or, if necessary, in discussion with the Principal.
2. Where a staff member requests a personal interview with the appropriate senior person or Principal, it must be granted within five working days of the request being made.
3. The appropriate senior person or the Principal shall seek to resolve the problem personally or by mutual agreement, in consultation with other member(s) of the senior staff. The Principal may also, by mutual agreement, seek consultation with the Chairman of Governors or members of the Vicariate's Management Board.
4. Where a staff member has a grievance with the management, operation or actions of the Governing Body of the school, a direct approach shall be made to the Chair of Governors.



5. Many grievances are best resolved informally. If, however, the matter is not resolved as a result of the informal approach, the formal grievance procedure could be invoked.

It is important to note that confidentiality should be maintained throughout the process.

Formal Grievance Procedure

1. Where the grievance has not been resolved under the informal procedures described above, the member of staff concerned should submit a formal written notice of their concerns or problems to the Principal, together with any relevant documents without unreasonable delay. The employee should clearly state both why s/he is raising a formal grievance (and the nature of the grievance) and the outcome/resolution s/he is seeking. If the grievance involves the Principal, the grievance should go to the Chair of Governors.
2. The Principal or his/her nominee shall write to acknowledge receipt of the formal grievance within 5 working days. The Principal/nominee shall arrange for an investigation to establish the facts of the case. The investigation should be completed as soon as possible taking into account the circumstances of the case.
3. Upon completion of the investigation the Principal/nominee will receive the investigation report and will arrange for the matter to progress as soon as possible to a grievance meeting of a Committee of the Governing Body with the employee. This Committee shall comprise of three members of the School Governing Body.
4. All relevant documents will be submitted to the Committee and the parties concerned at least five working days in advance of the meeting. All parties shall have the right to be accompanied by a work-based colleague. The purpose of this meeting will be to consider the grievance with a view to resolving the matter.
5. After the meeting the Chair of the Committee must inform the employee, usually within five working days, in writing, of their decision in response to the grievance.

Stages of the Complaints Process for Parents/Students

Stage 1

The complainant raises and discusses their concerns/issues with the student's class teacher. Most concerns can be resolved satisfactorily at this stage. However, the

staff member may feel it more appropriate to refer the complainant to a more senior or experienced member of staff who will try to resolve the concern informally.

Stage 2

If the complainant remains unhappy, they should then contact the appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team either by arranging an appointment to see them or putting their concerns in writing.

The member of the Senior Leadership Team will then investigate the complaint. An acknowledgement will be made of the concern/complaint within 24 hours. They will respond to the issues raised within 5 school working days of receiving the complaint. If it is not possible to resolve the issue in this time, then the matter will be passed to the School Principal



If the concern or complaint is against the School Principal, in the first instance the complainant will need to write in confidence to the Chair of Governors at the school. The Chair of Governors will seek to resolve the issue informally before, if necessary, moving to Stage 4.

Stage 3

The School Principal will consider the complaint and make further investigations which will involve a meeting with all concerned parties. Following the investigation by the School Principal a decision will be made regarding the complaint and this will be communicated to the complainant within 15 days.

Stage 4

If the Principal is unable to resolve the concern to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant may write to the Chair of Governors at the school. The Chair of Governors will acknowledge the complaint within five school working days and will carry out a subsequent investigation.

Once the investigation has taken place the complainant and school will be informed of the decision within a further five school working days.

Stage 5

If the complainant remains unsatisfied by the outcome of the investigation carried out by the Chair of Governors, they may contact the Chair of the Vicariate's Management Board or KHDA, who will investigate if the school's complaints process has been carried out appropriately.

Members of Complaint Committee (Senior Leadership Team)

SLT NO:	Name	Responsibilities	Contact Number	Email Address
1.	Ms. Karen White	Principal	0543125225	karenwhite-smm@smgeducation.org
2.	Sr. Terry Capurihan	Vice Principal, Teaching & Learning	0501604177	capterry@smgeducation.org
3.	Sr. Alma Esmero	Head of Pastoral Care & Development		sralma@smgeducation.org
4	Mrs. Ishani Khanna	Head of Primary Section	0507672706	ikhanna@smgeducation.org



5.	Ms. Mari Ella Villosillo	Head of Student Affairs and Activities	0502170990	mariellav@smgeducation.org
6.	Sr. Rosalie Badelic	Head of Finance and Administration	0564276266	srrosalie@smgeducation.org
7.	Sr. Tess Bayona	Senior Vice Principal	0564845902	rtessbayona@smgeducation.org

Handling Information

Complaints are kept confidential and only those involved in investigating and making a decision is made aware of the nature of the complaint.

The accused person is entitled to know the substance of the accusation. However, there are cases where the governing body may decide to withhold information, e.g., where there is a need to protect the source (or there is a legal reason why the information should not be released) or to meet data protection requirements.

Complaints Involving Students

Particular consideration is given to arrangements for handling complaints involving students. Students may be involved as complainants, as the subject of a complaint or as witnesses. At each stage, a student may be accompanied by his or her parent/guardian or an adult of his/her choice.

Impartiality and Fairness

Complaints' procedures should be fair to all parties and applied consistently.

Timing

Every effort will be made to investigate complaints quickly.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy

All documentation regarding complaints (including notes of any related meetings and telephone calls), the action taken and the final outcome will be recorded and a summary included in the Principal's next report to governors.

The governing body will monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary. Complaints information shared with the whole governing body will not name individuals.



The monitoring and review of complaints by the school and the governing body is a useful tool in evaluating the school's performance, and will contribute to school improvement. Any underlying issues identified will be addressed.