



**Al-Hijrah School**  
**مدرسة الهجرة**

**Excellence in motion | Bringing out the best**

# Complaints Policy

## Policy Monitoring, Evaluation & Review

The school will review this policy as below and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

<b>Updated:</b>	June 2017	<b>Reviewed by:</b>	SLT / Governing Body / IEB
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	As required		

This Policy was adopted by Al-Hijrah School on:	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Signed:</b>
<b>Name:</b> David Willey	<b>Signed:</b> 

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Specialist Schools  
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THE DUKE OF  
EDINBURGH'S AWARD



## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. At Al-Hijrah School we are obliged to meet statutory requirements and at the same time we use our Holy Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to guide our etiquettes and practices.
- 1.2. Al-Hijrah School strives to provide a good education for all of our pupils. The Head Teacher and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents/guardians. However, occasionally a situation arises that causes concerns for parents/guardians. This policy sets out the procedures that the school community will need to follow in such cases.
- 1.3. This procedure applies to all concerns or complaints, except for those which relate to:
  - School Admissions;
  - Statutory Assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN);
  - Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures;
  - Pupil exclusions;
  - Staff grievances, capability, or disciplinary procedures;
  - Complaints about services provided from the School's premises by other organisations;
  - Whistleblowing; or
  - Subject Access Requests and Freedom of Information Requests.

## 2. Aims & Objectives

- 2.1. This Complaints Policy aims to:
  - 2.1.1. Encourage the resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
  - 2.1.2. Ensure that concerns are dealt with quickly, fully and fairly and within clearly defined time limits;
  - 2.1.3. Provide effective responses and appropriate redress;
  - 2.1.4. Maintain good working relationships between all people involved with the school.

## 3. Summary

- 3.1. A summary of the various Stages is given below:

1)	Informal discussion and resolution	Informal Stage	School Staff
2)	Investigation by Complaints Coordinator	Formal Stage	School Staff
3)	Investigation by Head Teacher		School Staff
4)	Review by the Governing Body Complaints Committee		Governing Body

## 4. Resolving Concerns Informally

- 4.1. It is in everyone's interest that concerns are resolved at the earliest possible stage, before they become formal complaints. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal procedures.
- 4.2. The School encourages anyone with a concern to address it informally by contacting the School office or by raising it with their child's class teacher, or their manager, in the first instance. We hope that they will either be able to address the concern on the spot, or they will be able to arrange to

discuss it further at a mutually convenient time. The Head Teacher and Chair of the IEB will not routinely be involved in resolving informal concerns but, in exceptional circumstances, appointments can be made with them by contacting the School. It will be for the Head Teacher and/or Chair of the Governing Board, to determine if the circumstances are exceptional and if it is therefore appropriate for them to become involved at the informal stage.

## **5. Circumstances under which Stages should be missed out**

- 5.1. This policy sets out the most suitable and effective process for dealing with the majority of complaints. In most cases, any concern or complaint, regardless of whose attention it is initially brought to, should be discussed informally (Stage 1) before being escalated to any of the Formal Stages.
- 5.2. In some cases, it may be deemed inappropriate for individuals to discuss their concerns informally. In such cases, they may be directed to contact the Complaints Coordinator directly (i.e. begin at Stage 2).

## **6. Observing Confidentiality**

- 6.1. Where possible complaints will be dealt with confidentially and, where the Governing Board is involved, we will avoid sharing details of the complaint with the whole Governing Board except in very general terms. We would also ask you to observe confidentiality and not discuss complaints publicly, or via social media.
- 6.2. The School maintains a centrally held record of formal complaint forms (see 6 A) and documentation referred to as part of the complaints process. You have a right to request copies in accordance with the School's policy on dealing with Freedom of Information Policy.

## **7. Safeguarding**

- 7.1. Wherever a complaint indicates that a child's wellbeing or safety is at risk, the School is under a duty to report this immediately in accordance with the School's Safeguarding Policy which is available on the School's website.

## **8. Timescales**

- 8.1. The School will endeavour to abide by timescales stated under each stage of the process below. Sometimes, due to the nature or complexity of the complaint, the School may need to set different timescales in which case you will be notified of the date that the School will respond and you will be kept informed of progress throughout.
- 8.2. The School will not investigate complaints that have been made more than three months after the event that led to the complaint, except in exceptional circumstances. If a complaint is received outside that time frame the Head Teacher or the Chair of the Governing Board will decide whether the circumstances warrant the complaint being investigated.

## **9. Monitoring Complaints**

- 9.1. At all Formal Stages of the Complaints Procedure, the following information should be recorded:
  - 9.1.1. The name of the complainant;
  - 9.1.2. The date and time at which complaint was made;
  - 9.1.3. The details of the complaint;
  - 9.1.4. The desired outcome of the complainant;



- 9.1.5. How the complaint is investigated (including written records of interviews held);
- 9.1.6. Results and conclusions of investigations;
- 9.1.7. Any action taken;
- 9.1.8. The complainant's response (satisfaction or further pursuit of complaint) and the next step identified.

## ***10. Upholding or Not Upholding Complaints***

- 10.1. At each Stage of the Complaints Procedure, the conclusion will be either:
  - 10.1.1. That the complaint is upheld (in part or in full) and, where appropriate, some form of action is taken. It may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:
    - 10.1.1.1. an apology;
    - 10.1.1.2. an explanation;
    - 10.1.1.3. an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
    - 10.1.1.4. an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
    - 10.1.1.5. an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
    - 10.1.1.6. an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.
- 10.2. Or...
  - 10.2.1. That the complaint is not upheld and reasons for this are clearly given.
- 10.3. The complainant may either choose to take no further action or will be advised of how to take the complaint to the next relevant Stage of the Complaints Policy.

## ***11. Vexatious Complaints***

- 11.1. There will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Chair of the Governing Body is able to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed at School level.

## ***12. Complaints Procedure – The Stages***

### **12.1. Stage 1: Informal Discussion**

#### **12.1.1. Introduction**

The vast majority of concerns can be dealt with informally. There are many occasions where concerns are resolved straight away without the need to submit a formal complaint. Indeed, many concerns raised at this level might not be classified as complaints. If the complaint is judged to be a safeguarding issue, it will automatically be referred to the Complaints Coordinator.

#### **12.1.2. Who to Speak to Informally**

Individuals may decide to raise their concerns with a member of school Administrative Staff, Class Teacher, Senior Teacher, Governor or Head Teacher depending on their wishes and the type of issues they want to discuss. The member of staff may wish to involve the Complaints Coordinator at this stage. The concern may be made by telephone, in person or in writing.

**12.1.3. Monitoring**

Although this stage involves dealing with the issue informally it may prove helpful later, although not essential at this stage, for the person responding to make a basic record of the issue or complaint raised, which may include brief notes of conversations and the responses made.

**12.1.4. Timescales**

The complaint should be resolved within 5 working days

**12.1.5. Response**

The individual who raised the issue should be informed of any action to be taken to resolve the issue. If appropriate, this might be confirmed in writing.

**12.1.6. Options for Complainant**

If the individual is dissatisfied with the response they have been given and would like to take their concerns further, they should be referred to the school's Complaints Procedure.

**12.2. Stage 2: Investigation by Complaints Coordinator****12.2.1. Introduction**

This is the first Stage of the Formal Complaints Process and, as a result, all communications between parties need to be carefully recorded and monitored as set out in the 'Monitoring Complaints' section of this document. When a complaint is made directly against the Head Teacher, Stages 2 and 3 are not required and the Formal Procedure begins at Stage 4.

**12.2.2. Submitting a Formal Complaint**

By this Stage it must be clear that the concern is a definite complaint which will be dealt with according to this policy and should be formally submitted in writing to the Complaints Coordinator.

**12.2.3. Acknowledgement & Timescales**

The Complaints Coordinator should formally acknowledge the complaint within 5 school days of receiving it and begin an investigation.

**12.2.4. The Investigation**

The Complaints Coordinator will need to investigate the complainant and review any relevant documentation and information. If necessary, the Complaints Coordinator will take statements from those involved.

**12.2.5. Response**

The Complaints Coordinator will provide the complainant with a full written response within 10 school days of acknowledging it. This response will determine whether or not the complaint has been upheld, the reasons why, and what action (if any) will be taken. The response will provide details of how to move on to the next Stage, if the complainant is not satisfied.

**12.3. Stage 3: Investigation by Head Teacher****12.3.1. Introduction**

This is the second Stage of the Formal Complaints Process and, as a result, all communications between parties need to be carefully recorded and monitored as set out in the 'monitoring complaints' section of this document. When a complaint is made directly against the Head Teacher, Stages 2 and 3 are not required and the formal procedure begins at Stage 4.

### **12.3.2. Submitting a Formal Complaint**

By this Stage it must be clear that the concern is a definite complaint which will be dealt with according to this policy and should be formally submitted in writing to the Head Teacher.

### **12.3.3. Acknowledgement & Timescales**

The Head Teacher should formally acknowledge the complaint within 5 school days of receiving it and begin an investigation.

### **12.3.4. The Investigation**

The Head Teacher will need to investigate the complaint and review any relevant documentation and information. If necessary, the Head Teacher will take statements from those involved.

### **12.3.5. Response**

The Head Teacher will provide the complainant with a full written response within 10 school days of acknowledging it. This response will determine whether or not the complaint has been upheld, the reasons why, and what action (if any) will be taken. The response will provide details of how to move on to the next Stage, if the complainant is not satisfied. A copy of the response will be filed with the Complaints Coordinator.

## **12.4. Stage 4: Review by Governing Body Complaints Committee**

### **12.4.1. Introduction**

If the complainant remains unsatisfied following an investigation by the Head Teacher, they can ask for their complaint to be referred to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will convene a Complaints Committee which will be clerked by a member of the school staff, the Clerk to the Governing Body or another Governor.

### **12.4.2. The Committee**

The Committee will generally consist of three Governors who have not previously been involved with dealing with the complaint. If the Governing Body is unable to find 3 Governors without prior involvement and has formal collaboration arrangements in place with another school's Governing Body, independent Governors can be drawn from that Governing Body to sit on the Committee. The Committee should elect its own Chair.

### **12.4.3. Acknowledgement & Timescales**

The Chair of Governors should acknowledge receipt of the complainant's letter within 5 school days. This letter will inform them that their complaint will be heard by a Complaints Committee within 15 school days.

### **12.4.4. Governor Complaints Committee Arrangements**

The Chair of Governors will contact the Clerk and ask them to begin making preparatory arrangements. The Clerk should then formally write to the complainant, the Head Teacher and any other relevant staff or witnesses and inform them:

12.4.4.1. Of the date, time and venue of the hearing;

12.4.4.2. How it will be conducted;

12.4.4.3. Request for any supporting documentation by either the complainant or the school which must be returned to the Clerk no later than 5 school days before the hearing takes place; this should include any request from supporting witnesses or representatives to attend with either party.

The Clerk will ensure that all parties receive all relevant documents at least 3 school days before the date of the hearing so as to allow individuals to familiarise themselves with them.

**12.4.5. Governors Complaints Committee Meeting**

The Chair of the Committee should allow each party involved to explain their understanding or interpretation of events and for the Committee to question them for further clarification. Complainants do not have to attend the Committee Meeting if they would prefer not to, and all written evidence will be considered. Ultimately, the Chair of the Meeting has control over its proceedings.

**12.4.6. After the Committee Meeting**

The Committee will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and:

- 12.4.6.1. Reach a majority decision on the complaint;
- 12.4.6.2. Decide or recommend upon the appropriate action (if any) to be taken;
- 12.4.6.3. Where appropriate, suggest changes to, or request a review of, the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again.

This information will be included in letters to both the Head Teacher and the complainant within 5 school days of the hearing. This is the end of the school's Complaints Process.





**3. What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?**


**4. Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.**


**Signature:**

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**Date:**

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*Official Use*

**Date Acknowledgement  
Sent:**

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**Acknowledgment Sent  
By:**

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**Complaint Referred To:**

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**Date of Referral:**

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**Complaint Referred By:**

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**Signature:**

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## 2 Summary of Complaints Procedure



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