

# Complaints policy



## LONDON EAST ACADEMY & AL MIZAN SCHOOL

ISLAMIC SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR BOYS & ISLAMIC JUNIOR SCHOOL

Date agreed	Chair of Governing Body	Headteacher	Review
Sep 2020	Hussain Shefaar	Askor Ali	Review as necessary

# Complaints Policy

Correspondence, statements and records of complaints to be kept confidential where appropriate.

(Note this does not apply to the requirement of the school to provide parents and other interested parties with information about the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding year, nor to inspectors conducting inspections under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, or to the Secretary of State, should they ask for such records.)

Complaints can cover a wide variety of matters that concern parent/carers. The school expects ALL parents/carers complaints to be taken seriously and to be dealt with comprehensively and as far as possible in confidence.

## **Aims:**

The policy aims to ensure that all complaints from parent/carers are dealt with as quickly and sensitively as possible, and by the person best able to do so.

The period of consideration will vary with the gravity and complexity of the complaint and the urgency with which it needs to be settled.

Parent/carers should be informed of the procedures for making complaints and appealing against decisions.

## **Types of Complaint:**

The majority of complaints received by the school may fall into the following categories:

**Financial and administrative** (and breach of contract in independent schools); Accommodation and facilities;

**Academic** (course programme, unsatisfactory teaching, too much/too little homework, progress in a particular subject, etc.);

**Pastoral and welfare** (discipline/indiscipline, inappropriate sanctions, bullying, overall progress of the student, unhappiness of student, etc.);

**Child protection** (allegations against staff, handling of sensitive issues).

## **Responsibilities:**

**Board of governors:** for approving the policy, procedures and guidelines, hearing and deciding on appeals, receiving reports, advising the Headteacher, and for overlooking the implementation of the policy and procedures.

**Headteacher:** for the efficient implementation of the policy and procedures, for training staff on how to deal appropriately with complaints, for hearing parent/carer appeals from decisions taken by other staff, for presenting the Academy's case where the parent/carer appeals to the Board of Governors, and for reporting on complaints annually, or as required, to the Board of Governors.

**Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Line Managers:** for dealing with and where possible resolving complaints about academic matters/programmes of study/teaching methods/discipline issues and pastoral care.

**Form Tutors:** for dealing with and where possible resolving complaints concerning overall student progress, discipline issues and pastoral care.

**Headteacher/ Child Protection Officer:** for child protection issues.

**All Staff:** for hearing any complaints brought to them by parent/carers and reassuring them that their complaints will be dealt with as soon as possible by the appropriate member of staff, and for informing the relevant staff of the complaint.

## **Guidelines**

### STAGE 1 – FIRST CONTACT – INFORMAL STAGE

All staff should listen carefully and patiently to parent/carers' complaints, recognising that however ill-founded the complaint might be a matter of great concern to the parent/carer.

Parents/carers should be provided with an opportunity to discuss any concern with the appropriate member of staff. The member of staff should try and clarify with the parent the nature of their concern and assure them that the Academy wants to listen and resolve their concerns. In response the member of staff may explain to the parent how the situation happened. It can be helpful to identify at this point what sort of outcome the parent is looking for.

If the matter is within the competence of the member of staff to resolve quickly this should be done. Otherwise the parent/carer should be reassured that the complaint will be passed to the relevant senior staff, and relevant person should be informed by the member of staff as soon as possible.

The member of staff dealing with the concern should ensure that the parent/carer clearly understands:

- what action has been agreed;
- when they may be provided with a response if one can not be provided immediately. (Other than in exceptional circumstances a response should be provided within 10 working days);

The member of staff receiving the complaint should use the school's 'Complaints Form' (appended to this policy). But this does not prevent the member of staff also speaking to the Headteacher about the matter at the earliest opportunity. In any cases of doubt, members of staff should seek the advice of the Headteacher who has the responsibility for mentoring colleagues.

The member of staff should also arrange for the matter to be put in writing if this seems the best way of making things clear.

If the parent/carer is not satisfied with the response they should request that their concerns be referred to the Headteacher (if they have not already dealt with the issue). The Headteacher will seek any necessary clarification of the concerns including interviewing the parents where this would be helpful. The Headteacher will advise the parents of the outcome of their consideration. Other than in exceptional circumstances the Headteacher should provide a response to the parent/carer within 10 school days of them requesting the involvement of the Headteacher.

In the response they receive from the Headteacher, the parents/carers should be made aware of the procedure for considering their concerns further should they not be satisfied after this informal stage has been completed.

## STAGE 2 – FORMAL CONSIDERATION

Where a parent/carer has made an approach to the school through the informal stage and is not satisfied with the outcome, they should write to the Headteacher giving details of their concerns and asking for the matter to be given further consideration. The Headteacher will seek any clarification necessary about the complaint, including interviewing the parent where necessary. The Headteacher may also seek any necessary advice on the matter, which will/may include the Chair of the Governing Body.

The letter of complaint from the parent/carer need only be a simple statement. Parents who feel unable to write a letter may contact the Education Welfare Service of their Local Education Authority who may be able to provide help.

If the complaint concerns a child protection issue or involves an allegation of abuse by a member of Al-Mizan staff the staff member responsible for child protection complaints should be informed.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, the parent/carer should receive a written response from the Headteacher within 15 school days of receipt of their letter by the Headteacher.

Where a parent/carer is not satisfied with the outcome of this formal stage, they have 20 school days, from the date of the Headteacher's letter, to register the complaint with the Governing Body of the Academy, in writing.

## STAGE 3 – APPEAL – REFERRAL TO THE GOVERNING BODY

Where a parent/carer has made an approach to the school through the formal stage and is not satisfied with the outcome or the complaint is against the Headteacher, they should write to the Secretary to the Governing Body giving details of their concerns and asking for an appeal against the decision or action taken by the Headteacher.

The Governing Body of the school will only hear appeals that have already progressed through stages 1 and 2 of this procedure. However, if the complaint is against the Headteacher the Chair of Governors will complete Stage 1 and 2 before the formal hearing. On receipt of a written request for an appeal from a parent/carer, the secretary to the Governing Body will:

- immediately log and acknowledge receipt of the appeal;
- check that the complaint has already completed Stages 1 and 2;
- check that the 20 school day period since Stage 2 was complied with;
- seek any clarification necessary about the nature of the complaint and/or the appeal;
- arrange for the Governing Body to consider the appeal as soon as it is practical to do so and, other than in exceptional circumstances, within 20 school days of receipt of the letter requesting an appeal; and
- invite the parent and any representative to the meeting.

The Board of Governors will name five members of whom three will form a quorum. **There will be provision for three people to sit on the panel who have not been directly involved in the incident detailed in the complaint.** The Vice Chair of the Board of Governors will chair the

panel. If the Vice Chair is not available the Chair will nominate another committee member. The Board of Governor **will invite a person to the panel who is independent of the management and the running of the school.**

The Secretary to the Governing Body will notify in writing the outcome of the appeal to the parent/carer and Headteacher within 5 school days.

The Board of Governor's decision is binding, but parent/carers would still be able, in appropriate cases, to take a complaint to a court.

**This concludes the process for considering a general complaint.**

## **Reporting and Recording**

In all cases it is important for staff to use the official 'Complaints Form' so that records of the complaint and the action taken can be recorded and traced. Supporting documents should be attached to the form.

The Headteacher will consider the handling of complaints from time to time, and will discuss issues with staff as necessary.

The Headteacher will report to staff and the Governing Body from time to time on the number and type of complaints received.

## **Monitoring and Review**

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the working of the complaints procedures and for refining the application of them in the light of experience.

The Board of Governors is responsible for making changes to the policy and procedures.

This policy was accepted by the Governing Body in April 2015 and will be reviewed in January 2017.

## **Note**

Where there is a specific complaint about the conduct of a member of staff, including the Headteacher, it may be more appropriate for it to be considered under the separate disciplinary process where the findings and outcomes are confidential.

Where a complaint is made which relates to the Headteacher or a member of the Governing Body, the Chair of the Governing Body will be responsible to investigate the matter in line with the guidance in the school Staff Disciplinary policy. If the complaint is regarding the chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher will investigate the matter with members of the Governing Body.

A school day is defined as any day that the school is open for the teaching of all students.

## **Useful Telephone Numbers**

London East Academy & Al-Mizan Primary - Tel: 020 7650 3070

Communication with any specific member of the Governing Body is also available through the number above.

Appendices:

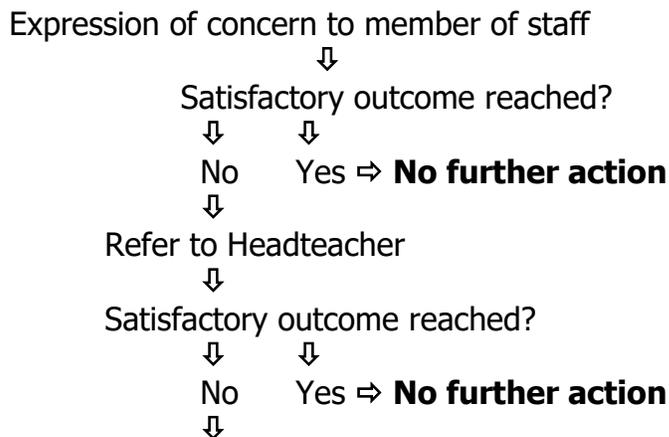
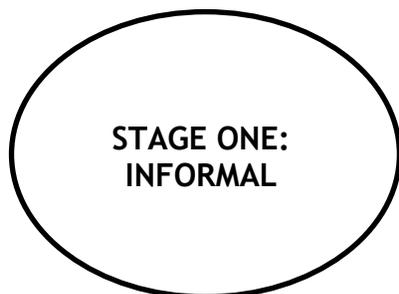
**APPENDIX 1** - Flow Chart: Stages for Handling Complaints

**APPENDIX 2** - STAGE 3 - APPEAL TO THE GOVERNING BODY

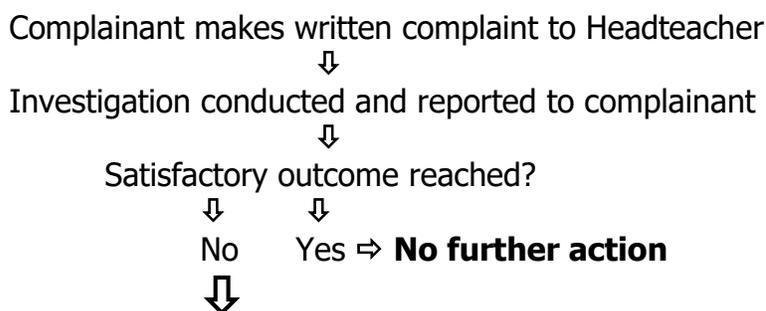
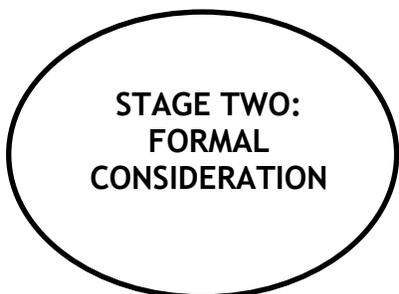
**APPENDIX 3** - PARENT/CARER COMPLAINT FORM:

# APPENDIX 1

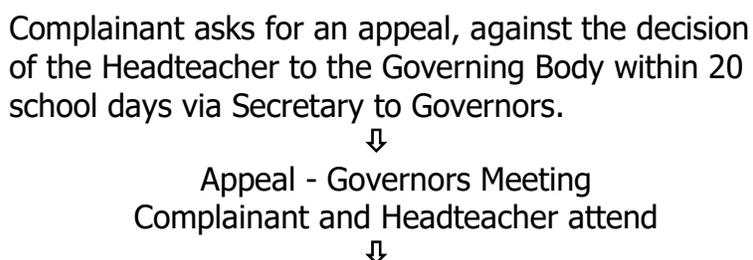
## Flow Chart: Stages for Handling Complaints



Response provided to parents/carers normally within 10 school days.



Response provided to parents/carers normally within 15 school days



Parents/carers and Headteacher notified of outcome within 5 school days.

## **STAGE 3 - APPEAL TO THE GOVERNING BODY**

### **PROCEDURE FOR A GOVERNING BODY MEETING DEALING WITH A FORMAL PARENTAL COMPLAINT**

- 1 Both the Headteacher and parent/carer are present until item 8 of this procedure. The Chair opens the meeting explaining that the purpose of the meeting is to hear the appeal of the parent/carer against the decision taken by the Headteacher to resolve the parental complaint.
- 2 The parent/carer presents his/her case stating the issues clearly.
- 3 Governors, Headteacher, and any representative of parents/carers, have an opportunity to ask questions of the parent/carer seeking clarification.
- 4 The Headteacher provides details of how the concerns have been handled and details of any action taken.
- 5 The parents/carer, governors and any representative of the parents/carer have an opportunity to ask questions to the Headteacher.
- 6 The Headteacher sums up.
- 7 The parent/carer sums up.
- 8 The Headteacher and parent/carer leave to allow the Committee to consider the concerns, if appropriate.
- 9 The Secretary to the Governing Body will confirm to the Headteacher and parent/carer, in writing, the Committee's decision **and will pass on any findings and recommendations to the complainant, proprietors and headteacher and where relevant, the person complained about** (usually within 7 working days of the meeting).

**PARENT/CARER COMPLAINT FORM:**

Member of Staff receiving the complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

From (Name of Parent/Carer): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student & Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time of complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

Complaint:

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Action Taken:

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Outcome:

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Issue passed to: \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Seen: Senior member of staff (Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher/SMT Member)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_