

Al Yasmina Academy

Complaints Policy

Policy Issued on:	15 January 2023
Policy Review date:	January 2024
Lead Professional:	Executive Principal

Rationale:

This policy highlights the procedure for communication with regards to complaints and the process to follow.

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Al Yasmina Academy strives to be an open, professional organisation in which all members of the community feel valued and able to play a full and active part in its development.

Communications may take a variety of forms; verbal (meetings/telephones), written (through letters, notes in planners, email, website/school communicator). Occasionally a communication may be received second hand.

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where members may be teaching full time and running ECAs/clubs. Quite often, staff will be working with students at break, lunch and after school.

For this reason, the academy is proactive in encouraging the use of modern communication networks.

All staff email contacts are frequently publicised with all parents being encouraged to provide contact information for prompt and effective communication. However, this does not mean that communications are always effective, efficient nor appropriate.

All Communication should be acknowledged within 24 hours.

Parents

Parents who wish to speak with any member of staff other than their child's classroom teacher, should contact the school to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet. Normally most concerns are usually resolved by raising the issue or concern with the class teacher. Sometimes, this is not resolved to the satisfaction of the parent and a conversation with the Year/Grade Leader or Head of Department may be necessary.

Al Yasmina Academy believes that students achieve their best when the school and family work together.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

Al Yasmina Academy is committed to listening to the views of all our parents in order to improve our provision.

Al Yasmina Academy believes that all complaints should be seen as important, and we endeavour to resolve problems quickly and efficiently and in line with ADEK policy guidelines.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles behind the School's Complaints Procedure are:

- All communications are dealt with promptly, efficiently, objectively, and professionally.
- We aim to respond to specific issues in an informal manner and resolve them quickly, sensitively and to the satisfaction of the person concerned.

- Communications can be received in person, by telephone, by e-mail or by the online form on our website or via the hotline.
- Below are some guidelines showing how the issue can be referred.
- Contact will be made with individuals within two working days.

Al Yasmina Academy enjoys professional relationships with parents, children and the community based on mutual respect and a willingness to listen to the views of others and to respond constructively and in the best interests of the child.

What is a complaint?

The expression of dissatisfaction can be about a variety of different possibilities. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.

In most cases concerns or issues raised can be resolved through discussion and good communication. Inevitably, there may be outcomes that parents are not happy with and under such circumstances a formal procedure needs to be followed to ensure all involved are treated fairly and that the situation may be resolved.

RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

When a complaint has been made most people want:

- To be dealt with immediately and with a sense of urgency;
- To discuss the matter;
- To be listened to;
- To receive a sincere apology;
- To be told what action is to be taken / offered a resolution;
- To be reassured that all measures will be taken to prevent the concern happening again in the future.

It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology;
- An explanation;
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- An undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

After an investigation, it may also be the case that the complaint may not have any substance and is therefore considered to be unfounded or unsubstantiated.

Queries/Complaints Procedure

1. Contact Class Teacher - *the class teacher can often resolve any parental issues or concerns.*
2. Contact Year Leader – *the Year leader may be able to solve the concern or issue.*

3. Contact Assistant Principal – *If the concern has not been addressed to a parent's satisfaction, the issue can be referred to the Assistant Principal.*
4. Contact School Principal – *The Assistant Principal will refer to the Principal who is often able to address serious issues within their school.*
5. Contact Executive Principal - *If unresolved at this point, the School Principal will refer to the Executive Principal.*
6. Contact Director of Education - *If the procedure has been followed and the Executive Principal involved, the Director of Education will see parents and liaise with the school to address the complaint. The Director will make a final judgement after investigation.*
7. Contact CEO (for appeals at Director Level) *In some circumstances and if Parents remain unhappy with the Director's decision, the final appeal may be heard by the CEO.*

Should anyone experience any problems with this procedure, they should contact our Parents Relation Executive (PRE) on pre@alyasminacademy.sch.ae or 025014888.

DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

As highlighted, Al Yasmina Academy follows a seven-stage procedure as follows:

- Stage 1 - Informal Stage to class teacher
- Stage 2 - Informal stage to Year Leader
- Stage 3 - Formal Complaint to Assistant Principal
- Stage 4 - Formal Complaint to School Principal
- Stage 5 - Formal Complaint to Executive Principal
- Stage 6 - Director of Education
- Stage 7 –Appeals will be directed to the CEO.

Any school related complaints reported directly to ADEK are now returned to the school so that the correct process may be followed.

STAGE 1 and STAGE 2 - INFORMAL

Most concerns can be easily resolved informally by discussion and good communication with the school staff. Clarity is necessary in ascertaining whether a parent is asking a question, or expressing an opinion, rather than making a complaint. Parents may approach the class subject teacher/HOY (Primary)/ Year Leader (Secondary)/Curriculum Team Leader/Subject Leader directly with a concern to attempt to resolve the matter.

Should the parent remain unhappy despite best efforts, they should be asked to state their views in writing to the relevant Assistant Principal.

STAGE 3 - COMPLAINT TO ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Once a concern has been received in writing it becomes a complaint. It will be acknowledged within 24 hours.

The Assistant Principal will investigate the complaint and will reply in full within ten school days. If it is not possible to reply within this timescale a letter will be sent to this effect with a brief explanation for the delay and an indication as to when the complainant is likely to receive a full response.

The Assistant Principal may provide an opportunity for the complainant to meet him/her to supplement any information provided previously.

When a decision has been reached, the Assistant Principal will make sure that the complainant is clear about the action taken. The letter will clearly state the right of the complainant to reply to the School Principal within 5 days of the decision letter and the need to set out in what way they remain dissatisfied with the outcome.

STAGE 4 - FORMAL COMPLAINT TO SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

The complainant may appeal against the decision of the Assistant Principal to the School Principal within ten days of the decision from the school.

Within three days of a written appeal, the School Principal will write to the complainant to acknowledge receipt of the written request. The letter should also explain that the complainant has the right to submit any further documents relevant to the complaint. The School Principal will investigate the complaint and will reply in full within five days.

STAGE 5 - FORMAL COMPLAINT TO EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL

The complainant may appeal against the decision of the School Principal to the Executive Principal within ten days of the decision from the school.

Within three days of a written appeal, the Executive Principal will write to the complainant to acknowledge receipt of the written request. The letter should also explain that the complainant has the right to submit any further documents relevant to the complaint. The Executive Principal will investigate the complaint and will reply in full within five days.

STAGE 6 - FORMAL COMPLAINT TO THE DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION

Stage 6 complaints should be sent to the Directors of Education who will hear the case and minute the meeting. The aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. A written statement outlining the decision will be sent to the complainant and the Executive Principal within five school days.

STAGE 7 - APPEALS

Appeals against this decision should be directed to the CEO. The CEO's decision is final, and no further hearings will take place.

INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS

The investigation must be objective and follow the process indicated below:

- 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 necessary);
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right;
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- Conduct an interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- Keep notes of any interview for record.

DEALING WITH UNREASONABLE OR PERSISTENT COMPLAINTS

It is vital that such incidents are dealt with effectively and where genuine complaints are raised, they should be dealt with fairly, honestly, and properly, but where behaviour is characterised by:

- Actions that are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious;
- Any insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason;
- Any insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner.

The individual should be made aware of their behaviour and processes to stem excessive and unreasonable complaints for such individuals.