



Complaints Policy

September 2023



Complaints Policy

Introduction

Allah's Messenger (SAW) has said:

"Indeed, every one of you is a shepherd and everyone shall be questioned in regard to his flock"

(Sahih al Bukhari)

We are committed to providing a quality service and education to the highest possible standards. However, there is room for error and complaints may arise. One of the ways we can continue to improve the work we do is by listening and responding to the views of the parents, staff and students.

If you are dissatisfied with our quality of the service we provide, we need to know so that we can make improvements.

The purpose of the Complaints Procedure is to outline a method by which complaints can be dealt with in the most efficient and Islamic manner. We wish to make the process as easy as possible.

'Nasihah' (advice) is a basic element of our faith and conversely, 'Ghiba' (backbiting) is something to be avoided. There are many ways to try and change things when they are not as they should be. If we are trying to improve for the sake of Allah, we should surely follow the way of the Prophet (SAW) through the correct Islamic 'adab' and practice.

What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether made orally or in writing. This policy addresses complaints. If you wish to make a complaint about the school/organisation you must follow the procedure set out.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A 'concern' may be treated as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A complaint may be generally recognised as 'an expression or statement of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

It's in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to follow formal procedures. Schools should take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

However, there will be occasions when complainants want to raise their concerns formally. In those cases, the complaints procedure should be followed.

(Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2019. Updated 28 March 2019)

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1. Purpose Of This Policy

- 1.1. Islamia Primary School is committed to attaining and maintaining the highest standards achievable. There can be occasions when matters fall short of the required standard. This complaints policy has been prepared to allow anyone to raise any issues he/she has with the School, and provides a set of stages which will deal with complaints in an efficient and fair way.
- 1.2. There are three stages to the School's complaints policy. It is the School's aim to ensure that the vast majority of complaints raised are dealt with informally at Stage One.
- 1.3. In the event that the complaint cannot be resolved at an informal level, this policy sets out a formal procedure for complaints to be investigated and resolved.
- 1.4. This policy has been prepared with due regard to *s.29 Education Act 2002* and the Department for Education's non-statutory guidance "*Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016*".
- 1.5. "School days" means a school day during term time and does not include inset days, weekends, bank or public holidays or any other days that are outside term time.

2. Who This Policy Applies To

- 2.1. This policy applies to anyone who has a complaint regarding the students, staff, Governors, premises or operation of the School, whether he/she is a parent or guardian of a student, or a member of the School's local community ("the Complainant").
- 2.2. This policy does not apply to complaints arising from:
 - 2.2.1. admissions;
 - 2.2.2. child protection and safeguarding;
 - 2.2.3. exclusions;
 - 2.2.4. school re-organisation proposals;
 - 2.2.5. services provided by third party suppliers/contractors who may use the School's premises;
 - 2.2.6. staff grievances and disciplinary procedures;
 - 2.2.7. whistleblowing.
- 2.3. The Governing Board reserves the right to reject a complaint from a vexatious complainant.

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2.4 If a parent has a concern or complaint regarding Special Needs, they are encouraged in the first instance to meet with the SENCo. If this matter is not resolved satisfactorily, the Headteacher should be notified. If the concern is not resolved, parents have the right to ask for an examination of the complaint by the Governing Body.

3. Stage One – Informal Complaint (Concern)

3.1. The Complainant should first approach the class teacher of the student or alternatively another member of the School's staff ("Member of Staff"). If the Complainant is not a parent or guardian of a student, he/she should direct his/her complaint to the Deputy Head Teacher.

3.2. The Complainant may raise his/her complaint in person, by telephone, in writing.

3.3. The Complainant should be prepared to give details of the circumstances which have given rise to the complaint that he/she wishes to raise, and express how he/she would like the matter to be dealt with or how he/she see a resolution being achieved. It may be necessary to put the details in writing ("the Complaint").

3.4. There may be some occasions where the Complaint can be resolved on the spot. If that is achievable, details of the concern and the resolution will be recorded by the Member of Staff for monitoring purposes.

3.5. There may be some complaints which require further enquiries, with accounts being taken from other parties involved. The Member of Staff dealing with the complaint at Stage One will make a record of the issues raised, and will carry out those enquiries. The enquiries shall be concluded within five School days from the date when the Complaint was made.

3.6. Once the enquiries have been concluded, the Member of Staff will contact the Complainant and provide:

3.6.1. a summary of his/her understanding of the complaint raised;

3.6.2. a summary of the information which he/she has discovered as part of his/her Stage One enquiries (if required to be undertaken);

3.6.3. provide the School's response to the Complaint and an explanation as to how the response has been reached;

3.6.4. confirm whether any action is to be taken; and,

3.6.5. confirm that the matter will be logged in the class log book and that a record will be retained to ensure that steps can be taken to avoid the issue arising again.

4. Stage Two – Formal Complaint

4.1. If the Complainant is not satisfied that the matter has been resolved at Stage One, he/she can progress his/her Complaint to the formal procedure under Stage Two ("Stage Two Complaint").

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- 4.2. The Complainant will be required to email full details to *complaints@islamia.brent.sch.uk* or send the complaint in writing.
- 4.3. The email or written complaint should be addressed to the Head Teacher of the School (or member of SLT). If the complaint concerns the Head Teacher the form should be addressed to the Chair of the Governing Board.
- 4.4. The Stage Two Complaint form or email will be acknowledged in writing within three School days.
- 4.5. The Letter/Email of Acknowledgement will provide:
 - 4.5.1. the contact details of the Head Teacher or the Chair of the Governing Board; and,
 - 4.5.2. specify that the Complaint will be investigated within ten School days (“the Stage Two Investigation”).
- 4.6. During the Stage Two Investigation, the Complainant is required to keep the details of the Complaint private and confidential. This is to enable a just and fair investigation to be undertaken. Any steps taken by the Complainant which do not preserve the confidentiality of the Complaint may undermine the efficiency and effectiveness of the Stage Two Investigation.
- 4.7. The Head Teacher or Chair of the Governing Board will be entitled to delegate the Stage Two Investigation to another senior member of School staff or Governor, so long as he/she has not been involved with the Complaint at Stage One or in any other way.
- 4.8. In the event that the Stage Two Complaint is about the Head Teacher/Chair of the Governing Board, or if the Head Teacher/Chair of the Governing Board has dealt with the matter at Stage One, the Stage Two Complaint will be investigated by another member of the School’s senior management team or another member of the Governing Board.
- 4.9. The Complainant will be invited to attend a meeting with the Head Teacher/Chair of the Governing Board to discuss the Stage Two Complaint and the findings of the Stage Two Investigation (“Stage Two Meeting”).
- 4.10. The Stage Two Meeting will be arranged within five School days of the conclusion of the Stage Two Investigation, and not more than thirteen School days from the date of the Letter of Acknowledgement referred to at paragraph 4.5 of this policy.
- 4.11. The Complainant will be entitled to be accompanied at the Stage Two Meeting by one of the following:
 - 4.11.1. a relative;
 - 4.11.2. a friend; or,
 - 4.11.3. a representative.

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- 4.12. At the Stage Two Meeting, a decision will be given regarding the outcome of the Stage Two Investigation and the decision of the School regarding the Stage Two Complaint. The decision will be confirmed in writing within five School days of the Stage Two Meeting.
- 4.13. Minutes of the Stage Two Meeting will be taken by an appropriate person appointed by the Head Teacher or Chair of the Governing Board.
- 4.14. A record of the Stage Two Complaint, along with any documentation prepared during the Stage Two Investigation, and the Stage Two Meeting minutes, will be retained by the School for six years.

5. Stage Three – Complaints Panel

- 5.1. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome at the conclusion of Stage Two, he/she may progress his/her Complaint to Stage Three (“the Stage Three Complaint”).
- 5.2. The Complainant will be required to write to the Clerk of the Governing Board (“the Clerk”) to request that the Complaint be dealt with at Stage Three. (Contact details for the Clerk will be available from the School’s General Office or the School’s website).
- 5.3. The Stage Three Complaint will be considered by a complaints panel (“the Panel”).
- 5.4. The Panel will have three members:
 - 5.4.1. two members from the Governing Board who have had no involvement with the Stage Three Complaint at Stage One or Stage Two; and,
 - 5.4.2. one independent member who has no involvement with the management and running of the School.
- 5.5. Within three School days of a written request for the Complaint to be considered at Stage Three, the Clerk will acknowledge the request in writing and arrange for a meeting of the Panel to take place within ten School days (“the Panel Meeting”).
- 5.6. The Complainant and the School will be entitled to submit any relevant documentation for the Panel’s consideration. The documentation must be submitted to the Clerk three clear School days before the date of the Panel Meeting.
- 5.7. The Complainant and the School must provide copies to each other of any documents submitted for the Panel’s consideration three clear School days before the Panel Meeting.
- 5.8. The Complainant and the School will also be entitled to call any witnesses which each may reasonably require in order to support the submissions to the Panel. Details of the witnesses must be provided to the Clerk and other party three clear School days before the Panel Meeting.
- 5.9. The Panel Chair shall have an absolute discretion as to whether the Panel will consider any party’s documents or witnesses were there has been non-compliance with either paragraphs 5.6, 5.7 or 5.8 of this policy.

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- 5.10. Minutes of the Panel Meeting will be taken by an appropriate person appointed by the Principal or Chair of the Governing Body.
- 5.11. The Complainant will be entitled to be accompanied at the Panel Meeting by one of the following:
- 5.11.1. a relative;
 - 5.11.2. a friend; or,
 - 5.11.3. a representative.
- 5.12. At the Panel Meeting, the Chair of the Panel will explain how the Panel Meeting will be structured. The Panel will invite the Complainant to outline the Complaint, to refer the Panel to any of the documents submitted in compliance with paragraphs 5.6 and 5.7, and to call on any witnesses he/she has identified in accordance with paragraph 5.8 of this policy. The Complainant will be entitled to put questions to his/her witnesses. The School will also have the right to put questions the Complainant's witnesses once the Complainant has concluded his/her questions.
- 5.13. The School will be invited to make its submissions once the Complainant has concluded his/her submissions to the Panel.
- 5.14. The Panel will invite the School to outline its response to the Complaint, to refer the Panel to any of the documents submitted in compliance with paragraphs 5.6 and 5.7, and to call on any witnesses it has identified in accordance with paragraph 5.8 of this policy. The School will be entitled to put questions to its witnesses. The Complainant will also have the right to put questions to the School's witnesses once the School has concluded its questions.
- 5.15. When the Panel has heard the Complainant and the School's submissions, it will be entitled to adjourn to consider its decision.
- 5.16. If the Panel is able to, it will deliver its decision at the conclusion of the Panel Meeting. A copy of the decision will be provided in writing within five School days to the Complainant and the Head Teacher of the School.
- 5.17. If the Panel is unable to reach a decision at the conclusion of the Panel Meeting, it will be entitled to adjourn the Panel Meeting and to deliver its decision in writing to the Complainant and the Head Teacher of the School within five School days.
- 5.18. A record of the Stage Three Complaint, along with documentation submitted to the Panel, and the Panel Meeting minutes, will be retained by the School for six years.

