



# Complaints and Concerns Policy

To create a school that unlocks the potential of every child

طفل كل لإمكانات العنان إطلاق على قادرة مدرسة لإنشاء

Approved/reviewed by	
Principal and Headteachers	
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# Complaints Policy

## Safa British School

### Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Safa British School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under KHDA guidance, we will use this complaints procedure.

### The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as *‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought’*.

A complaint may be defined as *‘an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action’*.

It is in everyone’s interest that concerns, and complaints, are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Safa British School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the principal or headteacher will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior, but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Safa British School will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

### How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone.

Concerns should first be raised with the class teacher. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to raise the concern with a relevant assistant headteacher on the leadership team. If the issue is still unresolved, then a complaint may be made to the headteacher, then more formally to the principal.

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 of the procedure.

Complaints against school staff (except the headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to the headteacher. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the headteacher should be addressed to the school principal.

Complaints against the principal should be addressed to either Sameer Merchant or Louay Khattab (the Chair of Governors). Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA).

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

## **Request to change class**

Our goal at Safa British School is to provide a rich academic environment that meets the needs of all students. We focus on preparing our students for the challenges of life. This means preparing students to face adversity and equipping them with the skills to adjust to a variety of professors or employers. Our students will gain much from text books, lessons, projects and assignments. However, the educational process includes far more than that; students also gain valuable insight and maturity from interacting with different people and adjusting to a variety of teachers.

Safa British School students are placed in classes following the podding method, male and female balance, native language and teacher/director of inclusion recommendations.

Class changes will NOT be made for the following reasons:

Student does not like the teacher

Parent does not like the teacher

Teacher is "too hard"

Teacher gives too much work

Student is failing the class

Class is perceived by the student to be too difficult

Student does not have their best friend or has a friendship issue

Personality conflicts will not be justification for changing a class. All conflicts need to be resolved in a mature, professional manner. Students and Parents must take the responsibility to meet with the teacher and work through the problem or seek additional help if the nature of the problem is that the teacher is "too hard," "gives too much work," or if the student is in jeopardy of failing.

## **Anonymous complaints**

We will not investigate anonymous complaints.

## Time scales

You must raise the complaint within four weeks of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within four weeks of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

## Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

## Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Safa British School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

## Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

## Stage 1

Formal complaints must be made to the headteacher (unless they are about the headteacher), via the school office. This may be done in person, in writing, or by telephone.

The headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter, email or telephone call) within three school days.

Within this response, the headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The headteacher can consider whether a face-to-face or online meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

*Note: The headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team*

During the investigation, the headteacher (or investigator) will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the headteacher will provide a response within seven school

days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide an explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Safa British School will take to resolve the complaint.

The headteacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

If the complaint is about the headteacher, the principal will complete all the actions at Stage 1.

If the complaint is about the principal, a member of the governing body will complete all the actions at Stage 1.

If the complaint is about the governing body, these will be referred to KHDA.

## Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 – a meeting with members of the governing body's complaints committee, which will be formed of the first three, impartial, governors available. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the principal within three school days of receipt of the Stage 1 response.

The principal will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter, telephone call or email) within three school days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The governing body will inform the complainant of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within seven school days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the governing body will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the governing body will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence.

The complaints committee will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee. If there are fewer than three governors available, the principal will source any additional, independent governors in order to make up the committee.

The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

*Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.*

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least three school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations or images that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and the principal with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it within seven school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the KHDA if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Safa British School.

## Next Steps

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the KHDA after they have completed Stage 2.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- ask for assistance as needed

- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

## Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent, and fair consideration of the complaint through:
  - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
  - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
  - consideration of records and other relevant information
  - analysing information
- liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond
- where applicable, prepare a comprehensive report for the headteacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The headteacher or complaints committee will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.