



# **Al Rabeeh School**

## **Complaints and Escalation Policy**

Reviewed September 2022

All throughout these documents the schools known as Al Rabeeh School will be referred to as 'ARS' for short.

## **Parent Escalation Policy**

### **1. Purpose of Policy and Guiding Principles**

This policy is intended as a good practice guide applying to most general complaints which the school is likely to receive from parents.

The purpose of this policy is to address and resolve parental concerns and complaints. The aim of this complaint's procedure is to:

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- be easily accessible and publicised;
- be simple to understand and use;
- be impartial and non-adversarial;
  - allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- respect confidentiality;
  - address the concerns raised and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary; and
- Provide information to senior leaders about where improvements can be made.

### **2. Links with Other Policies or Legislation**

The school is required by the Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) to have a complaints procedure.

### **3. Raising a concern; Guidelines for dealing with concerns and complaints informally**

The vast majority of concerns and complaints can be resolved informally. There are many occasions where concerns are resolved straight away through the Teacher, Form Tutor, School HOD/Y (depending on the type of concern), Administration staff, Pastoral staff, Senior Leader, Principal's PA, PRE, etc.

Parents must feel able to raise a concern with members of staff without any formality, either in person, by telephone or in writing. On occasions, it may be appropriate for someone to act on behalf of a parent. At first, it may be unclear whether a parent is asking a question or expressing an opinion rather than making a complaint. A parent may want a preliminary discussion about an issue to help decide whether he or she wishes to take it further.

The normal response time to respond to these times is for an initial response or acknowledgment to be made within 24 hours. Where this is not possible, an explanation must be given for the reason for delay.

Members of staff dealing with these concerns should record the nature of the concern and the steps taken to resolve.

If the parent is not satisfied with the actions taken to resolve the issue they should follow the formal complaints process.

#### **4 Formal complaints**

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The school has a four-stage formal complaint process and the fifth stage with the regulator.

As the Principal has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school they have responsibility for the implementation of a complaints system, including the decisions about their own involvement at various stages. One of the reasons for having various "stages" in a complaints procedure is to reassure complainants that their grievance is being heard by more than one person. The Principal will make arrangements to ensure that his/her involvement will not predominate at every stage of a particular complaint.

##### **Stage 1 – Complaint heard by a member of staff**

Parents have an opportunity for discussion of their concern with the appropriate member of staff (e.g. class teacher, coordinator, Heads of Schools or Principal's PA or the Parent Relations Executive) who clarifies with the parent the nature of the concern, and reassures them that the school wants to hear about it. 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 member of staff first contacted cannot immediately deal with the matter, s/he should make a clear note of the date, name, contact address and/or phone number.

Any member of staff will know how to refer, if necessary, to the person with responsibility for the particular issue raised by the parent. S/he will check later to make sure the referral has been successful.

On certain major issues, the Principal may decide to deal with concerns directly at this stage. If the concern relates to the Principal, the parent is advised to contact the Chair of Governors, via the Principal's PA.

The staff member dealing with the concern makes sure that the parent is clear what action (if any) or monitoring of the situation has been agreed, putting this in writing only if this seems the best way of making things clear.

Where no satisfactory solution has been found within 5 school days, parents are asked if they wish their concern to be considered further. If so they are given clear information, both orally and in writing, about how to proceed and about any independent advice available to them.

##### **Stage 2 – Complaint heard by Middle / Senior Leadership**

At this stage the complaint is dealt with by members of the middle leadership team. There may be cases where Senior Leadership Team supports this process. At this stage, the Head of the School (Primary or Secondary Headteacher) and Vice Principal is aware of the complaint and may decide to

be part of the process.

If for any reason the complaint cannot be resolved at this stage then this will go to the final internal phase of the complaint and to the Principal of the school.

### **Stage 3 – Complaint heard Executive Leadership Team**

At this stage, it has become clear that the concern is a definite complaint. In some cases, the Principal has already been involved in looking at the matter with the support of the Senior Leadership Team.

If a complaint is against the action of a member of SLT, the Principal will designate another member of the Senior Leadership Team to investigate. If a complaint is against the action(s) of the Principal, the Chair of the Governing Body should carry out the Stage 2 procedures.

### **Stage 4 – External Appeal**

If the complainant indicates, in writing, that they wish to appeal against the outcome of the investigation into their complaint, this is referred to an appeal panel.

It is important that this review is unprejudiced and impartial; therefore, the school will ensure that at least one member of the Panel is independent. The review is the last stage of the internal complaints process and is not there to merely rubber stamp previous decisions.

Therefore, individual complaints should not be considered by the full panel as serious conflicts of interest can arise; for example, in exceptional circumstances a complaint may result in disciplinary action against a member of staff, and Senior members may be required to give an unprejudiced hearing to an appeal by the member of staff concerned. Similarly, some members might have knowledge of the problem which led to the complaint and would be unable to give unbiased consideration to the issue.

### **Stage 5 – External Appeal**

Any unresolved complaints can be referred to KHDA by the schools Principal for consideration & final decision.

## **4. Roles and responsibilities**

### **The Role of the Principal**

The Principal will ensure that staff are familiar with this policy and receive appropriate training in complaint handling. The Principal will assign a member of SLT to deal with formal complaints.

### **The Role of the Governing Board**

The Governing Board will monitor complaints (nature and level) to review any improvements to current school processes or systems.

The Governing Board will convene an appeal panel for complaints under Stage 4 of the policy.

### **The Role of the employee/other staff**

All staff should deal with complaints, queries or concerns from parents in a professional manner and in line with the timescales of this policy.

**The PRE will keep a complaints log to record formal complaints.**

## **5. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Governing Board will monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary. Complaints information shared with the whole Governing Board will not name individuals.

As well as addressing an individual's complaints, the process of listening to and resolving complaints will contribute to school improvement. When individual complaints are heard, the school may identify underlying issues that need to be addressed. The monitoring and review of complaints by the school and the Governing Board can be a useful tool in evaluating the school's performance.

## **6. Complaint procedure**

The complaint meeting should allow for:

- The complainant to explain their complaint
- Panel to question the complainant
- The Principal to explain the school's response
- The Panel to question the Vice Principal and/or other
- Members of staff about the school's response
- Final statements by both the complainant and the Principal.

**Everyone should be aware of how to direct parents when they ask to see someone in the school to ensure maximum effectiveness of this policy and the efficiency of proper customer service. The following is the Escalation Procedure for staff members to follow when they have received a complaint or query from a parent:**

Transportation, Canteen or any Operational matters: [Operations Manager](#)  
Registration and Admissions: [Registrar & Admissions](#)  
ADEK Matters: [ADEK Liaison Officer](#) Accounts or Fees: [Accountant & Cashier](#)  
Lateness, Absences or any Student Service Matters: [Pastoral Leaders](#)

If the matter is general classroom happenings: the [Class Teacher](#) should be contacted. This can happen using the Class Dojo or school emails.

After these people have been spoken to and if the matter has not been dealt with to the parent's satisfaction, please refer to the following structure, no matter the issue:

If the student is in EYFS: [Head of FS or Head of Primary](#)

If the student is in Primary: [Head of Year, Phase Leader, Deputy Heads or Head of School](#)  
If the student is in Secondary: [Head of Year, Head of Department, Deputy Heads or Head of School](#)

If the student is SEN: [Head of Inclusion/SENCO](#)

If the matter is specific to Curriculum, the [Heads of Departments and Head of Schools \(HOS\)](#) should be involved.

After these steps have been taken, then you may contact the School Vice Principal. If s/he is unable to resolve the issue then s/he must escalate it and email the Personal Assistant to School Principal or PRE to request a meeting for the Principal and the parent at [pre@alrabeehacademy.ae](mailto:pre@alrabeehacademy.ae)

In every meeting between parents and School Leaders, minutes should be taken and the minutes emailed to all parties within 3 business days. Copies of the minutes should be kept when the meeting involves parents and school. All minutes of meetings should be uploaded onto Engage as evidence of the meeting. If the issue is further escalated, the minutes should go to the next person in line of escalation, giving that person a way of reviewing what has already been discussed.

When you have received a query from a parent and are unsure of the answer, inform the parent that you do not wish to give them incorrect information, so you will check for the answer and reply back to them within 2 business days. Keep track of the calls that you will need to make and the information you are giving out as well as the nature of the queries.

### **Policy Review**

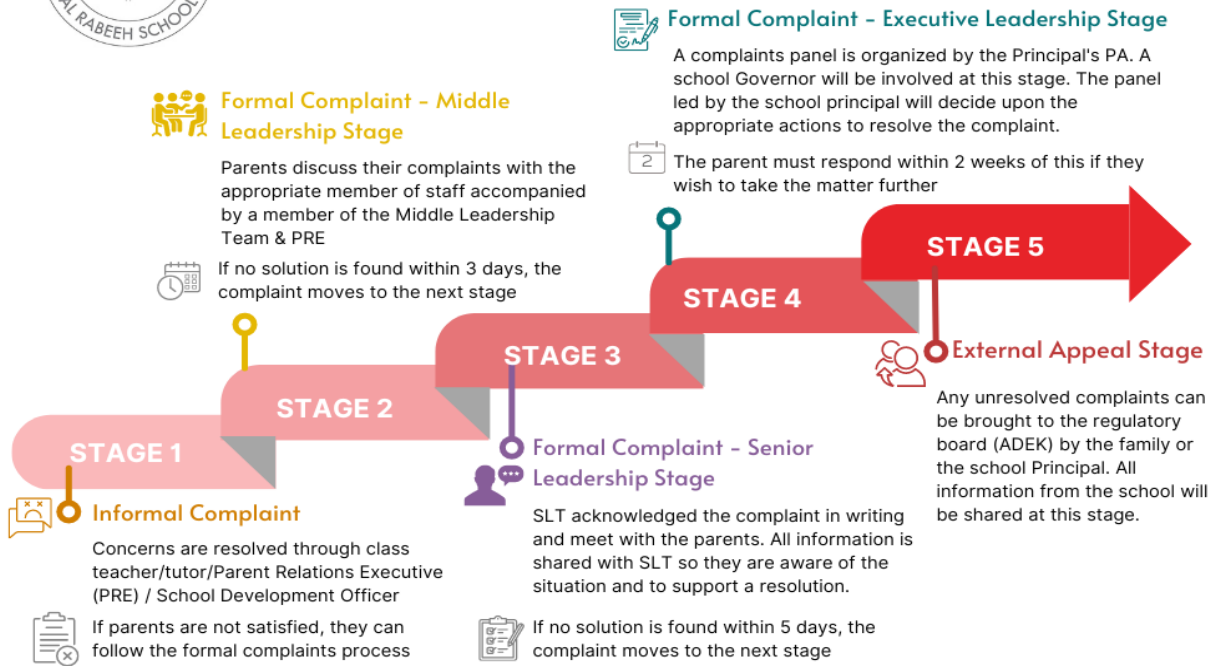
This policy will be reviewed annually.

<b>Draft Date:</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> September 2022</b>
<b>Principal Approval:</b>	
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>August 2023</b>

# Appendix 1: Visual Escalation Process



## Five Stage School Escalation Process



**Important note: The school Principal may be involved at any stage of this process to resolve the matter. All stages must be recorded, documented, and saved on the school management system.**