

IQRA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL POLICY

Complaints and Complaints Procedures

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COMPLAINTS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

Introduction

This procedure has been established in accordance with Section 39 of the School Standard and Framework Act 1998. The procedure sets out arrangements for Iqra Independent School in respect of complaints.

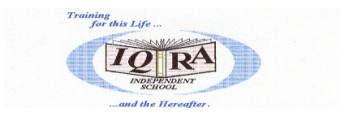
General Principles

All complaints will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible. The length of the period will vary with the gravity and complexity of the complaint and the urgency with which it needs to be settled. However, the intention is that all complaints should be settled within a period that is reasonable in all the circumstances.

An anonymous complaint will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances. To allow for a proper investigation, complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. Any matter raised more than three months after the event will not be considered except in exceptional circumstances. Investigation of any complaint or review request will begin within five school days of receipt of the same. The investigation will be completed as soon as reasonably practicable and the outcome shared with the complainant.

The school's nominated Complaints Officer will record all complaints received, including those ultimately resolved at an informal stage. The outcome of the complaint will also be recorded, together with reasons for that decision, the outcome falling into one of the following categories:

- Complaint resolved informally
- Complaint dismissed
- Complaint to be dealt with under another procedure
- Complaint upheld and the appropriate action is deemed to be one of
 - ✓ Counseling
 - ✓ Training



- ✓ General supervision
- ✓ Other management action

Urgent complaints will be identified as such and given priority.

All complaints will be investigated fully, fairly and carefully and complainants will be kept informed of progress during, as well as at the end of each stage.

The main aim at all stages will be to secure that either the complaint is settled or that a decision is taken about the complaint and it can then, if required, proceed to the next stage.

The complainant may seek independent advice from the Parents/Partnership Coordinator. Iqra Independent School may seek advice from Scholars or the Local Education Authority, but the Authority cannot determine the outcome of a complaint.

Complaining about the actions of a member of staff other than the Head Teacher

Informal Stage

The complainant is normally expected to arrange to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment. Simple clarification or the provision of information can resolve many concerns and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage. In the case of serious concerns it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Head Teacher. An unreasonable refusal to attempt an informal resolution may result in the procedure being terminated forthwith.

Formal Stage

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal stage the complainant must put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Head Teacher, who will be responsible for its investigation of the written complaint. The complainant should include details that might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents. In addition, the Head Teacher may meet with the complainant to clarify the complaint.

The Head Teacher will collect such other evidence, as she/he deems necessary. Where this involves an interview with a member of staff, who is the subject of the complaint, a friend or a representative, may accompany that member of staff if they so wish.

The investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, the complainant, and the member of staff concerned will be informed in writing of the outcome.

This may be to the effect that:

- there is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld;
- the concern is not substantiated by the evidence;



- the concern was substantiated in part or in full – some details may then be given of action the school may be taking to review procedures etc but details of the investigation or of any disciplinary procedures will not be released;
- the matter has been fully investigated and those appropriate procedures are being followed, which are strictly confidential e.g. where staff disciplinary procedures are being followed.

The complainant will be told that consideration of their complaint by the Head Teacher is now concluded. A copy of the complaint including findings and recommendations will be distributed to the complainant, proprietors and head teachers and the person complained about.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, the complainant may request an establishment of a hearing before a panel appointed by the Chair of the Trustees of at least three people should not be directly involved in the matters detailed in the complainant and one person should not be part of the management or running of the school. A friend or representative may accompany the complainant at this meeting. Any such request must be made in writing within two weeks of receiving notice of the outcome from the Head Teacher, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure.

If the complainant considers that the Head Teacher has acted unreasonably in considering the complaint or the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, then the complainant may bring a complaint against the Head Teacher (see “Complaining about the actions of the Head Teacher”). This will provide an opportunity for the evidence supporting such a complaint to be investigated.

Complaining about the actions of the Head Teacher

Informal Stage

The complainant is expected to speak directly with the Head Teacher. (In the case of serious concerns it may be appropriate to raise them directly with the Trustees who may appoint someone to act as an Investigating Officer [I.O.]) Simple clarification or the provision of information can resolve many concerns. If the matter is not resolved, a third party may be invited to act as a mediator at a further meeting. An unreasonable refusal to attempt an informal resolution may result in the procedure being terminated forthwith.

Formal Stage

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal stage, the complainant must put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Head of Service who will determine which of the agreed procedures to invoke. If it is determined that the complaint is “general”, the Head of Service will arrange for its investigation.

The complainant should include details that might assist the investigation, such as the names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, copies of relevant documents etc. In addition, the complainant will be invited to meet with the Trustees to present oral evidence or to clarify the complaint.

The chair of Trustees will collect such other evidence as is deemed necessary. This may include the interviewing of witnesses and others who may provide relevant information. The Head Teacher will be provided with a copy of the complaint and any additional evidence presented by the complainant or collected by the Trustees. Once there has been an opportunity for the Head Teacher to consider this, she/he will be invited to meet separately with the chair of Trustees, in



order to present written and oral evidence in response. A friend or representative may accompany the Head Teacher at this meeting.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the complainant should contact the Board of Trustees. The school shall make the name and address of the Chair of Trustees available to the complainant. Also the complainant is allowed to have any independent witness present at a disciplinary interview as his/her representative.

The Board of Trustees **will initially attempt to resolve the complaint informally** and may contact the Local Education Authority for advice. If the Chair of Trustees cannot resolve the complaint informally, he will refer the matter to the Board of Trustees who shall deal with the complaint formally.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint the complainant may refer the matter to the Local Education Authority if he or she believes that the Board of Trustees has acted unreasonably, or has failed to carry out its duties properly.

Investigation Procedure

The investigation of an allegation or a complaint will always be carried out thoroughly and responsibly. The outcome of such an investigation will have significance not only for the complainant but also for the member of staff against whom the complaint has been made.

An anonymous complaint will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances. This would include serious concerns such as child protection issues or bullying allegations, where the school would either involve external agencies or else conduct its own internal review to test whether there is any corroborative evidence which might trigger a formal investigation.

Monitoring Formal Complaints

1. **Keeping Records** – The person investigating will ensure that:

- Careful records are kept
- The complaints log is completed
- Confidentiality is maintained in correspondence

2. **Reviewing and Monitoring** – The Head Teacher will:

- Review the complaints log termly
- Survey a sample of complainants to determine the levels of satisfaction achieved
- Report to the Trustees where necessary, and a copy of the complaints log sent each December.

Information for Parents

The school shall provide parents and other interested parties with information about the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the proceeding year.



CHECKLIST

It is school policy to handle complaints as part of the overall strategy to satisfy the needs of people using school services. Any expression of dissatisfaction will be treated as a complaint and dealt with accordingly

1. Complaints should be handled:

- a) Confidentially
- b) Fairly
- c) Promptly

2. Staff should endeavour to:

- a) Be courteous to the complainant
- b) Respond positively
- c) Offer constructive solutions

3. Formal written complaints should be:

- a) Recorded
- b) Acknowledged within five working days
- c) Notified to Senior Management

4. The complaints process should be:

- a) Publicly displayed
- b) Monitored regularly
- c) Reviewed and evaluated periodically

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Any person dissatisfied with school services should be encouraged to make this fact known at the point and time of their dissatisfaction to the persons directly involved.

The first person to be advised of the complaint should, if appropriate, endeavour to resolve the difficulty, ensuring that School policy and procedures are followed. If it is not appropriate for the member of staff to deal with the complaint, it should be referred as soon as possible to the appropriate School manager.

Normally, the sequence of activities to be followed should be:

- 1. Complaint received**
- 2. Entry made in complaints log* and complaint report* number assigned**
- 3. Section 1 of complaint report completed**
- 4. Complaint acknowledged**
- 5. If necessary, complaint report passed to appropriate School Manager**
- 6. Facts ascertained and recorded on complaint report**
- 7. Explanations/remedy proposed and recorded**
- 8. Complainant kept informed**
- 9. Outcome recorded on report**
- 10. Report filed by Head Teacher in school complaints file.**

* All formal complaints must be recorded in the complaints log and a complaint report completed by the member(s) of staff dealing with the complaint.



COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete and return to the school office who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint.

**What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.
(Who did you speak to and what was the response)?**



What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Proceed to Panel (Y/N):

Date: