



Complaints Policy

Academic Year: 2026–2027

Introduction

Queen Elizabeth's School, Dubai Sports City is committed to delivering the highest standards of education and care. While we take great pride in the quality of our provision, we recognise that, on occasion, parents or other stakeholders may have concerns or feel the need to raise a complaint relating to a child's experience, wellbeing, or the wider operations of the School.

We welcome constructive feedback and view it as an opportunity for reflection and improvement. In circumstances where a concern arises, we encourage parents and carers to engage with us promptly so that the matter can be resolved efficiently and fairly. Where concerns cannot be resolved informally, the formal procedures outlined in this complaints policy should be followed.

Although this policy primarily addresses complaints made by parents or carers of students enrolled at the School, it also outlines the process for managing complaints from members of the wider community, including members of the public.

In a small number of cases, complainants may act in a manner that is unacceptable and impedes the work of the School or affects the safety and wellbeing of others. While we appreciate that complaints may relate to serious matters, we will not tolerate any form of threatening, abusive or disruptive behaviour. The safety and dignity of our students and staff are paramount.

This policy sets out the School's procedure for handling concerns and complaints, including the approach taken when managing persistent, unreasonable or vexatious complaints.

Concern or complaint

Definitions:

- '*a concern*' means an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought; and
- '*a complaint*' means a clear expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken, or a lack of action and the expectation of a response from the School.

Resolving concerns

A concern can be expressed by a child, student, parent or a member of the public (including but not limited to local residents, visitors to the School, employees of transport companies and staff from other schools). Concerns will be managed informally through established channels of communication, with an attempt to resolve the matter at the earliest possible stage. Forms of communication include children and students talking to members of staff, e.g. in bespoke tutorials, or pastoral checks; parents emailing the School or speaking to their son's teacher by telephone, or discussing concerns at parent review or consultation evenings; or members of the public contacting the School by phone or in writing.

Queen Elizabeth's School, Dubai Sports City is firmly committed to the philosophy that the education of children and students is a partnership between the School and parents. The success of a partnership is dependent on the willingness of both parties to communicate, to solve problems and to resolve difficulties in a spirit of co-operation rather than conflict.

The School aims, in the first instance, to resolve any concerns or complaints quickly and informally. From our experience, the vast majority of concerns can be resolved satisfactorily by this means and there is every intention that this shall continue to be the case.

Concerns raised by children, students and parents

Stage One: Informal resolution

- Many problems can be resolved by a child or student themselves by contacting their class teacher or form tutor. However, the School understands that a child or student may want to involve their parents.
- If parents wish to discuss a concern, they should first contact the class teacher or form tutor. Concerns regarding academic matters should be directed to the Head of the relevant department.
- The formal complaints procedure is set out below and will only be invoked when informal resolution has not been impossible.

Stage Two: Formal resolution

- If the concern cannot be resolved on an informal basis, parents are invited to put their complaint in writing clearly stating that they wish to make a formal complaint and address it to the Head of Year or Head of Subject. If the subject of the complaint is a Middle or Senior leader, then the complaint should be directed to the Principal.
- Parents who attempt to escalate their complaint at a later stage of the procedure will be directed to follow the procedure from the correct stage.
- In most cases, a Senior Leader will contact the parents within 48 hours of receiving the formal complaint by telephone or in writing. Parents may be required to attend a meeting to discuss the matter further if necessary. It is possible that a resolution may be reached at this stage.
- If a resolution has still not been reached it may be necessary for further investigations after which, a response to the formal complaint will be provided in writing, usually within a further five working days.
- Parents who are dissatisfied with the decision reached by the Head of Year or Head of Subject are invited to pursue their complaint in writing to the Principal. The Principal will investigate the matter and respond within five working days. Parents may be required to attend a meeting with the Principal to discuss the matter further. If the complaint relates to the Principal, then the complaint should be directed to the CEO's Office. The CEO will investigate and respond within five working days. The complainant must

write to the CEO's Office outlining the nature of the complaint against the Principal, the members of the community involved, any actions or meetings that have been taken and all communication to date, including relevant times and dates. A complaint form should be delivered by email to the CEO's Office via ceo@qeglobal.com.

- Following an investigation by the appropriate designated person, a written response will be provided, explaining the findings, and indicating whether the complaint has been wholly or partially upheld, or whether it has been dismissed. If it has been wholly or partially upheld, the School will explain what actions it plans to take to resolve the situation and to learn lessons to reduce the likelihood of similar issues arising in the future.

Stage Three: Company review and panel hearing

- If parents are dissatisfied with the decision made after having exhausted Stage Two, they may make a formal written complaint to the CEO's Office stating their grounds for complaint in full, together with the reasons for their dissatisfaction with previous decisions. The complainant must write to the CEO's Office outlining the nature of the complaint, the members of the community involved, any actions or meetings that have been taken and all communication to date, including relevant times and dates. A complaint should be delivered by email to the CEO's Office via CEO@QEGlobal.com within five working days from the date of receipt of the decision at Stage 2 above.
- A senior staff member in the CEO's Office will review the complaint and its handling at Stage Two and may provide a further written response.
- Where the complaint remains unresolved and the parent wishes to pursue it further, the CEO's Office will convene a panel of at least three people who have had no prior involvement with the handling of the complaint to consider the formal written complaint and provide a written response detailing their decision, usually within ten working days. The panel will be independent of those who have investigated the complaint, or about whom the complaint has been made. The panel would include at least one member who is totally independent of the School. The complaints committee will consist of at least three persons:

1. A member of the Board of Governors
 2. Another member of the Board of Governors or a member of the School's teaching staff
 3. An independent individual who is not directly involved with the daily operation of the School, as per the standards for British Schools Overseas
- The CEO's Office will, if the circumstances are appropriate, offer the complainant an opportunity to present their complaint, in person, to the committee and, if so, a meeting will be arranged as soon as reasonably practicable. The complainant may be accompanied at the meeting, but it is recommended that neither the complainant nor the School has legal representation, as the panel is not a form of legal proceeding. If a complainant is accompanied to the meeting, the names, and professions of the accompanying person(s) must be shared with the CEO's Office at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.
 - The CEO's Office may alternatively respond in writing without holding a meeting.
 - The committee may request further particulars of the complaint from the complainant or the School before reaching a decision or, if appropriate, in advance of any meeting and will request such information at the earliest opportunity.
 - The committee will aim to provide a written response detailing their decision within ten working days of the meeting.
 - A written response will be provided, explaining the findings and indicating whether the complaint has been wholly or partially upheld or dismissed. If it has been wholly or partially upheld, the panel will make recommendations to resolve the complaint and/or changes to the School's procedures to reduce the likelihood of similar issues arising in the future.

Stage 4 - Referral to KHDA

- If the complainant feels that the complaints committee has not adequately dealt with the complaint they may refer the case to the KHDA. Please note that the KHDA will not consider any complaints or issues that have not been subject to all complaint levels set out in this policy.

Complaints by members of staff

- Please refer to the staff grievance procedure. Staff may also raise concerns through the School's whistleblowing policy. Low level concerns should also be raised as a matter of routine, as per the School's safeguarding policy and the code of conduct for staff and governors.
- If the staff member needs to make a safeguarding disclosure about another member of staff this should be made directly to the DSL who will inform the Principal as this is also potentially a safeguarding situation that may require immediate action by the employer. No comment or communication should be made in person or online about the disclosure to the staff member concerned or any other member of staff or School community.

Complaints by members of the public

- Members of the public should raise their concerns or complaints by telephone or in writing to the Principal. Concerns and straightforward complaints can be dealt with by the Principal's Office, or another appropriate member of staff, quickly, in writing or by telephone.
- Where there is a more complex complaint, the Principal will appoint an appropriate person to deal with the complaint. The Principal will contact the member of public, usually within five working days, with the name of the person who will deal with the complaint (designated person).
- The designated person will investigate the complaint and will usually provide a response in writing within ten working days. The Principal must approve and retain a copy of the response for the School's records.
- The Principal will record the date and nature of the concern in the central register and is responsible for tracking its progress until resolution is achieved.
- As part of this process, personal information, such as the name and contact details of the complainant, will need to be collected and stored in order that the School can fulfil its requirements as set out in this policy. Such personal data will be processed in compliance with the School's data protection policy, meaning that it will be stored securely, only processed for reasons related to

the complaint, and will be disposed of after the School has no further reason or requirement to retain it. Complainants will be able to exercise their rights under the data protection law, in accordance with the School's policy.

Timescales, tracking and data protection

- Complaints must be raised within three months of any incident (action or lack of action with which the complainant is dissatisfied) or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents.
- The School will consider complaints made outside of this time frame only if exceptional circumstances apply. Complainants should be aware that the ability of the School to consider a complaint can be impeded if the complaint is made a considerable time after the incident(s) occurrence.
- The timings for investigations and outcomes listed in the procedures above are provided as guidelines only and are not intended to be fixed. Timescales may be varied depending on the nature of the complaint and the level of investigation required. Complainants will be kept updated where there is a reason to extend the timescales.
- Complaints received during the School's scheduled holiday periods will be dealt with as soon as reasonably practicable and will not follow the timescales above. In most circumstances they will be treated as if they were received on the first full day of School after the holidays.
- For parental complaints, the child or student's Head of Year or Head of Subject will log the date and nature of the original complaint in the central register held by the Principal's Office and is responsible for tracking its progress until resolution is achieved.
- The tracking and recording of complaints made by others, or escalated to the Principal or CEO's Office, will then be managed by the respective offices.
- The central complaints register will include an overview of the nature of the complaint, how it was managed and details of the outcome.
- Should legal proceedings be brought against the School, the consideration of the complaint may be paused until such proceedings have concluded. Similarly, should other agencies, such as the police or local authority be

investigating aspects of a complaint, the timescales set out may need to be altered and the School's investigation may need to be paused.

- All complaints will be dealt with in a professional manner and will be treated seriously and confidentially.
- As part of these processes, personal information, such as the name and contact details of the complainant, will need to be collected and stored in order that the School can fulfil its requirements as set out in this policy. Such personal data will be processed in compliance with the School's data protection policy, meaning that it will be stored securely, only processed for reasons relating to the complaint, and will be disposed of after the School has no further reason or requirement to retain it. Complainants will be able to exercise their rights under the data protection law, in accordance with the School's policy.
- Meetings and panel hearings may not be recorded (audio or visual) unless there is a recognised need for a reasonable adjustment and consented to by all parties. Recorded evidence, where not consented to, will not ordinarily be permissible.

Anonymous complaints

- The School will not investigate complaints made anonymously unless exceptional circumstances exist. Such circumstances could be that a complaint relates to matters of safeguarding and child protection, issues covered in the School's whistleblowing policy or allegations that a criminal offence has been committed.
- If complainants do not leave the School with a name and a means of contacting them, then the School cannot be expected to keep them informed on the progress or outcome of any investigation.
- Mass complaint campaigns, where the issues and wording are identical or very similar, may be responded to with a template response, or a single response published in the public domain.
- A complaints petition will receive a single response only published in the appropriate public domain and/or sent to the petition's organiser.

- Undirected complaints in online chat groups will not be responded to by the School.

Persistent complainants and harassment

- For the purposes of this policy, a persistent complainant is a person (e.g. a parent or member of the public) who engages in unreasonable behaviour when raising a concern and/or complaint. Examples of unreasonable behaviour include (but are not limited to):
- Refusing to co-operate with the School's complaints procedure as set out in this policy whilst still wishing for their concern or complaint to be resolved;
- Actions which are out of proportion to the nature of the concern and/or complaint;
- Actions which are obsessive, persistent or repetitious, particularly when the School's complaints procedure has been exhausted;
- Prolific correspondence or excessive email or telephone contact about a concern or complaint;
- Insistence on pursuing unjustified or unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes to justified complaints;
- Actions which are pursued in an unjustifiable manner; for example, using abusive or threatening language, making complaints in public and refusing to attend appointments to discuss the complaint;
- Actions which have a significant and disproportionate adverse effect on the smooth running of the School, the education and welfare of the children and students or the harmonious and respectful ethos which staff and children and students work hard to maintain;
- Attempts to coerce the School or its staff member into supporting one or other parent of a child in their legal custody claims;
- Harassment is the repeated and unreasonable pursuit of concerns and/or complaints, particularly if the matter is pursued in a way intended to cause distress or disruption rather than achieve resolution. Examples of harassment include (but are not limited to):

- Repeated behaviour that is deliberately targeted towards one or more members of staff;
- Repeated actions of a complainant in such a manner that the concern and/or complaint is pursued causing on-going unwarranted distress to members of staff;
- The School is committed to finding a successful resolution to concerns and/or complaints whether raised formally or informally. In doing so, the School will follow the procedures described in this policy, which is available from the School and published on the School's website.

The School expects anyone who wishes to raise a concern and/or complaint to:

- Treat all staff with courtesy and respect;
- Respect the needs of children, students and staff within the School;
- Not pursue any complaint or concern with a member of staff either off the School premises, outside the context of School or in any private capacity;
- Avoid violence or threats of violence towards people or property;
- Avoid raising the complaint in an online chat group or forum;
- Recognise the constraints under which staff work and allow the School a reasonable time to respond to a complaint;
- Recognise that investigating and resolving a specific problem can sometimes take some time;
- Follow the complaints policy in full and abide by decisions arrived at by that procedure.

Persistent complainants or harassment procedure

Stage One

- Inform the complainant informally that his/her behaviour is now considered to be unreasonable or unacceptable, and request that they desist or change their approach.

Stage Two

- Inform the complainant in writing that their behaviour is now considered to fall under the terms of the persistent complainants and harassment procedure and detail the restrictions that will apply, which may include (but are not limited to):
- All future meetings being conducted with a second member of staff present;
- Notes of meetings may be taken;
- The School will respond only to written communications (except in cases of emergency);
- Access to any individual employee or all members of staff being denied.

Verbal or physical aggression

- The School will not tolerate any form of verbal or physical aggression towards staff. If such aggression occurs, the School's response will be to:
- Immediately ban the individual from entering the School site;
- Prosecute under applicable legislation.

Fair dealing

The School will always consider legitimate new complaints, even if the person making them is or has been subject to the persistent complaints and harassment procedure. If appropriate, the School reserves the right not to respond to communications from individuals subject to the said complaints and harassment procedure.

Next Governing Body review: June 2027