

## Parents Complaint Procedure and Policy

*Vision: Grow - Flourish - Succeed*

*Mission: Together we inspire creative, mindful learners who value diversity, support one another and strive for success.*

### 1. Introduction

GEMS Founders School, Dubai (GFS) aims to solve concerns and complaints as quickly and effectively as possible.

Anyone with parental responsibility for a student can complain if they are not satisfied with the service they receive.

- The procedure for complaints is designed to ensure that, wherever possible, an informal resolution is attempted. All stages of the complaint's procedure will be investigatory rather than adversarial.

### 2. Aims and purposes

GFS will take all informal concerns and complaints seriously at the earliest stage to try to reduce the number that develop into formal complaints.

- A student, parent or guardian wishing to make a complaint of academic nature should explain the circumstances to the subject teacher, form teacher or any other senior member of the full-time academic staff.
- A student, parent or guardian wishing to make a complaint of non-academic nature should explain the circumstances to the Parent Relations Executive (PRE) followed by the Manager, School Operations (MSO).

The aim at this stage is to resolve the complaint at source.

- It is likely that a problem will become more difficult to solve when more people become involved.
- All staff will hope to be able to resolve issues on the spot or if that is not possible through mediation. This should include advice, information, discussion and explanation.
- If concerns are taken directly to the Executive Principal or to other senior leaders, a parent may be asked if they have discussed their concerns with the relevant teacher and/or Head of Department, and should want to arrange a meeting to do that.
- The main priority is to resolve the matter quickly and calmly, involving just the people needed to help solve the problem.
- All complaints requiring action will be recorded and the action, taken in response, will also be recorded.

### 3. Roles and responsibility

The responsibility for dealing with general complaints lies solely with the School.

All parents need to be informed that any anonymous complaint will not be investigated under the parents Complaint Procedure unless there are truly exceptional circumstances. These would include serious concerns



such as child protection issues or bullying allegations, where the School might have to involve appropriate external agencies or might conduct its own internal review to test for any corroborative evidence which might trigger a formal investigation.

## **4. Complaints process**

### **PART A: Complaining about the actions of a member of staff**

#### **Informal Stage**

The complainant is normally expected to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be done by mail, by telephone or in person by appointment. At GFS we believe that many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or by providing information and it is our experience that most complaints are resolved at this informal stage.

A written record of complaint will only be kept if the complainant specifically requests this. The member of staff involved is, however, obliged to report the event to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

An unreasonable refusal by the complainant to attempt an informal resolution may result in the procedure being terminated. If the academic related complaint is not resolved by meeting with the member of staff concerned the complainant should arrange to meet the Head of Year to discuss their complaint. If the non-academic related complaint is not resolved by meeting with the PRE, the complainant should arrange to meet the MSO.

#### **Formal Stage**

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal stage, then the complaint must be put in writing and passed to the Head of Year or PRE, who will be responsible for its investigation.

All formal complaints will be logged in the School's Complaints Log, kept by the PRE and available to the Executive Leadership Team (XLT), Local Advisory Board (LAB) and external inspectors.

The written complaint should include all details that might assist the investigation. The Head of Year and PRE may meet with the complainant to clarify the complaint.

The Head of Year and PRE will collect such other evidence as deemed necessary.

The investigation will begin as soon as possible and conclude within 10 school days.

When it has been concluded, the complainant and member of staff will be informed in writing of the outcome.

The outcome will be one of the following:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so that the complaint cannot be upheld.
- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence.
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full. Details will then be given of any action the School may be taking in response to the complaint. Details of individual actions taken in respect of a member of staff or other student/parent will not be given.
- The matter has been fully investigated and appropriate procedures are being followed, which are strictly confidential.



The complainant will be told that consideration of their complaint by the Head of Year or PRE is now concluded.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed by the Head of Year or PRE, they may request a review by Deputy Head or MSO. Any such request should be made in writing and specifically state any perceived failures to follow the procedure.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed by the Deputy Head or MSO, they may request a review by Senior Deputy Head of Primary/Secondary, Head of Primary/Secondary or Vice Principal.

When it has been concluded, the complainant and member of staff will be informed in writing of the outcome.

The outcome will be one of the following:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so that the complaint cannot be upheld.
- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence.
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full. Details will then be given of any action the School may be taking in response to the complaint. Details of individual actions taken in respect of a member of staff or other student/parent will not be given.
- The matter has been fully investigated and appropriate procedures are being followed, which are strictly confidential.

## **Part B: Complaining about the actions of the Senior Deputy Head of Primary/Secondary, Head of Primary/Secondary or Vice Principal**

### **Informal Stage**

Any complainant is usually expected to arrange to speak directly with the Senior Deputy Head of Primary/Secondary, Head of Primary/Secondary or Vice Principal. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification of the provision of information.

If the matter is not resolved, if both parties agree, then a third party may be invited to act as a mediator at a further meeting. A refusal, unreasonably, 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 Associate Principal.

The written complaint should include all details that might assist the investigation. The complainant will be invited to meet with the Associate Principal to present oral evidence or to clarify the complaint.

The Associate Principal will collect such other evidence as is deemed necessary. This may include the interviewing of witnesses and others.

The Senior Deputy Head of Primary/Secondary, Head of Primary/Secondary or Vice Principal will then be invited to meet with the Associate Principal, separately, to present any written or oral evidence in response.



When the investigation has been concluded then the Senior Deputy Head of Primary/Secondary, Head of Primary/Secondary or Vice Principal and the complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome.

Details of individual action taken in respect of a member of staff will not be given.

The complainant will be told that consideration of their complaint by the Associate Principal is now concluded. If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, finds the decision perverse or believes that the Associate Principal has acted unreasonably then a request for a review can be made to the Executive Principal, in writing, within 10 days of notice and include a statement specifying any perceived failures.

When it has been concluded, the complainant and member of staff will be informed in writing of the outcome.

The outcome will be one of the following:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so that the complaint cannot be upheld.
- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence.
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full. Details will then be given of any action the School may be taking in response to the complaint. Details of individual actions taken in respect of a member of staff or other student/parent will not be given.
- The matter has been fully investigated and appropriate procedures are being followed, which are strictly confidential.

### **Part C: Complaining about the actions of the Associate Principal**

#### **Informal Stage**

Any complainant is usually expected to arrange to speak directly with the Associate Principal. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification of the provision of information.

If the matter is not resolved, if both parties agree, then a third party may be invited to act as a mediator at a further meeting. A refusal, unreasonably, 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 Executive Principal/CEO.

The written complaint should include all details that might assist the investigation. The complainant will be invited to meet with the Executive Principal/CEO to present oral evidence or to clarify the complaint.

The Executive Principal/CEO will collect such other evidence as is deemed necessary. This may include the interviewing of witnesses and others.

The Associate Principal will then be invited to meet with the Executive Principal/CEO, separately, to present any written or oral evidence in response. When the investigation has been concluded then the Associate Principal and the complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome.

Details of individual action taken in respect of a member of staff will not be given.



The complainant will be told that consideration of their complaint by the Executive Principal/CEO is now concluded.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, finds the decision perverse or believes that the Executive Principal/CEO has acted unreasonably then a request for a review can be made to the Chairman of the Local Advisory Board, in writing, within 10 days of notice and include a statement specifying any perceived failures.

When it has been concluded, the complainant and member of staff will be informed in writing of the outcome.

The outcome will be one of the following:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so that the complaint cannot be upheld.
- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence.
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full. Details will then be given of any action the School may be taking in response to the complaint. Details of individual actions taken in respect of a member of staff or other student/parent will not be given.
- The matter has been fully investigated and appropriate procedures are being followed, which are strictly confidential.

#### **Part D: Complaining about the actions of the Executive Principal/CEO**

##### **Informal Stage**

Any complainant is usually expected to arrange to speak directly with the Chairman of the Local Advisory Board.

Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification of the provision of information.

If the matter is not resolved, if both parties agree, then a third party may be invited to act as a mediator at a further meeting. A refusal, unreasonably, 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 Chairman of the Local Advisory Board.

The written complaint should include all details that might assist the investigation. The complainant will be invited to meet with the Chairman of the Local Advisory Board to present oral evidence or to clarify the complaint.

The Chairman of the Local Advisory Board will collect such other evidence as is deemed necessary. This may include the interviewing of witnesses and others.

The Executive Principal/CEO will then be invited to meet with the Chairman of the Local Advisory Board separately, to present any written or oral evidence in response. When the investigation has been concluded then the Executive Principal/CEO and the complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome.

Details of individual action taken in respect of a member of staff will not be given.



The complainant will be told that consideration of their complaint by the Chairman of the Local Advisory Board is now concluded.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, finds the decision perverse or believes that the Chairman of the Local Advisory Board has acted unreasonably then a request for a review can be made to the Chief Education Officer, in writing, within 10 days of notice and include a statement specifying any perceived failures.

When it has been concluded, the complainant and member of staff will be informed in writing of the outcome.

The outcome will be one of the following:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so that the complaint cannot be upheld.
- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence.
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full. Details will then be given of any action the School may be taking in response to the complaint. Details of individual actions taken in respect of a member of staff or other student/parent will not be given.
- The matter has been fully investigated and appropriate procedures are being followed, which are strictly confidential.

#### **Part E: Review Process**

A panel of three members of the Local Advisory Board shall conduct any review of the process followed by the Chairman of the Local Advisory Board or Vice President – Education.

The review will normally be conducted through the consideration of written submissions.

- The panel will be sympathetic to oral representations.
- The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant.
- The panel will then write to the Executive Principal/CEO, as appropriate, to make a response to the complainant.
- The panel will have access to the records kept of the process followed.
- The complainant, the Executive Principal/CEO, as appropriate, 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 but the procedural failure did not affect the outcome significantly so the matter is now closed.
  - The concern was substantiated in part or in full and the Governing Body will take steps to prevent a recurrence or to rectify the situation, where this is practicable.

Note: The complainant is not allowed access to any details of the investigation except for any statements that have been provided to the application of disciplinary procedures is strictly confidential.

An advisory note, produced by the Executive Principal/CEO and Chairman of the Local Advisory Board for all colleagues and employees who might find themselves recipients of concerns/complaints and felt they can enter with a dialogue.



## 5. Formal lines of communication.

GFS considers that any complaint should be made in a formal way via telephone, email or in person by appointment. We respectfully request that Phoenix, Seesaw and the GFS Reception WhatsApp number not be used as a domain to make any kind of complaint.

GFS maintains Social Media accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to promote the work of our wider community. We ask our parents to respect these as places where we celebrate our students' efforts and not considered as an avenue to raise any complaints.

## 6. Monitoring and review

This policy has been discussed and agreed by the GEMS Founders School, Dubai teaching staff and leadership teams for implementation.

Signed *John Stapley* ..... Date .....13 October 2023.....  
**Whole School Vice Principal**

Signed *LaRU* ..... Date .....13 October 2023.....  
**Associate Principal**

Signed *A. Profield* ..... Date .....16 October 2023.....  
**Executive Principal/CEO/Senior Vice President of Education**

### Next policy review date:

02 February 2024  
28 June 2024