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**POLICY TITLE:**            **Complaints Policy**

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**Author:**                        Principal – Michelle Farr

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**Ratified by:**                  Al Karamah Governing Body

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**Responsible signatory:**      Principal

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**Outcome:**

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**Cross Reference:**            Health and Safety Policy

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## COMPLAINTS

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<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 This policy applies to concerns and complaints received at Al Karamah School / Training Institute and establishes a clear procedure for effective and efficient complaint management.	
1.2 A local resolution to complaints is always the preference of Al Karamah School	
<b>2 OBJECTIVES</b>	
2.1 The objectives of this policy is to:	
(a) Provide ease of access to the complaints process;	
(b) Instil confidence in the way in which complaints are managed;	
(c) Provide information on how to make a complaint;	
(d) Have an honest, open and thorough approach to investigations;	
(e) Address all legitimate concerns raised by the complainant or the authorised representative;	
(f) Adopt a fair and consistent approach to the investigation of all complaints	
(g) Separate complaints from disciplinary/grievance procedures, where appropriate;	
(h) Assist, record, audit and cross-reference complaint data to other quality and risk management processes;	
(i) Learn lessons from complaints that will continually improve the quality of services provided, reduce incidents and risk.	
<b>3. DEFINITIONS</b>	
A <b>concern</b> is defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'	
A <b>complaint</b> is defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.	
<b>4. SCOPE</b>	
The school / Institute intends to resolve complaints informally where possible, at the earliest possible stage.	
There may be occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. This policy outlines the procedure relating to handling such complaints.	
This policy does not cover complaints procedures relating to:	
• Whistle-blowing	
• Staff grievances	
• Staff discipline	
Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaint.	
<b>5 ROLES &amp; RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	
<b>5.1 The complainant</b>	
The complainant will get a more effective and timely response to their complaint if they:	
Follow these procedures	
Treat all those involved with respect	

- Do not publish details about the complaint on social media
- Specify what outcome they are seeking as a result of the complaint

## 5.2 **The investigator**

An individual will be appointed to look into the complaint and establish the facts. They will:

- Interview all relevant parties, keeping notes
- Consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely
- Prepare a comprehensive report to the Principal or complaints which includes the facts and potential solutions

## 6. **PRINCIPLES FOR INVESTIGATION**

When investigating a complaint, we will try to clarify:

- What has happened
- Who was involved
- What the complainant feels would put things right
- Does the complaint include external bodies

### 6.1 **Timescales**

The complainant must raise the complaint within 3 months of the incident. If the complaint is about a series of related incidents, they must raise the complaint within 3 months of the last incident.

When complaints are made out of term time, we will consider them to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

If at any point we cannot meet the timescales we have set out in this policy, we will:

- Set new time limits with the complainant
- Send the complainant details of the new deadline and explain the delay

## 7. **STAGES OF COMPLAINT IF NOT AGAINST PRINCIPAL**

### 7.1 **Stage 1: Informal**

The school will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that the provision or clarification of information will resolve the issue.

The complainant should raise the complaint as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff or the Principal as appropriate, either in person or by letter, telephone or email. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the Principal.

The school will acknowledge informal complaints within 2 days, and investigate and provide a response within 10 days. The informal stage will usually involve a meeting between the complainant and the Principal as appropriate. If the complaint is not resolved informally, it will be escalated to a formal complaint.

### 7.2 **Stage 2: Formal**

#### 7.3 Formal complaints can be raised:

- By letter or email
- Over the phone
- In person

The complainant should provide details such as relevant dates, times, and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents, and what they feel would resolve the complaint.

The Principal will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 3 days.

The Principal (or designated member of the senior leadership team) will call a meeting to clarify concerns, and seek a resolution. The Principal (or other person appointed by the Principal for this purpose) will then conduct their own investigation. The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within 20 days.

### 7.4 **How to escalate a complaint**

Complaints can be escalated by contacting the Principal/COO

- By letter or email

- Over the phone
- In person

The complainant will need to provide the details of the complaint as set out above, as well as details from the complainant on how they feel the previous stage of the procedure has not addressed their complaint sufficiently, and what they feel would resolve the complaint.

The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within 20 days.

## 8 **Stage 3: INDEPENDENT REVIEW**

If a complainant remains dissatisfied after attempts to resolve the complaint locally have failed then they may refer this to the independent review.

The independent reviewer for AKS/AKTI is the Chief Operating Officer of the Middle East, Will Goodwin or his delegated nominee. They will allow the complainant to have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence.

### **How to escalate a complaint**

Complaints can be escalated by contacting the Principal/COO

- By letter or email
- Over the phone
- In person

### **The outcome could be:**

- Uphold the complaint, in whole or in part
- Dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part

If the complaint is upheld, a decision will be made to:

- Decide the appropriate action to resolve the complaint
- Where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future

The school will inform those involved of the decision in writing within 5 school days.

If the complainant remains unsatisfied by the outcome of the independent review, they can contact ADEK, who may investigate if the school's complaints process has been carried out appropriately'.

## 9 **COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE PRINCIPAL**

Complaints made against the Principal or any member of the governing board should be directed to the Director of Quality or Chief Operating Officer.

## 10 **PERSISTANT COMPLAINTS**

### 10.1 **Unreasonably persistent complaints**

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore we will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:

- Has made the same complaint before, and it's already been resolved by following the school's complaints procedure
- Makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory or repetitive
- Insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complaints procedure, beyond all reason
- Pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner, e.g. refuses to articulate the complaint, refuses to co-operate with this complaints procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the timeframes it sets out
- Makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on school time
- Seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value

### **Steps we will take**

We will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns, and give them a clear statement of our position and their options. We will maintain our role as an objective arbiter throughout the process, including when we meet with individuals. We will follow our complaints procedure as normal (as outlined above) wherever possible.

If the complainant continues to contact the school in a disruptive way, we may put communications strategies in place. We may:

- Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term
- Put any other strategy in place as necessary

### **Stopping responding**

We may stop responding to the complainant when all of these factors are met:

- We believe we have taken all reasonable steps to help address their concerns
- We have provided a clear statement of our position and their options
- The complainant contacts us repeatedly, and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience
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Where we stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so. We will also explain that we will still consider any new complaints they make.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from our school site.

### **10.2 Duplicate complaints**

If we have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that we hadn't previously considered, or any new information we need to take into account. If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will:

- Tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and that the local process is complete

If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again.

### **11 RECORD KEEPING AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

The school will record the progress of all complaints, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the final outcome. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls.

This material will be treated as confidential and stored securely, and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel.

Records of complaints will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law, our privacy notices.

The details of the complaint, including the names of individuals involved, will not be shared with the whole governing board in case a review panel needs to be organised at a later point.

### **12 LESSONS LEARNED**

AKS/AKTI will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the Principal where appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there are any improvements that the school can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.