

AL-ZAHRA SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS POLICY

2024/25

School:	Al-Zahra School
Head Teacher:	Mrs Z Rizvi
Proprietors appointed member of trustee overseeing school activities	Dr Mesbahi

Policy Review Dates	
Academic year:	2024/25
Review Cycle:	Annual
Last Review Date:	5 th SEPT 2024
Al-Khoei Foundation Ratification:	9 th SEPT 2024
Date Shared with Staff:	11 th SEPT 2025
Next Review Date:	2 nd SEPT 2025
Number of complaints in the last academic year:	Stage 1: 7 Stage 2: 1 Stage 3: 0

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Proprietors of Al-Zahra school take seriously their responsibility under section 157 of the 'Education Act of 2002' to promote the welfare of children, and to provide safeguarding dedicated to the wellbeing and protection of those under the age of 16 years. Al-Zahra school prides itself on the quality of teaching and care provided to pupils and the Islamic relationships at all levels within the School. However, it is recognised that, from time-to-time relationships may be affected by dissatisfaction due to a variety of reasons and any such issue(s) should be resolved promptly in the interest of all.

Based on its commitment to Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, Schedule 1, Part 7, paragraph 25, the Proprietors of Al-Zahra school have formed this policy regarding its complaint procedures. This Policy is applicable to all pupils and is available on the school's website. If parents/ carers have a complaint, it will be handled in accordance with this procedure.

i. What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the School as a whole, about a specific subject or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent/ carer of a registered pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the School is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent/ carer believes that the school has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly. parents/ carers can be assured that all complaints will be treated seriously, confidentially, and further be assured that no child will be penalised for a complaint that is raised in good faith.

2. The Three-stage Complaints Procedure

i. Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally;
- When a parent/ carer is making an initial complaint there is usually no need for the complaint to be put in writing. Parents/carers should contact their son/daughter's Class Teacher/ the Form Tutor, who will respond as soon as practically possible. In many cases, the matter will be resolved immediately by this means to the parents'/ carers' satisfaction;
- If a parent decides to raise a concern or a complaint in writing, this does not mean that the formal stage is automatically triggered. Complaints will

usually only progress to the formal stage after first being considered at the preliminary stage.

- If unsatisfied, parents/ carers may then ask to discuss concerns with the Head Teacher. At the end of the discussion, it will be made clear to the complainant what action, if any, will be taken, the timescale within which it will take place and how she/he will be notified of any outcomes. The Head Teacher will normally respond within five school days. Every effort will be made to resolve the matter;
- A written record, complaint log will be kept by the Head Teacher of all complaints and the date on which they were received and resolved;
- If it is apparent that the parent/ carer is not happy with the response to their complaint, the parent/ carer will be advised that a formal complaint should be put in writing.

ii. Stage 2 – Formal Resolution (Head Teacher)

- If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, then parents/ carers should put their complaint in writing to the Head Teacher, who will acknowledge the complaint within five school days;
- The Head Teacher will decide the appropriate course of action. In most cases the Head Teacher will make arrangements to meet parents/ carers within five school days of receiving the written complaint. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage;
- It may be necessary for the Head Teacher to carry out further investigations. Where an investigation takes place written statements will be taken and recorded;
- The Head Teacher may in certain cases refer the matter to the Proprietors of Al-Zahra school;
- Once the Head Teacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be reached, and parents/ carers will be informed of this decision in writing within 20 school days or a mutually agreed time of meeting the parents/ carers or those making the complaint. The Head Teacher will give reasons for the decision;
- Head Teacher will also notify the parents/ carers that if they are not satisfied, the parent/ carer will be advised that they may send a written complaint to the Proprietors of Al-Zahra school.

iii. Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If the parents/ carers feel a complaint to a Head Teacher has not been answered satisfactorily, they can appeal against the response provided,

by writing for the complaint to be referred to the Proprietors of Al-Zahra school:

The Al-Khoei Foundation,
Chevening Road,
London NW6 6TN
020 73724049

- It is important that all stages of the informal procedure have been exhausted. If this is not the case the parents/ carers will be advised to follow the procedures described for the informal stages above;
- If the Head Teacher is the subject of the complaint, the earlier stages will be skipped, and the Proprietors of Al-Zahra school will undertake the investigation;
- The Proprietors of Al-Zahra school will convene a Panel of three people normally consisting of the appointed member of trustee overseeing the school, another member of the Board of Trustees, who is not directly involved in the matters that are subject to the complaint, and an independent neutral person of good standing within the community not directly connected with the school;
- The Panel will call for a full report from the Head Teacher and, if necessary, obtain further particulars about the matter. The Panel will examine the complaint fully before responding. The complainant will be invited, with a relative, teacher or friend (and an interpreter if needed) to a meeting that should normally take place within 15 school days of the complaint being made within Stage Three;
- Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. Children giving evidence to the Panel will be encouraged to be represented by a suitable advocate;
- The Head Teacher may be invited to attend the meeting to clarify the facts about the previous investigation;
- After consideration of all the relevant facts, the Panel will reach a decision and make recommendations that shall be completed within 15 school days of the hearing. The appointed member of trustee overseeing school activities will write to the complainant, the Head Teacher and the person who is the subject of the complaint informing them of its decisions and the reasons for them. The decision of the Panel will be final.

3. Further Guidance

i. Recording Complaints

Following resolution of a complaint, the Head Teacher will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved at the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing and any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld). At the School's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent/ carer
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

Written records will be kept of all complaints to monitor the progress of a complaint. This will provide evidence that the complaint was considered and of the outcome.

All correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential; this excludes the requirement of the school to provide parents and the interested parties with the information about the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding years, nor to the inspectors conducting inspection under section 162 A of the educational act 2002, or the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

ii. Time frame

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively and acknowledged within 5 working days if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: Al-Zahra school's target is to complete each of the first two stages of the procedure within 20 school days. Stage 3, will be completed within a further 30 school days.

Please note that, for the purposes of this procedure, 'working days' refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time. School days are when the pupils are attending; staff INSET days are excluded; counting begins on the school day after receipt. In relation to all complaints, parents/ carers will be kept

informed where Al-Zahra school requires reasonable additional time for investigations to be carried out.

iii. Additional Information

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with a decision made by the Panel they will be able to pursue their complaint with the Department for Education and/or the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

If at any point the child appears to be at risk, parents/ carers and staff should follow the procedures as set out in our "Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy".