



**AL-HIDAYAH ISLAMIC SCHOOL**

# **DISPUTES AND COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

Policy No: ADM001

Version: 1

Drafted by: Roslan Abdul Jalil

Approved by Board on: 24 / 05 / 2015

Responsible Person: Roslan Abdul Jalil

Scheduled Review Date: 14 / 06 / 2015

Signed, Chair:



## Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	5
NATURE OF COMPLAINTS .....	6
DEFINITION OF COMPLAINT .....	6
CONFIDENTIALITY .....	6
LINES OF APPROACH .....	7
Parent’s Complaint Flow Chart .....	7
PROCEDURES.....	8
STUDENTS’ COMPLAINTS.....	9
ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS.....	10
RESOLUTION .....	10
PARENT’S COMPLAINT FORM .....	11



## INTRODUCTION

The *Education Act 1999* has, as a condition of registration or renewal of registration, a requirement that a school has a “means by which disputes and complaints about the provision of education at the school may be dealt with:”.

An effective complaints procedure can diffuse problems and can provide the school with helpful information. Complaints treated as constructive suggestions can be used to improve standards and may prevent cause for further complaint. Even an unjustified complaint may indicate an area that can be improved.

A dispute can be considered to be a pursued unresolved complaint.

Al-Hidayah Islamic School endeavours to solidify the three-way partnership of parents, staff, and students with the aim of creating a harmonious and productive educational Islamic environment in which healthy relationships are nurtured, thus avoiding complaints and dispute. This is aligned with the Islamic nature of the school where Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Quran:

“O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do”.

“O ye who believe! stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do”. (5:8)

## **NATURE OF COMPLAINTS**

There are essentially four areas of complaint:

1. parents (or guardians)
2. pupils
3. the public
4. staff

## **DEFINITION OF COMPLAINT**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem.

A complaint may be made if a parent thinks that the school has, for example:

- done something wrong;
- failed to do something it should have done; or
- acted unfairly or impolitely.

A complaint may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department in the school or about an individual member of staff.

**All complaints at Al-Hidayah Islamic School will be handled seriously.**

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All complaints are treated in a confidential manner and with respect at Al-Hidayah Islamic School.

Parents can express their concerns as all concerns are kept confidential. They need not fear that their child will suffer in some way because they have complained about the staff member of the school.

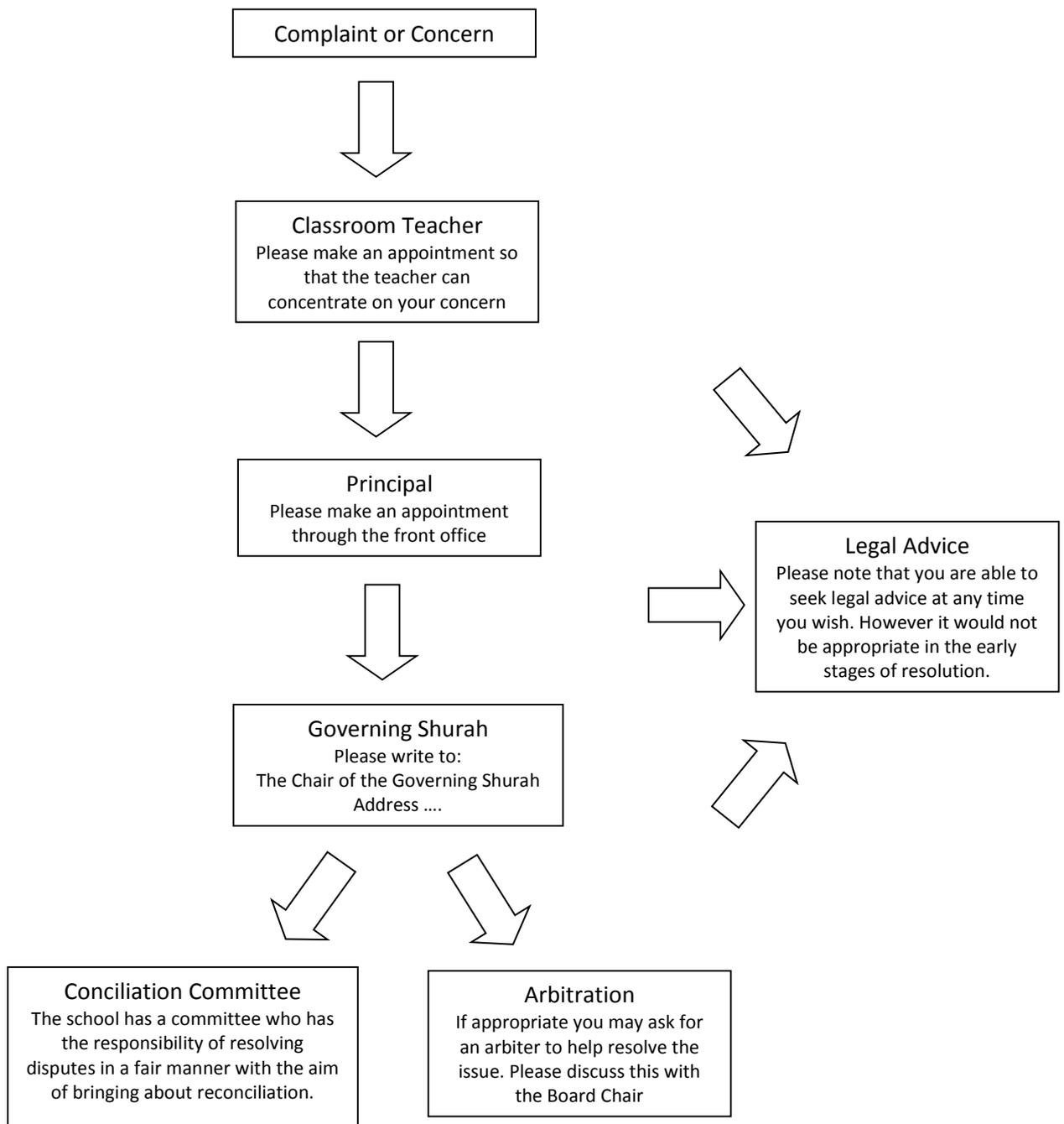
It is the school's policy that complaints made by parents will not adversely affect their children and similarly that complaints raised by pupils will not adversely affect them or other pupils.

Members of staff will be notified of any complaints that might be damaging to their reputation. Staff will be given appropriate advice on how to deal with, not only complaints that are made to them, but also complaints that are made about them.

**If there is a situation involving the Police, the Principal, or next most senior staff member if the Principal is unavailable, must take responsibility for action in the school and the Governing Body Chair should be informed as soon as possible.**

# LINES OF APPROACH

## Parent's Complaint Flow Chart



## PROCEDURES

There are two ways to make a complaint:

- verbal
- written

### 1. Verbal complaints

- i. Parents should make an appointment to voice their concern.
- ii. The class teacher will deal with parental concerns that lie within their area of responsibility and inform parents of the action(s) they will be taking or have taken.
- iii. If the parents are not happy with the response from the class teacher, parents can make an appointment to see the principal through the front office.
- iv. Parents can write to the Governing Shurah if the issues cannot be resolved by the principal.
- v. If the parents wish to take the matter further after meeting the Governing Shurah, the parents could consider the Conciliation Committee (if the school has one) or seeking the advice of an independent arbitrator.

#### Note:

- When approached about a matter that lies outside their remit, staff will refer it to the appropriate person.
- At all stages of a complaints resolution procedure, the complainant should be reminded that they can seek legal advice if they wish, especially at the point where the school has done all it can to reach a resolution.

### 2. Written complaints

- i. Parents should approach the front office and lodge a written complaint or concern.
- ii. A copy will be given to the principal and another copy kept for filing.
- iii. The Principal will forward the complaint or concern to the relevant staff member to address the issues.
- iv. The staff member's written responses should always be discussed with the Principal, who will sign the response.
- v. If the parents are not happy with the response from the class teacher, parents can make an appointment to see the principal through the front office.
- vi. Parents can write to the Governing Shurah if the issues cannot be resolved by the principal.
- vii. If the parents wish to take the matter further after meeting the Governing Shurah, the parents could consider the Conciliation Committee (if the school has one) or seeking the advice of an independent arbitrator.

**Note:**

- Al-Hidayah will try its best to acknowledge the complaint or concern immediately or within **three** working days.
- The Principal will share serious complaints with the Amir of the Governing Shurah.
- There may be certain circumstances, such as complaints about the Principal, when the parents will need to write directly to the Amir of the Governing Shurah whose address would be supplied on request.
- Confidential files on all complaints will be maintained and kept together, cross-referenced with other files as necessary. The files contain simple but clear notes of all conversations with parents about any source of dissatisfaction.
- At all stages of a complaints resolution procedure, the complainant should be reminded that they can seek legal advice if they wish, especially at the point where the school has done all it can to reach a resolution.

**STUDENTS' COMPLAINTS**

**The principles that apply to parental complaints should also be applied to complaints and concerns from pupils.**

There are, however, differences in approaches. One important difference from the handling of parental complaints is that pupils should be able to raise concerns with any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable.

In more complex situations, once the matter is resolved, the outcome should be discussed with the pupil by a member of staff. To make sure that it is fully understood, a written record may be shared.

Complaints that appear trivial will need to be handled seriously. Young children may test the complaints procedures on relatively minor issues before finding the confidence to raise something painful, such as bullying.

If the issue is a painful one, or if exploration of it is taking time, a student may need support from another pupil or from an adult. Students should be encouraged to choose a person with whom they feel comfortable to provide support.

Complaints, and ways of dealing with them, also need to be explained to pupils. Personal and Social Education programs can be of use, not only in teaching pupils how they may support and act as mentors to others, but also in encouraging them to understand that their views matter.

## **ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS**

Anonymous complaints may be where there is no indication of either name or address, or where the complainants say that they do not wish to be identified. They may come from members of the public, from parents or from pupils. Complaints from the public about the behaviour of a group of pupils will be dealt with on a general basis, with reminders to all about the school's expectations.

Parents and pupils will be encouraged to give their names and should be given reassurance on the issue of confidentiality. If they persist in wishing to remain anonymous, it is at the Principal's discretion as to what action, if any, should be taken, depending on the nature of the complaint.

Anonymous complaints will be kept in a file.

**Anonymous allegations about child abuse should be monitored closely but no action taken until there is more certainty about the veracity of the allegation.**

## **RESOLUTION**

At Al-Hidayah Islamic School, making peace and resolving a complaint or dispute is an Islamic duty. A Muslim should be careful not to harm others and there is great reward for those who strive for peace and preserve brotherhood:

"The believers are but a single Brotherhood, so make peace and reconciliation between your two contending brothers; and fear Allah that you may receive mercy." (Quran 49:10)

Al-Hidayah Islamic School knows that the very acknowledgement of an issue will bring relief to parents. Satisfaction for a complainant may come from any of the following:

- knowing that changes have been made, and that matters will be different in future
- knowing that the school is now alert to a possible problem
- feeling that their concern has been considered seriously
- an outcome which may be different from the one they sought, but which they perceive to be well considered
- a considered letter
- an apology and seeking forgiveness if appropriate

"Be quick (speed up, rush, compete) in the race for forgiveness from the Creator of heaven and earth and for Paradise whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth prepared for the Pious people. Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and pardon (all) mankind; for Allah loves those who do good." (Quran 3: 133 - 134).

