

St. Andrews International School Samakee

Document Information			
Policy Number:	PO-M&L-2	Created by:	Headteacher
Reviewed by:	SLT	Responsibility:	All Staff
Last Review:	2/2023	Next Review:	2/2026
Review Cycle:	Triennial	Ratified by:	SLT

Complaints Policy

Introduction

We believe that the St. Andrews Samakee provides an excellent education for all our children and that the Headteacher and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

Aims and objectives

Our school aims to meet its statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents of students at the school, and others and to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases; we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed and then resolved.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
- Respect complainants’ desire for confidentiality
- Treat complainants with respect and courtesy
- Make sure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
- Consider how the complaint can feed into school improvement evaluation processes
- We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.
- The school will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full.
- To support this, we will make sure we publicise the existence of this policy and make it available on the school website.
- Throughout the process, we will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

St. Andrews International School Samakee

Legislation and Guidance

This document meets the requirements of section 29 of the Education Act 2002, which states that schools must have and make available a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

This document refers to good practice guidance on setting up complaints procedures from the Department for Education (DfE).

In addition, it addresses duties set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework with regards to dealing with complaints about the school's fulfilment of Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

Definitions and Scope

Definitions

A concern is defined as “an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought”

A complaint is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action”

Scope

The school 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.

Complaints about services provided by other providers who use school premises or facilities should be directed to the provider concerned.

The complaints process

How to share a concern

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.

The next step would involve Phase Leaders. These post-holders are members of the St. Andrews Samakee School Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and have a wealth of experience in dealing with a range of issues.

What to do if the matter is not resolved through informal discussion

Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the Phase Leader, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher. The Head of School considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates

St. Andrews International School Samakee

each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.

What to do if the matter is not resolved through formal meetings with the Head of School

If the matter is not resolved through formal meetings with the Head of School you may then write to the Chair of the school's board of directors' (or designated director), at the school address, setting out your complaint and why you are unhappy with the school's response. Please write within 14 days of receiving the headteacher's response. The Chair (or designated director) will write acknowledging your letter within a few days and may invite you for an informal meeting to discuss your complaint. If not, the Chair (or designated director) will then write again once s/he has investigated more fully. You should receive a full response within 14 days.

What to do if the matter is not resolved through the Chair of Directors' response

If you are unhappy about the Chair of Directors' response you are entitled to ask a panel of directors to meet to consider your complaint. If you want to do this, write to the Chair of the Directors within 14 days of receiving the Chair's response. Say that you have a formal complaint and that you remain unhappy with the way the school and Chair of directors have responded, and that you would like a panel of directors to consider your complaint. There is no need to write all the details of the complaint in this letter but you will be required to explain clearly what you are complaining about. The Chair (or designated director) will contact you about the panel and explain what will happen. You may bring someone with you if you wish. This part of the procedure is referred to as the formal stage of the complaints procedure.

What happens at the Panel meeting

One of the directors will chair the meeting, and s/he will explain what will happen. You may be asked to outline your complaint. Panel members and/or the headteacher, who will also be present, may ask you questions. The headteacher will then explain how the school has responded to the complaint, and then you and the panel may ask the headteacher questions. You may also ask other people (witnesses) to speak about what happened.

After this, everyone except the panel and the person taking minutes will leave, so that the panel can consider its findings. The Chair of the panel will write to you within a few days setting out the panel's findings. They will also write to the headteacher and Chair of directors. Their findings are binding upon the school and the panel's findings are the school's final response to you about your complaint.

How To Complain – A Summary

1. Talk to the staff member concerned or another appropriate staff member such as the Phase Leader
2. Talk to the headteacher
3. Write to the Chair of Directors
4. Write to ask for a complaints panel

FINALLY...

Please be assured that we will take your complaint seriously and treat you fairly. If something has gone wrong we want to put it right, and if you are not happy with the result, then neither are we!