



Complaints Policy

ALOHA COLLEGE MARBELLA
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Policy aim

At Aloha College Marbella, we are committed to maintaining a transparent, fair, and effective framework that facilitates the timely resolution of concerns and complaints raised by students, parents or other stakeholders. This policy aims to foster open communication, ensure accountability, and enhance the overall satisfaction and well-being of the school community by addressing issues promptly, impartially, and in a manner that upholds the principles of fairness, confidentiality and continuous improvement.

The majority of issues raised by parents, students or the community are concerns rather than formal complaints. The school is dedicated to addressing concerns seriously at the earliest opportunity, with the aim of minimising the need for formal complaints and avoiding the use of formal procedures where possible. The primary objective of the school's policy is to resolve complaints as fairly and swiftly as possible.

This policy applies to all stakeholders within the school community, including students, parents, teachers, staff, and administrators. Its overarching aim is to maintain a safe and supportive learning environment. Parents are often the primary audience regarding behaviour expectations and the procedures for raising any concerns. Furthermore, the policy is also relevant to school staff, as it outlines the steps they can take to ensure a secure and conducive educational setting.

This policy is made available to parents, students and the community via the school website.

Procedures

The following outlines the stages that can be followed to resolve complaints. This Complaints Policy has three main stages:

Stage 1 – A concern is raised with a class teacher, subject teacher, Head of Department/Head of Sixth Form, member of the Leadership Team, Headteacher, or Principal.

Stage 2 – The formal complaint is heard by the Chair of Governors.

Stage 3 – The complaint is heard by the Board of Trustees' Complaints Appeal Panel.

❖ Stage 1 – Raising a concern

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will typically result in a prompt response, with the aim of resolving the issue swiftly. The school requests that parents initially

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contact the class teacher, tutor, subject teacher, Head of Department (for secondary), or Head of Key Stage.

For serious concerns, complainants may submit their issues in writing to the appropriate Head of Section or the Principal. If the concern relates to financial matters, health and safety, food, transport, or premises, it must first be raised with the Principal.

In some cases, the concern may require further investigation or consultation with others. In such instances, the complainant will receive an initial response within five working days, followed by a more detailed response if necessary.

The vast majority of concerns are expected to be satisfactorily resolved in this manner. However, if a parent is not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, they may write to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

❖ **Stage 2 – Formal Complaint**

If a parent wishes to file a formal complaint, they should write to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, clearly stating their intention. The letter should be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the Chair, marked "Confidential," and handed in at the Main Reception. The letter must include details of the complaint. The Chair will acknowledge receipt and proceed to investigate the matter with the school.

Alternatively, the complainant may email the letter of complaint directly to the Chair of the Board at acmbot@aloha-college.com. The investigation will be conducted either by the Chair or by a person appointed to act on their behalf. The nature of the investigation will depend on the specific complaint but will typically involve:

- Establishing what has occurred so far, who has been involved and what actions have been taken to date.
- Conducting the investigation with impartiality and an open mind.
- Keeping a record of the investigation.

Following the investigation, the Chair or the designated person will write to the complainant with their findings within ten working school days. If the parent remains dissatisfied, they must inform the school within ten working school days of receiving the Chair's findings. The complaint will then be referred to a panel of the remaining trustees.

❖ **Stage 3 – Complaints Appeals Panel**

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The final stage of the process involves a panel of Trustees, marking the last school-based phase of the complaints procedure. The aim of the appeal panel hearing is to resolve the complaint impartially and foster reconciliation between the school and the complainant. The hearing will typically take place within ten school working days of receiving the written request. The panel will review the Chair's investigation and report, taking into account the representations of the complainant. All parties will be notified of the panel's decision in writing within three school working days following the hearing. The decision of the Full Board of Trustees is final.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated with seriousness and confidentiality. Correspondence, statements, and records will be kept confidential, except in cases where disclosure is required or where any other legal obligation applies.

A parent reserves the right to challenge the decision of the Board of Trustees in a court of law.

Complainants

While schools serve a public function, they are private spaces, and the public does not have an automatic right of entry. Schools prioritise maintaining a safe environment for pupils, staff, and community members.

If a parent's behaviour raises concerns, the school has the authority to ask them to leave the premises. In more serious cases, the Principal may formally notify the parent in writing that their implied licence to be on school grounds has been temporarily revoked, pending any representations the parent wishes to make. It is essential that the school provides the parent with an opportunity to express their views on the barring decision in writing.

The decision to bar should then be reviewed, taking into account any representations made by the parent, and subsequently confirmed or lifted. If the decision is confirmed, the parent should receive written notification explaining the duration of the bar.

Parents wishing to file a complaint about being barred may do so by submitting a letter or email to the Principal or Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Student complaints procedure

If a student raises a complaint, the procedures outlined below will be followed. In the case of a safeguarding issue, the relevant safeguarding policy and guidance will be strictly adhered to.

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Stage 1: Informal Resolution

Students are encouraged to raise concerns informally with the relevant class or subject teacher, Head of Department (Secondary), or Head of Key Stage. These concerns will be addressed promptly, and the findings will be shared with the student and, if appropriate, their parents.

If the issue remains unresolved, the student may proceed to the formal complaint process.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint Process

The student should submit a written complaint to the Head of Section, detailing the nature of the complaint, individuals involved, and any previous attempts at resolution.

An investigation will be conducted by the Head of Section and other designated staff members. The school aims to complete the investigation within 10 working days and provide a suitable response to the student and, if appropriate, their parents.

Stage 3: Appeals

If the student is dissatisfied with the resolution, they may appeal in writing to the Principal. The appeal should clearly outline the grounds for dissatisfaction and include any additional relevant information.

The Principal will review the appeal and provide a final written response, detailing any actions taken or decisions made. This response will be communicated to the student and, if appropriate, their parents within ten working days of receiving the appeal.

IGCSE/A LEVEL/IB specific complaints

When students and/or parents raise a complaint, the documented procedures within this policy are rigorously followed to address the concern. All complaints are handled fairly, promptly and responsively, with the aim of addressing student and parental concerns while contributing to the continuous development of the school.

Parents and students have the right to lodge complaints regarding significant decisions made by school staff and leadership that may impact a student's readiness for future education or career pathways. These concerns include:

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- Exclusions from ACM courses due to misconduct related to Academic Integrity (refer to the Academic Honesty Policy for detailed procedures).
- Accusations of misconduct regarding Academic Integrity and the related investigations (see the Academic Honesty Policy for details).
- Submission issues for internally and externally assessed work (e.g., if a student's internally assessed work is received after the published internal submission date, the last piece of work received by the deadline may be used for submission).
- Discrepancies between teacher-predicted and final moderated grades.
- Discrepancies between IB/A Level predicted grades for university applications and final IB/A Level results, which may affect offers for further education.
- The selection of courses/subjects at ACM during the choice of IB/A Level/IGCSE subjects and courses.
- Decisions related to a student's subject pathway and placement in courses.
- Requirements for attendance and academic achievement criteria that allow continuation with the pursued course.
- Decisions regarding the level of support provided for internally assessed work.
- Declaring a student to be not in good standing with the school, affecting their enrollment status.
- Withholding external examination results or externally awarded certificates due to non-payment of school fees.
- Standards of teaching, classroom facilities, and examination facilities.
- Pastoral concerns.

For each of the complaints listed above, the prescribed procedures are outlined in this document. The Head of Key Stage/IB Coordinator is actively involved in investigating any complaints related to specific programmes (IGCSE/A Level/IB). If a student or parent wishes to contest grades awarded by an examination board after results are issued, the appeals process set out by the individual examination boards/IB regulations will be followed.