

St. Andrews International School Samakee

Document Information			
Policy Number:	PO-M&L-2	Created by:	Headteacher
Reviewed by:	SLT	Responsibility:	All Staff
Last Review:	2/2026	Next Review:	2/2029
Review Cycle:	Triennial	Ratified by:	SLT

Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

At St. Andrews Samakee International School, we value our positive relationships with parents and the wider school community. We believe that open communication and mutual understanding are essential to providing excellent education for all our children.

We recognise that occasionally concerns or complaints may arise, and we are committed to resolving these fairly, promptly and professionally. This policy sets out our procedures for handling complaints in a transparent and effective manner.

We take all complaints seriously and use them as opportunities to learn and improve our provision.

2. Aims and objectives

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial - treating all parties fairly and with respect
- Resolve concerns informally wherever possible - through open dialogue and mutual understanding
- Provide clear timescales - keeping complainants informed at every stage
- Facilitate thorough investigation - ensuring all relevant facts are considered
- Respect confidentiality - protecting the privacy of all involved
- Be accessible - making our complaints procedure easy to understand and use
- Learn and improve - using complaints to enhance our school provision
- Put children first - ensuring the interests and wellbeing of pupils remain paramount

We will make sure our complaints procedure is:

- Easily accessible and publicised on our school website
- Simple to understand and use
- Sensitive to the needs of all parties
- Compliant with relevant legislation and best practice guidance

St. Andrews International School Samakee

3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on:

- Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, which requires schools to have a complaints procedure
 - The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 - standards for independent schools (if applicable)
 - Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework - requirements for handling complaints about EYFS provision
 - Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR - regarding confidentiality and record keeping
 - Department for Education (DfE) guidance - Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures
-

4. Definitions and Scope

4.1 Definitions

Concern: An expression of worry or doubt over an issue for which reassurance is sought. Concerns can usually be resolved informally.

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken (or lack of action) that requires a formal response.

Complainant: The person making the complaint (usually a parent/carer, but may be a pupil, member of staff, or member of the public).

4.2 Scope - What This Policy Covers

This policy covers complaints about:

- The school's provision of facilities or services
- Actions or lack of action by the school or staff
- The application of school policies
- Treatment of pupils or parents

4.3 What This Policy Does NOT Cover

Separate procedures exist for:

- Admissions decisions - handled through admissions appeals process
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs - handled through SEND tribunal process
- Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures - internal HR processes
- Staff capability or conduct - handled through performance management/disciplinary procedures
- Child protection concerns - handled through safeguarding procedures (see section 10)
- Whistleblowing - covered by separate whistleblowing policy

St. Andrews International School Samakee

If a complaint is received about any of these matters, we will direct the complainant to the appropriate procedure.

Complaints from staff should be directed through the school's grievance procedure.

Anonymous complaints will be considered at the headteacher's discretion, depending on the seriousness and credibility of the complaint.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The Complainant

The complainant will:

- Raise concerns or complaints as soon as possible
- Treat all staff with respect and courtesy
- Provide full details of the complaint
- Cooperate with the school's investigation
- Respect confidentiality

5.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall implementation of this policy
- Ensuring all staff understand the complaints procedure
- Handling formal complaints at Stage 2
- Keeping the Board of Directors informed of complaints and outcomes
- Monitoring complaints data and identifying trends
- Ensuring learning from complaints informs school improvement

5.3 The Complaints Coordinator

Phase Leads act as the complaints coordinators and are responsible for:

- Receiving and logging all formal complaints
- Coordinating investigations
- Communicating with complainants throughout the process
- Maintaining confidential records
- Reporting to the headteacher and Board of Directors

5.4 The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is responsible for:

- Reviewing and approving this policy
- Handling complaints about the headteacher (Stage 2)
- Convening complaints panels (Stage 3)
- Monitoring complaints data annually

St. Andrews International School Samakee

- Ensuring the school learns from complaints

5.5 The Complaints Panel

The complaints panel will:

- Consists of at least three people not directly involved in the complaint
 - Include at least one member independent of the management and running of the school
 - Have a chair who is independent and impartial
 - Hear the complaint fairly and reach a decision
 - Provide written findings to all parties
-

STAGE 2 - Complaint to the Board of Directors

We aim to resolve complaints at the earliest possible stage through informal discussion. Our complaints process has three formal stages if informal resolution is not possible.

INFORMAL STAGE - Raising a Concern

Who to contact:

- Your child's class teacher (for concerns about day-to-day matters)
- Phase Leader (for concerns not resolved by the class teacher)
- Headteacher (for serious concerns or those not resolved at earlier stages)

How to raise a concern:

- In person (by appointment)
- By telephone: [insert phone number]
- By email: [insert email address]

What will happen:

- We will listen to your concern and discuss it with you
- We will investigate if necessary
- We will try to resolve the matter through discussion and mutual understanding
- We will respond within **5 school days**

Most concerns are resolved at this informal stage.

STAGE 1 - Formal Complaint to the Headteacher

If your concern is not resolved informally, or if it is of a serious nature, you may make a formal

St. Andrews International School Samakee

complaint.

How to make a formal complaint:

- Complete the Complaints Form (Appendix A) or write a letter setting out:
 - Your full name and contact details
 - Details of the complaint
 - What you have already done to try to resolve it
 - What outcome you are seeking
- Send to: The Headteacher, St. Andrews Samakee International School, email: msudhirak@standrews-samakee.com

What will happen:

1. **Acknowledgment** - We will acknowledge your complaint in writing within **3 school days**
2. **Investigation** - The headteacher (or senior leader if the headteacher is implicated) will:
 - Investigate the complaint thoroughly
 - Interview relevant parties
 - Review relevant documents and records
 - Consider all evidence impartially
3. **Response** - You will receive a written response within **15 school days** (or sooner if possible) setting out:
 - Findings of the investigation
 - Conclusions reached
 - Any actions to be taken
 - Your right to escalate to Stage 2 if you remain dissatisfied

If the complaint is about the headteacher:

- Address your complaint to: The Chair of the Board of Directors, c/o St. Andrews Samakee International School, [address]
- The Chair (or designated director) will investigate and respond following the same timescales

STAGE 2 - Complaint to the Board of Directors

If you are dissatisfied with the Stage 1 response, you may escalate your complaint to the Board of Directors.

How to escalate:

- Write to: The Chair of the Board of Directors, c/o St. Andrews Samakee International School, [address]
- State clearly that you wish to escalate your complaint to Stage 2
- Explain why you are dissatisfied with the Stage 1 response
- Do this within **10 school days** of receiving the Stage 1 response

St. Andrews International School Samakee

What will happen:

1. **Acknowledgment** - The Chair will acknowledge your complaint within **3 school days**
2. **Review** - The Chair (or designated director) will:
 - Review all documentation from Stage 1
 - May meet with you to discuss your concerns
 - May conduct further investigation if necessary
 - Consider whether the complaint was handled appropriately at Stage 1
3. **Response** - You will receive a written response within **15 school days** setting out:
 - Findings of the review
 - Whether the Stage 1 investigation was thorough and fair
 - Any additional actions to be taken
 - Your right to request a panel hearing (Stage 3) if you remain dissatisfied

STAGE 3 - Complaints Panel Hearing

If you remain dissatisfied after Stage 2, you may request a panel hearing.

How to request a panel hearing:

- Write to: The Chair of the Board of Directors, c/o St. Andrews Samakee International School, [address]
- State that you wish to escalate your complaint to a panel hearing
- Do this within **10 school days** of receiving the Stage 2 response

What will happen:

1. **Acknowledgment and Arrangements** - The Chair will:
 - Acknowledge your request within **3 school days**
 - Convene a complaints panel within **20 school days**
 - Write to you with details of the hearing including date, time, location
 - Explain the panel procedure
 - Invite you to submit any additional written evidence
 - Inform you of your right to be accompanied by a friend or representative
2. **The Panel** will consist of:
 - At least **three people** who have not been directly involved in the complaint
 - At least **one member** who is independent of the management and running of the school
 - A **chair** who will manage the hearing impartially
3. **Before the Hearing:**
 - You will receive copies of all relevant documents at least **5 school days** before the hearing
 - You may submit written evidence
 - You may bring witnesses (please notify the school in advance)
 - You may be accompanied by a friend or representative (not acting in a legal capacity)
4. **At the Hearing:**
 - The chair will introduce the panel and explain the procedure

St. Andrews International School Samakee

- You will be invited to present your complaint and any evidence
 - The panel and headteacher may ask you questions
 - The headteacher will respond to the complaint and present evidence
 - You and the panel may ask the headteacher questions
 - Both parties may call witnesses
 - You will have the opportunity to make a final statement
 - All parties except the panel and clerk will leave while the panel considers its decision
5. **The Panel's Decision:**
- The panel will write to you within **10 school days** of the hearing with:
 - Findings on each aspect of the complaint
 - Recommendations for action (if appropriate)
 - Reasons for the decision
 - A copy will be sent to the headteacher and made available to the Board of Directors
 - **The panel's decision is final** and represents the school's final response to your complaint
-

7. Timescales

We are committed to resolving complaints as quickly as possible. The timescales outlined above are our targets. If we need more time (for example, due to the complexity of the complaint or during school holidays), we will:

- Inform you of the delay
- Explain the reason
- Provide a revised timescale

School holidays: Please note that timescales refer to school days (term time). Complaints received during school holidays will be acknowledged within 3 school days of the start of the next term.

8. Recording and Monitoring Complaints

8.1 Record Keeping

We will keep written records of all formal complaints (Stage 1 and above), including:

- Date the complaint was received
- Name of complainant (unless anonymous)
- Details of the complaint
- Actions taken and by whom
- Outcomes and reasons

St. Andrews International School Samakee

- Correspondence with the complainant
- Any recommendations for improvement

Records will be kept confidentially and securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Retention: Complaint records will be kept for **6 years** from the date of resolution.

Access: Complainants may request access to records relating to their complaint under data protection legislation.

8.2 Monitoring and Learning

The headteacher will:

- Monitor complaints data to identify trends or recurring issues
- Report to the Board of Directors annually on:
 - Number and nature of complaints
 - Outcomes
 - Actions taken
 - Lessons learned
- Use complaints data to inform school improvement planning

9. Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled with sensitivity and discretion. Information about complaints will only be shared with those who need to know in order to investigate and resolve the matter.

The complainant's identity and details of the complaint will be kept confidential except where:

- Disclosure is necessary for the investigation
- There are safeguarding concerns (see section 10)
- Required by law

All parties involved in a complaint are expected to respect confidentiality.

10. Safeguarding

If at any stage a complaint raises safeguarding concerns about a child, the school's safeguarding

St. Andrews International School Samakee

procedures will take precedence.

The complaint will be referred immediately to:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Tabietha Sudhirak
- The headteacher Monica Sudhirak

The complainant will be informed that safeguarding procedures are being followed, but details may not be shared due to confidentiality requirements.

11. Vexatious, Persistent or Unreasonable Complaints

We are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially. However, we will not tolerate behaviour that is:

- Abusive, offensive or threatening
- Persistently unreasonable or makes excessive demands
- Designed to cause disruption or annoyance

If a complainant's behaviour becomes unacceptable, we may:

- Inform them in writing that their behaviour is unacceptable
- Request that contact is limited to written communication only
- Restrict their access to school premises
- Refuse to investigate further complaints about the same matter
- Seek legal advice or involve the police if behaviour is threatening

Serial complaints: If a complainant repeatedly raises the same issue after it has been through the full complaints procedure, we will:

- Inform them in writing that the matter is closed
 - Refuse to engage in further correspondence about the same issue
 - Direct them to external bodies if they remain dissatisfied
-

12. Withdrawal of Complaints

If a complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint at any stage, they should inform the school in writing. The school will confirm the withdrawal in writing and close the complaint file.

St. Andrews International School Samakee

13. Complaints About the Chair of Directors or the Board

If a complaint is about the Chair of Directors or the entire Board:

- The complaint should be addressed to: The Clerk to the Board of Directors, c/o St. Andrews Samakee International School, [address]
 - An independent investigator may be appointed
 - The complaint will be heard by an entirely independent panel
-

14. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Specific Requirements

For complaints about our EYFS provision, we will:

- Investigate written complaints relating to EYFS requirements within **28 days**
 - Provide the complainant with a written response outlining the outcome of the investigation and any action taken
 - Keep a record of all EYFS complaints and make this available to EDT or BSO inspectors on request
-

15. Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour

We expect all complainants to behave reasonably and treat staff with courtesy and respect. We will not tolerate:

- Aggressive, abusive or threatening behaviour (verbal or written)
- Physical violence or intimidation
- Vexatious or persistent complaints designed to harass
- Unreasonable demands or expectations
- Refusal to accept a decision or repeatedly raising the same issue

If a complainant behaves unreasonably, we may:

- Issue a warning about their behaviour
- Restrict contact to written communication only
- Limit contact to one designated member of staff
- Ban them from school premises
- Involve the police if behaviour is threatening or violent
- Take legal action if necessary

St. Andrews International School Samakee

16. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the headteacher and Board of Directors, or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
 - Significant issues arise from complaints
 - Best practice guidance is updated
-

17. Contact Information

To make a complaint or raise a concern:

Informal concerns:

- Your child's class teacher
- Phase Lead: [name and email]
- Headteacher: Monica, [email address], [phone number]

Formal complaints:

- Headteacher: Monica, [email address], [phone number]

Escalated complaints:

- Chair of the Board of Directors, c/o St. Andrews Samakee International School, [full address]

School address: St. Andrews Samakee International School [Full address] [Phone number] [Email address] [Website]

APPENDIX A: FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM

St. Andrews Samakee International School - Formal Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to the Headteacher (or Chair of Directors if your complaint is about the Headteacher).

Your Details:

St. Andrews International School Samakee

Name: _____

Relationship to school (e.g. parent, carer): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Pupil's Details (if applicable):

Name: _____

Class/Year Group: _____

Your Complaint:

Please provide full details of your complaint, including:

- What happened
- When it happened
- Who was involved
- What you have already done to try to resolve the issue

(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

What outcome are you seeking?

St. Andrews International School Samakee

Have you raised this concern informally? Yes No

If yes, who did you speak to and when?

Please attach any relevant documents or evidence.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

For office use only:

Date received: _____ Acknowledged by: _____ Date: _____
 _____ Complaint reference number: _____ Stage of procedure: _____

APPENDIX B: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES SUMMARY

Stage	Who Handles It	Timescale	Outcome
Informal	Class teacher, Phase Leader, or Headteacher	5 school days	Most concerns resolved
Stage 1	Headteacher (or senior leader if HT implicated)	Acknowledge: 3 days Respond: 15 days	Written response with findings and actions

St. Andrews International School Samakee

Stage 2	Chair of Directors (or designated director)	Acknowledge: 3 days Respond: 15 days	Written response reviewing Stage 1
Stage 3	Independent complaints panel	Panel convened: 20 days Decision: 10 days after hearing	Final written decision - binding on school
