Parents Complaint Procedure and Policy

Vision: Grow - Flourish - Succeed
Mission: Together we inspire creative, mindful learners who value diversity, support one another and strive for success.

1. Introduction

At GEMS Founders School, Dubai (GFS), we aim to address concerns and complaints swiftly and effectively. Any individual with parental responsibility for a student may raise a complaint if they are dissatisfied with any aspect of the school's service.

This procedure seeks to resolve issues informally whenever possible, ensuring an investigatory rather than adversarial approach at all stages

2. Aims and purposes

GFS is committed to addressing all concerns promptly, reducing the likelihood of them escalating into formal complaints.

- Academic Complaints: Concerns related to academics should be discussed with the relevant subject teacher, form teacher, or senior academic staff member.

- Non-Academic Complaints: Non-academic concerns should be directed to the Parent Relations Executive (PRE) or Manager of School Operations (MSO).

The goal at this stage is to resolve issues quickly and at their source, limiting unnecessary involvement from additional parties.

All complaints that require further action will be recorded, including the steps taken in response.
The aim at this stage is to resolve the complaint at source.

- It is likely that a problem will become more difficult to solve when more people become involved.
- All staff will hope to be able to resolve issues on the spot or if that is not possible through mediation. This should include advice, information, discussion and explanation.
- If concerns are taken directly to the Executive Principal or to other senior leaders, a parent may be asked if they have discussed their concerns with the relevant teacher and/or Head of Department, and should want to arrange a meeting to do that.
- The main priority is to resolve the matter quickly and calmly, involving just the people needed to help solve the problem.
- All complaints requiring action will be recorded and the action, taken in response, will also be recorded.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The responsibility for handling complaints lies with the school. Anonymous complaints will not be investigated unless they involve exceptional circumstances, such as serious child protection concerns or allegations of bullying, where external agencies may be involved.

4. Complaints process

PART A: Complaining about the actions of a member of staff

Informal Stage:
The complainant should first communicate directly with the relevant staff member by email, telephone, or in person. Most issues can be resolved through simple clarification or information sharing at this stage.

If the issue is not resolved, the complainant should then meet with the Head of Year (for academic issues) or the MSO (for non-academic issues). Refusal to attempt informal resolution may lead to termination of the complaint process.

Formal Stage:
If unresolved at the informal stage, the complaint must be submitted in writing to the Head of Year or PRE. A formal investigation will be conducted, and all formal complaints will be recorded in the School's Complaints Log.

The investigation will be completed within 10 school days. Upon conclusion, the complainant and staff member involved will be notified in writing of the outcome, which may include:

- Insufficient evidence to uphold the complaint.
- The concern is not substantiated by evidence.
- The concern is substantiated in part or in full, with appropriate actions taken (note that details of actions taken against individuals will remain confidential).
- The complainant will be told that consideration of their complaint by the Head of Year or PRE is now concluded.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed by the Head of Year or PRE, they may request a review by Deputy Head or MSO. Any such request should be made in writing and specifically state any perceived failures to follow the procedure.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed by the Deputy Head or MSO, they may request a review by Senior Deputy Head of Primary/Secondary, Head of Primary/Secondary or Vice Principal.

When it has been concluded, the complainant and member of staff will be informed in writing of the outcome.

Part B: Complaints regarding Senior Leadership

Informal Stage: For concerns related to a Deputy Head, Assistant Principal or Head of Primary/Secondary, the complainant is encouraged to speak directly with the individual. Should the issue persist, mediation may be arranged, provided both parties agree.

Formal Stage: If unresolved, the complaint should be submitted in writing to the Vice Principal, who will lead the investigation. Both the complainant and the staff member will be invited to present their evidence. Once the investigation is complete, both parties will be informed in writing of the outcome.

Complaints unresolved at this stage may be escalated to the Associate Principal.

Part C: Complaining regarding the Vice/Associate Principal

Informal Stage

Any complainant is usually expected to arrange to speak directly with the Vice/Associate Principal. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification of the provision of information.

If the matter is not resolved, if both parties agree, then a third party may be invited to act as a mediator at a further meeting. A refusal, unreasonably, to attempt an informal resolution may result in the procedure being terminated forthwith.

Formal Stage

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal stage the complainant must put the complaint in writing to the Executive Principal/CEO.

The written complaint should include all details that might assist the investigation. The complainant will be invited to meet with the Executive Principal/CEO to present oral evidence or to clarify the complaint.

The Executive Principal/CEO will collect such other evidence as is deemed necessary. This may include the interviewing of witnesses and others.

The Vice/Associate Principal will then be invited to meet with the Executive Principal/CEO, separately, to present any written or oral evidence in response. When the investigation has been concluded then the Vice/Associate Principal and the complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome.

Details of individual action taken in respect of a member of staff will not be given.

The complainant will be told that consideration of their complaint by the Executive Principal/CEO is now concluded.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, finds the decision perverse or believes that the Executive Principal/CEO has acted unreasonably then a request for a review can be made to the Chairperson of the Local Advisory Board, in writing, within 10 days of notice and include a statement specifying any perceived failures.

When it has been concluded, the complainant and member of staff will be informed in writing of the outcome.

The outcome will be one of the following:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so that the complaint cannot be upheld.
- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence.
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full. Details will then be given of any action the School may be taking in response to the complaint. Details of individual actions taken in respect of a member of staff or other student/parent will not be given.

- The matter has been fully investigated and appropriate procedures are being followed, which are strictly confidential.

Part D: Complaining about the actions of the Executive Principal/CEO

Informal Stage

Any complainant is usually expected to arrange to speak directly with the Chairperson of the Local Advisory Board.

Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification of the provision of information.

If the matter is not resolved, if both parties agree, then a third party may be invited to act as a mediator at a further meeting. A refusal, unreasonably, to attempt an informal resolution may result in the procedure being terminated forthwith.

Formal Stage

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal stage the complainant must put the complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Local Advisory Board.

The written complaint should include all details that might assist the investigation. The complainant will be invited to meet with the Chairperson of the Local Advisory Board to present oral evidence or to clarify the complaint.

The Chairperson of the Local Advisory Board will collect such other evidence as is deemed necessary. This may include the interviewing of witnesses and others.

The Executive Principal/CEO will then be invited to meet with the Chairperson of the Local Advisory Board separately, to present any written or oral evidence in response. When the investigation has been concluded then the Executive Principal/CEO and the complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome.

Details of individual action taken in respect of a member of staff will not be given.

The complainant will be told that consideration of their complaint by the Chairperson of the Local Advisory Board is now concluded.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, finds the decision perverse or believes that the Chairperson of the Local Advisory Board has acted unreasonably then a request for a review can be made to the Chief Education Officer, in writing, within 10 days of notice and include a statement specifying any perceived failures.

When it has been concluded, the complainant and member of staff will be informed in writing of the outcome.

The outcome will be one of the following:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so that the complaint cannot be upheld.
- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence.
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full. Details will then be given of any action the School may be taking in response to the complaint. Details of individual actions taken in respect of a member of staff or other student/parent will not be given.

- The matter has been fully investigated and appropriate procedures are being followed, which are strictly confidential.

Part E: Review Process

A panel of three members of the Local Advisory Board shall conduct any review of the process followed by the Chairperson of the Local Advisory Board or Vice President – Education.

The review will normally be conducted through the consideration of written submissions.

- The panel will be sympathetic to oral representations.
- The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant.
- The panel will then write to the Executive Principal/CEO, as appropriate, to make a response to the complainant.
- The panel will have access to the records kept of the process followed.
- The complainant, the Executive Principal/CEO, as appropriate, will be informed in writing of the outcome. This may be to the effect that:
- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld.
- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence.
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full but the procedural failure did not affect the outcome significantly so the matter is now closed.
- The concern was substantiated in part or in full and the Governing Body will take steps to prevent a recurrence or to rectify the situation, where this is practicable.

Note: The complainant is not allowed access to any details of the investigation. Any disciplinary procedures are strictly confidential.

An advisory note will be produced by the Executive Principal/CEO and concurred by the Chairperson of the Local Advisory Board for all colleagues and employees who might find themselves recipients of concerns/complaints.

5. Formal lines of communication.

GFS considers that any complaint should be made in a formal way via telephone, email or in person by appointment. We respectfully request that online platforms and the GFS Reception WhatsApp number not be used as a domain to make any kind of complaint.

GFS maintains Social Media accounts on Facebook and Instagram to promote the work of our wider community. We ask our parents to respect these as places where we celebrate our students' efforts and not considered as an avenue to raise any complaints.

6. Safeguarding Complaints

The school safeguarding team will be informed of any complaints that raise safeguarding concerns, these will be recorded on Guard and addressed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL). Any safeguarding-related allegations against adults should be reported to the DSL and will be addressed by an allegations manager from the safeguarding team.

7. Monitoring and review

This policy has been discussed and agreed by the GEMS Founders School, Dubai teaching staff and leadership teams for implementation.

Signed ..... Date .....22 August 2025.....
Whole School Vice Principal

Signed ..... Date .....22 August 2025.....
Associate Principal

Signed ..... Date .....22 August 2025.....
Executive Principal/CEO/Executive Vice President of Education

Next policy review date:
February 2026