

AHBS Communication & Complaints Policy

Introduction

AHBS is committed to good communication between home and school and to listening and being sensitive to the family's views and opinions. Our open and approachable ethos means that few, if any, complaints reach the 'formal' stage. We pre-empt situations escalating by being visible, high profile and accessible - and by being open, and adaptable to different points of view whilst strongly protecting our core values. Our families are regularly consulted, and know their feedback will always be constructively received and given due consideration.

The guiding principles behind the School Communication and Complaints Procedure are:

- Complaints made to the school will always be listened to and acted upon.
- Complaints will be investigated thoroughly, fairly and promptly.
- Complaints made about students or queries about classroom practice will normally be dealt with by their Form Advisor/Class teacher
- Complaints made by parents concerning an employee will be dealt with by a senior member of staff.
- If the complaint is directed at a senior member of staff, the Principal will deal with the matter directly.
- We aim to respond to concerns and queries informally and resolve them quickly, sensitively, and to the satisfaction of all concerned.
- The referral guidelines below showing to whom the issue can be referred should be followed
- Contact will be made with all complainants within two working days.

Referral Route

1	2	3	4
Subject matter, homework or the curriculum	Welfare issues, problems between pupils	School organisation, policies, staff conduct, serious issues	Staff issues
Class teacher	Class teacher		Head of School
Phase leader Head of School Principal	Phase leader Head of School Principal	Year group leader Head of Department Senior Leader of School Head of School Principal	Principal

Communication with Parents and the Community

Good communication is based on mutual respect. Teachers take care in all communications with parents both formal and informal, in the workplace and out of school. Communication is sent through Class Dojo in EYFS and Primary or iSAMS across the school. As a general rule, staff should avoid engaging in discussions about school issues outside of school as this may well be in breach of confidentiality.

Specialist teachers, including Arabic, should copy the appropriate class teacher into all communications with parents.

Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the procedure, efforts must be made to keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an acknowledgment that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint;

It may also be the case however that the complaint may not have any substance and is therefore considered to be unfounded or unsubstantiated.

Timescale

The school will make every effort to respond fully to a written complaint within 5 school days. Where this proves unrealistic, the school will inform the complainant in writing, and give some estimate of how long it will take to provide a detailed response. Contact will be made with all complainants within two working days. Complaints regarding school organisation, school policies, staff conduct and conduct of the Principal will follow a more formal route.

If there is a requirement for further investigation, complaints reach a formal stage.

i. Formal Complaints

Formal Complaints will be reviewed by the Principal, involving HR and ISP leadership as necessary. Interviews and statements taken from staff will be reviewed, together with any witness statements. Staff may opt to have a representative attend with them as they present their evidence. It may be necessary for a staff member to remain offsite until the information has been gathered as part of the investigation.

ii. Investigating Complaints

The Investigating Officer (as named by the Principal) should follow the process below:

- establish **what** has happened so far, and **who** has been involved;
- clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information necessary);
- clarify what the complainant feels would put things right;
- interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- conduct an interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keep notes of any interview for record.

iv. In Summary

Most complaints are best dealt with informally.

Formal Complaints are in writing. They will be dealt with by an individual nominated by the Principal.

GUIDANCE NOTE – INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS WITH PARENTS

All staff are reminded that when speaking with parents ensure that initial pleasantries are exchanged before moving on to the main topic of conversation. Staff should always try to be as empathetic, understanding, and courteous as possible.

Any concerns relating to individual pupils should be discussed with the Year Group Leader or Head of Department prior to any informal discussion with parents.

GUIDANCE NOTE – EMAIL COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

When a parent contacts a member of staff with a concern or query via email, the member of staff should reply within **24 hours** and ensure they **copy their reply to their Year group/ Phase leader**.

Where the Phase leader considers the matter warrants the attention of the Head of Primary/ Principal they should forward it directly.

Phase Leaders should copy their responses to the Head of Primary and where the Head of Primary deems it appropriate, a copy will be forwarded to the Principal.

GUIDANCE NOTE – MEETING REQUEST BY PARENT

Where a parent has requested a meeting with a member of staff, this request should be met at the earliest opportunity. Please notify your Phase Leader of the request, together with date and venue of meeting.

Following all meetings with parents, an email summarising the conversation and outcomes is sent via ISAMS.

