Complaints Procedure

At Hazrat Khadijatul Kubra Girls School

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1. Aims

"Indeed, Allah commands justice, excellence and generosity to relatives, and forbids immorality, wrongdoing and oppression." **(Qur'an 16:90)**

Hazrat Khadijatul Kubra Girls School is committed to handling concerns and complaints fairly, promptly and transparently. Complaints are viewed as an opportunity to resolve issues, strengthen relationships and improve the quality of education and care provided by the school.

In responding to complaints, the school aims to:

- Resolve concerns at the earliest possible stage.
- Treat all parties with courtesy, dignity and respect.
- Ensure complaints are considered fairly, impartially and confidentially.
- Conduct thorough and proportionate investigations.
- Provide timely, clear and reasoned responses.
- Keep complainants informed throughout the process.
- Ensure decisions are lawful, fair and reasonable.
- Use feedback and complaints to support continuous school improvement.

The school will make this policy readily available and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that all complainants can access the complaints process.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- Section 29 of the Education Act 2002.
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Part 7.
- Relevant guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE).
- Relevant guidance issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

The school will ensure that complaints are managed in accordance with statutory requirements and the principles of natural justice, fairness and transparency.

3. Definitions and Scope

Definitions

The Department for Education distinguishes between:

- A **concern**: an expression of worry or doubt for which reassurance or clarification is sought.
- A **complaint**: an expression of dissatisfaction regarding actions taken, or a failure to act.

The school encourages concerns to be raised and resolved informally wherever possible.

Scope

This policy applies to complaints relating to:

- Teaching and learning.
- Pastoral care and pupil wellbeing.
- Behaviour and conduct.
- Communication with the school.
- The implementation of school policies.
- School services, activities and educational provision.

This policy does not apply to matters covered by separate statutory procedures, including:

- Admissions.
- Special Educational Needs and Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessments.
- Safeguarding and child protection matters.
- Suspension or permanent exclusion.
- Whistleblowing.
- Staff grievances or disciplinary matters.

Complaints relating to services provided by third-party organisations using school premises should be directed to the relevant provider.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Complainant

The complainant is expected to:

- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy.
- Provide sufficient information to enable the complaint to be investigated.
- Cooperate with reasonable requests for information or meetings.
- Treat all parties involved with courtesy and respect.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the complaints process.

4.2 The Investigator

The investigator will:

- Establish the facts relating to the complaint.
- Meet with relevant parties and review appropriate evidence.
- Maintain accurate and confidential records.
- Provide findings and recommendations to the Headteacher or Complaints Panel, where appropriate.

4.3 The Complaints Coordinator

The Complaints Coordinator will normally be the Headteacher or a nominated Trustee and will:

- Manage the administration of the complaints procedure.
- Act as the main point of contact for the complainant.
- Ensure complaints are handled fairly and within the stated timescales.
- Maintain confidential records and ensure appropriate information sharing.
- Make reasonable adjustments to support access to the complaints process where required.

4.4 Trustees and Complaints Panel

Where a complaint reaches the formal stage, Trustees will:

- Ensure the complaints procedure has been followed appropriately.
- Arrange and conduct a fair and impartial complaints hearing where required.
- Ensure all parties have an opportunity to present their views.
- Consider the evidence presented and reach a reasonable decision.
- Communicate the outcome and any recommendations in writing.

5. Principles of Investigation and Timescales

The school will investigate complaints fairly, impartially and proportionately, seeking to establish the relevant facts and achieve a reasonable resolution.

Complaints should normally be raised within three months of the incident or, where there is a series of related incidents, within three months of the most recent incident. The school may consider complaints outside this timeframe where exceptional circumstances apply and a fair investigation remains possible.

Complaints received during school holidays will be deemed received on the next school day.

The school will aim to resolve complaints promptly and within the timescales set out in this policy. Where this is not reasonably possible, the complainant will be informed of the delay, the reasons for it, and the revised timescale.

6. Complaints Procedure

6.1 Stage 1: Informal Resolution

The school encourages concerns to be raised and resolved informally wherever possible.

Concerns should be discussed with the relevant member of staff or the Headteacher as soon as possible, either in person, by telephone or in writing.

The school will normally acknowledge concerns within **5 school days** and aim to resolve them within **14 school days**.

Where a concern cannot be resolved informally, the complainant may proceed to Stage 2.

6.2 Stage 2: Formal Complaint

A formal complaint should be submitted in writing to the Headteacher, setting out the nature of the complaint and the outcome sought.

The Headteacher, or an appropriate member of staff acting on their behalf, will investigate the complaint and provide a written response.

The school will normally:

- Acknowledge the complaint within **5 school days**.
- Complete the investigation and provide a written outcome within **14 school days**.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request that the complaint be considered by a Complaints Panel.

6.3 Stage 3: Complaints Panel

Where a complainant remains dissatisfied following Stage 2, they may request a review by a Complaints Panel.

The panel will consist of at least **three individuals not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint**, including **at least one independent panel member**.

The panel will:

- Consider all relevant documentation and evidence.
- Provide all parties with a fair opportunity to present their views.
- Review whether the complaint has been handled fairly and appropriately.
- Reach a decision and determine any recommendations.

The panel may:

- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part.
- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.
- Recommend actions to resolve the complaint or improve school practice.

The panel's decision will be communicated in writing and will conclude the school's complaints procedure

7. Complaints Against the Headteacher or Trustees

Where a complaint concerns the Headteacher or a Trustee, it should be submitted to the Chair of Trustees.

The complaint will be investigated by an impartial individual who has had no prior involvement in the matter. Where appropriate, an independent investigator may be appointed.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the investigation, they may request that the matter be considered by a Complaints Panel in accordance with Stage 3 of this procedure.

8. Complaints Beyond the School

If a complainant remains dissatisfied after completing the school's complaints procedure, they may refer concerns regarding regulatory compliance to the Department for Education (DfE).

Information on how to do this can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school

9. Managing Unreasonable Complaints

The school is committed to considering all complaints fairly and respectfully.

Where a complainant's behaviour becomes unreasonable, abusive, threatening, repetitive or vexatious, the school may implement proportionate measures to manage communication while ensuring that any new concerns are appropriately considered.

Any incidents involving harassment, aggression or threatening behaviour may be reported to the relevant authorities.

10. Record Keeping

The school will maintain confidential records of complaints, investigations, correspondence and outcomes in accordance with data protection legislation and the school's records retention procedures.

Records will be stored securely and shared only where legally required or permitted.

11. Learning from Complaints

The school values feedback and will review themes arising from complaints to identify opportunities for improvement in policy, practice and provision.

12. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner where changes in legislation, guidance or school practice require.

The Headteacher and Board of Trustees are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the complaints procedure.

13. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Admissions Policy
- SEND Policy and Information Report
- Behaviour Policy
- Data Protection and Privacy Notices
- Staff Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures