



Durham School for Girls

COMPLAINTS POLICY

SEP 2025

Reviewed By | Jo Hayward - Principal

VALUES

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DURHAM GIRL



Introduction

Durham School for Girls has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents or pupils do have a complaint (other than in relation to a disciplinary matter which is the subject matter of a separate procedure), they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure. N.B. This procedure does not apply to any complaints pertaining to school exclusions.

What constitutes a complaint

For the purposes of this Policy, a complaint by a parent(s) or pupil(s) will either be; (i) An issue raised by a parent or pupil which they explicitly state that they wish to be treated as a complaint, or; (ii) An issue raised by a parent or pupil which is escalated to a member of the Senior Leadership Team because it has not been able to be resolved by other members of staff. In these circumstances, this will be recorded as a complaint, even if the parent has not explicitly requested it.

A complaint may be made about the School as a whole, about a specific department in the School or about an individual member of staff.

Dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. Parents can be reassured that we listen to them and take them seriously. If you are in any doubt about whether a complaint should be passed on, please do contact your child's Form Tutor, Class Teacher, Head of Year or the Principal's PA in the first instance to discuss the matter.

Recording Complaints

A written record of all concerns and complaints that cannot be resolved informally will be made and, where applicable, may include the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of Parent
- Name of Pupil
- Brief statement of issue
- Location of file (if applicable)
- Staff member handling the issue
- Brief statement of outcome

The written record will record action taken by the school regardless of whether a complaint is upheld.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

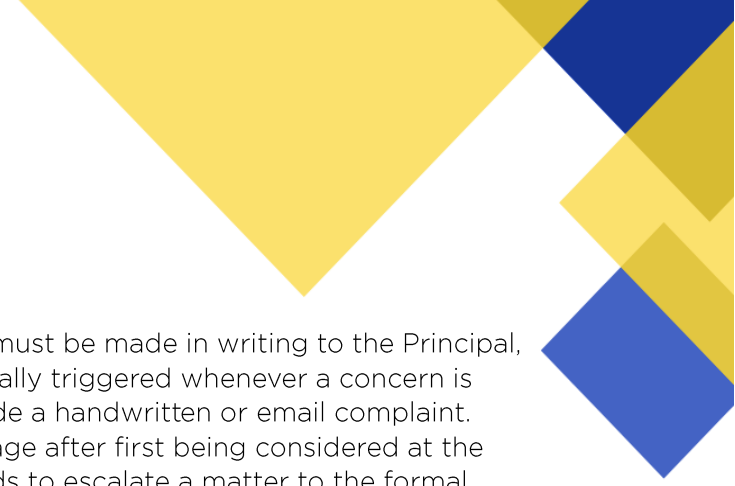
- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- All members of staff are encouraged to deal with a parental or pupil concern that lies within their area of responsibility. However, if parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's subject teacher, class teacher or form tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the person cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult either a Head of Department, Head of Year or one of the Deputy Heads.
- Complaints made directly to a Head of Department, one of the Senior Leadership Team or the Principal will usually be referred to the relevant class teacher, subject teacher, or form tutor unless that person deems it appropriate for them to deal with the matter personally.
- The class teacher, form tutor, or subject teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within five working days or in the event that the class teacher, form tutor, or subject teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

*'working days' shall mean working days during school term time.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Principal. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- In most cases, the Principal or another senior member of staff will meet / speak to the parents or pupils concerned, normally within 5 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. During the holiday period, complaints will be dealt with as swiftly as possible, but absence of staff may well lead to delays.
- If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for further investigations to be carried out.
- Once the School is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parent will be informed of this decision in writing. This will be within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint during term time and 15 working days during the holiday period.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

If a complaint is made during the holiday period, every effort will be made to adhere to the timescale above and parents will be kept fully informed if this is not possible due to the



unavailability of staff. Although all formal complaints must be made in writing to the Principal, this does not mean that the formal stage is automatically triggered whenever a concern is expressed in writing to the Principal, which may include a handwritten or email complaint. Complaints will usually only progress to the formal stage after first being considered at the informal stage and only then if the complainant intends to escalate a matter to the formal stage. If the Head is contacted directly by a parent with an initial complaint or concern, they may ask a Deputy Head or Head of School to deal with the matter in the first instance in line with the informal Stage 1 process.

Should the formal complaint relate to the Principal, the complaint should be addressed to the School's Proprietor on behalf of iSP – Kam Bhamra at jmatina@ispschools.com

Alternatively, If a parent feels that their complaint has not been dealt with sufficiently and appropriately through stage 1 and 2, it is then there is also the option to move to stage 3 and or contact the Ministry of Education Qatar on the Enquiry and Complaints portal on <https://privateschools.edu.gov.qa/Pages/home.aspx>

Stage 2b – Ministry Involvement

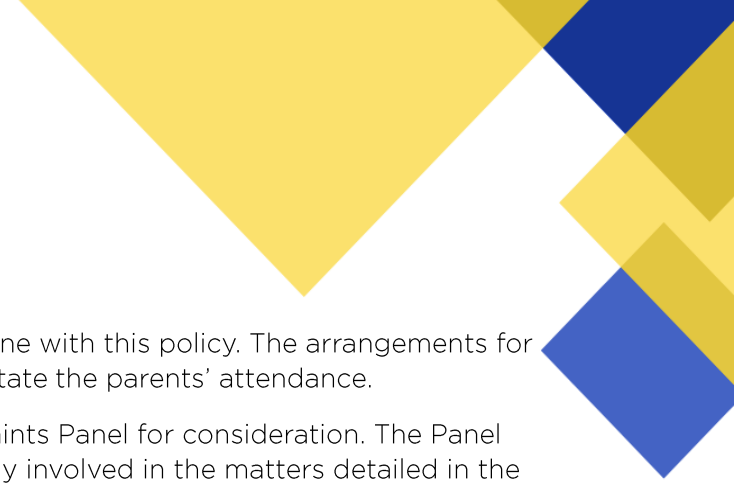
A parent at any time can complain directly to the Ministry. Although the policy of the Ministry of Education is for parents to complain using the portal, complaints can be received in person directly to the MOE.

In either instance the following procedure is adhered to.

1. The Ministry will inform the school of a complaint been made.
2. If the parent hasn't previously contacted the school about the complaint, policy is that parents are advised to do so in the first instance, following the above procedures.
2. If deemed to be valid and not investigated previously, either a visit or an email is sent to the school with the complaint made, with evidence asked for.
2. The school must end a full report with attached evidence to support or deny this claim. This must be sent in Arabic and through the school MOE email.
3. If felt the claim from the parent has been upheld, the school will receive an official warning. – This warning can be a record for the school, or further sanctions can be imposed from the MOE at this time.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Complaints Committee who have been authorised to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. A panel hearing will take place unless the parent(s) later indicates that they are now satisfied and do not wish to proceed further. If a parent does not exercise the right to attend a panel hearing, this does not remove



the School's obligation to hold the hearing in line with this policy. The arrangements for the hearing will be reasonable in order to facilitate the parents' attendance.

- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be not only outside the School's workforce and not a member of the School's Board, but also not involved with the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Committee. The Principal's PA, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 15 working days.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 5 working days prior to the hearing. At this stage, this will be a full-merits hearing of the complaint, not merely a judicial review style check that process was followed.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing. This may be by relatives, teachers or friends. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. It must be noted that parents' right to request and attend a panel is not forfeit because they have threatened or initiated legal proceedings.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 5 working days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations, will be sent in writing to the parents, the Principal, the School's Board and, where relevant, the person complained about.

Confidentiality

Parental complaints or concerns will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of the complaint or concern will be limited to the Principal and those directly involved. It is the school's policy that complaints made by parents will not rebound adversely on their children in any way. We cannot, however, entirely rule out the need to make relevant third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police or other organisations. Before this happens, the parent making the complaint would be fully informed.

The number of complaints received during an academic year will be notified to parents on an annual basis



When repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this can be regarded as outside of the scope of this policy.

A complaint raised in relation to a child who has left the school will not fall under the scope of this procedure and will be dealt with in line with current guidelines or legislation depending on the nature of the complaint. Parents are therefore advised to raise any issues with the school in a timely manner so that it can be addressed and resolved promptly.



DURHAM SCHOOL COMPLAINTS

Date	
Complaint From	
Name of student (if different to above)	
Nature of Complaint	
Action taken by	
Action Taken	
Outcome	
Signature	
Date	