



# Escalation Policy 2021 – 2022



مدرسة جيمس متروبول  
GEMS Metropole School  
MOTOR CITY

<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Mr. Naveed Iqbal</b>
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All throughout these documents the schools known as GEMS Metropole School will be referred to as 'MTS' for short.

## Parent Escalation Policy

### 1. Purpose of Policy and Guiding Principles

1.1. This policy is intended as a good practice guide applying to most general complaints which the school is likely to receive from parents.

1.2. The purpose of this policy is to address and resolve parental concerns and complaints. The aim of this complaints procedure is to:

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- be easily accessible and publicised;
- be simple to understand and use;
- be impartial and non-adversarial;
- allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- respect confidentiality;
- address the concerns raised and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary; and
- Provide information to senior leaders about where improvements can be made.

There are separate procedures for complaints about:

- the provision of religious education and collective worship;
- the School special needs assessments;
- allegations of abuse;
- financial improprieties;
- other criminal activities;
- Contracted staff.

### 2. Links with Other Policies or Legislation

2.1. The school is required by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) to have a complaints procedure.

### 3. Raising a concern; Guidelines for dealing with concerns and complaints informally

3.1. The vast majority of concerns and complaints can be resolved informally. There are many occasions where concerns are resolved straight away through the Tutor, School HOD/Y (depending on the type of concern), Administration staff, Pastoral staff, Senior Leader, Principal's PA, PRE, etc.



3.2. Parents must feel able to raise a concern with members of staff without any formality, either in person, by telephone or in writing. On occasions it may be appropriate for someone to act on behalf of a parent. At first it may be unclear whether a parent is asking a question or expressing an opinion rather than making a complaint. A parent may want a preliminary discussion about an issue to help decide whether he or she wishes to take it further.

3.3. The normal response time to respond to these times is for an initial response or acknowledgement to be made within 24 hours. Where this is not possible, an explanation must be given for the reason for delay.

3.4. Members of staff dealing with these concerns should record the nature of the concern and step taken to resolve.

3.5. If the parent is not satisfied by the actions taken to resolve the issue they should follow the formal complaints process.

#### **4. Formal complaints**

4.1. It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The school has a three stage formal complaint process, and the fourth stage with the regulator.

4.2. As the Principal has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school they have responsibility for the implementation of a complaints system, including the decisions about their own involvement at various stages. One of the reasons for having various "stages" in a complaints procedure is to reassure complainants that their grievance is being heard by more than one person. The Principal will make arrangements to ensure that his/her involvement will not predominate at every stage of a particular complaint.

#### **4.3. Stage 1 – Complaint heard by a member of staff**

4.3.1. Parents have an opportunity for discussion of their concern with the appropriate member of staff (e.g. class teacher, coordinator, Heads of Schools or Principal's PA or the Parent Relations Executive) who clarifies with the parent the nature of the concern, and reassures them that the school wants to hear about it. The member of staff may explain to the parent how the situation happened. It can be helpful to identify at this point what sort of outcome the parent is looking for.

4.3.2. If the member of staff first contacted cannot immediately deal with the matter, s/he should make a clear note of the date, name, contact address and/or phone number.

4.3.3. Any member of staff will know how to refer, if necessary, to the person with responsibility for the particular issue raised by the parent. S/he will check later to make sure the referral has been successful.

4.3.4. On certain major issues, the Principal may decide to deal with concerns directly at this stage.

4.3.5. If the concern relates to the Principal, the parent is advised to contact the Chair of the Governing Body, via the Principal's PA.



4.3.6. The staff member dealing with the concern makes sure that the parent is clear what action (if any) or monitoring of the situation has been agreed, putting this in writing only if this seems the best way of making things clear.

4.3.7. Where no satisfactory solution has been found within 5 school days, parents are asked if they wish their concern to be considered further. If so they are given clear information, both orally and in writing, about how to proceed and about any independent advice available to them.

#### **4.4. Stage 2 – Complaint Heard by the Vice Principal or SLT**

4.4.1. At this stage it has become clear that the concern is a definite complaint. In some cases the Principal has already been involved in looking at the matter; in most cases however the complaint will be delegated to a senior leader to respond to.

**4.4.2.** The process at Stage 2, with more information on who will be involved and timescales included in **Appendix 1**.

4.4.3. If a complaint is against the action of a member of SLT, the Principal will designate another member of the Senior Leadership Team to investigate.

4.4.4. If a complaint is against the action(s) of the Principal, the Chair of the Governing Body should carry out the Stage 2 procedures.

#### **4.5. Stage 3 – Complaint heard by the Senior Appeal’s Panel**

4.5.1. If the complainant indicates, in writing, that they wish to appeal against the outcome of the investigation into their complaint, this is referred to an appeal panel.

4.5.2. It is important that this review is unprejudiced and impartial; therefore the school will ensure that at least one member of the Panel is independent. The review is the last stage of the internal complaints process and is not there to merely rubber stamp previous decisions.

Therefore, individual complaints should not be considered by the full panel as serious conflicts of interest can arise; for example in exceptional circumstances a complaint may result in disciplinary action against a member of staff, and Senior members may be required to give an unprejudiced hearing to an appeal by the member of staff concerned. Similarly some members might have knowledge of the problem which led to the complaint and would be unable to give unbiased consideration to the issue.

4.5.3. Many complaints are inevitably seen by parents as being “against” a particular member of staff and their actions. However, all complaints that reach this stage will have done so because the complainant has not been satisfied at the earlier stages of the procedure. Therefore it may be appropriate for the Senior Panel to consider the complaint is against the school rather than against the member of staff whose actions led to the original complaint.

#### **4.6 Stage 4 – External Appeal**

4.6.1. Any unresolved complaints can be referred to KHDA by the schools Principal for consideration & final decision.



## 5. Roles and responsibilities

### 5.1. The Role of the Principal

- 5.1.1. The Principal will ensure that staff are familiar with this policy and receive appropriate training in complaint handling.
- 5.1.2. The Principal will assign a member of SLT to deal with formal complaints.

### 5.2. The Role of the Governing Board (LAB)

- 5.2.1. The Governing Board will monitor complaints (nature and level) to review any improvements to current school processes or systems.
- 5.2.2. The Governing Board will convene an appeal panel for complaints under Stage 3 of the policy.

### 5.3. The Role of the employee/other staff

- 5.3.1. All staff should deal with complaints, queries or concerns from parents in a professional manner and in line with the timescales of this policy.
- 5.3.2. The PRE will keep a complaints log to record formal complaints.

## 6. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 6.1. The Governing Board will monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary. Complaints information shared with the whole Governing Board will not name individuals.
- 6.2. As well as addressing an individual's complaints, the process of listening to and resolving complaints will contribute to school improvement. When individual complaints are heard, the school may identify underlying issues that need to be addressed. The monitoring and review of complaints by the school and the Governing Board can be a useful tool in evaluating the school's performance.

### Procedure at Stage 2

1. Vice Principal (or other member of SLT) acknowledges the complaint orally, or in writing, within 3 school days of receiving confirmation that the complaint is now to be dealt with at stage 2. The acknowledgement gives a brief explanation of the school's complaint procedure and a target date for providing a response to the complaint. This should normally be within 10 school days; if this proves impossible, a letter is sent explaining the reason for the delay and giving a revised target date.
2. The Vice Principal (or other member of SLT) provides an opportunity for the complainant to meet him/her to supplement information provided previously. It is made clear to the complainant that if s/he wishes, s/he may be accompanied to any meeting by a friend, relative, representative, or



advocate who can speak on his or her behalf; and that interpreting facilities are available if needed. This meeting should be minuted.

3. If necessary, the member of SLT should interview witnesses and take statements from those involved. If the complaint centres on a student, the student should also be interviewed. Students would normally be interviewed with parents/guardians present. In some situations circumstances may prevent this e.g. where this would seriously delay the investigation of a serious/urgent complaint or where particular circumstances mean that a student has specifically said s/he would prefer that parent/guardians were not involved. In such circumstances another member of staff with whom the student feels comfortable may be asked to attend. If a member of staff is complained against, the needs of that person should be borne in mind.

4. The Vice Principal or member of SLT keeps written records of meetings, telephone conversations, and other documentation. Once all the relevant facts have been established, the Vice Principal or member of SLT should then produce a written response to the complainant to discuss/resolve the matter.

5. A written response includes a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, this includes what action the school will take to resolve the complaint. The complainant is advised that should s/he wish to take the complaint further s/he should notify the Principal within two weeks of receiving the outcome letter.

### Procedure at Stage 3

Upon receipt of a written request by the complainant for the complaint to proceed to stage 3, the procedures outlined below should be followed:

1. The Principal's PA should write to the complainant within 3 school days to acknowledge receipt of the written request. The acknowledgement should inform the complainant that the complaint is to be heard, within 7 school days of receiving the complaint. The letter should also explain that the complainant has the right to submit any further documents relevant to the complaint. These must be received in time for the documents to be sent to the three members of the Panel.
2. The Principal's PA should arrange to convene a Complaints Panel and ensure that at least one member of the Panel is independent. The Panel members should include the Principal, Governors and one independent Panel member. All Panel members should have had no prior involvement with the complaint. The Chair or Vice-Chair of the Governing Board should chair the Panel. If s/he has previously been involved, a Chair must be elected for this purpose. The Panel will want to bear in mind the advantages of having a parent (who is also a Governor) on the Panel. The Panel will also be sensitive to equality issues.
3. The Chair of the Panel will ensure that the complaint is heard by the Panel within 7 school days of receiving the letter. All relevant correspondence regarding the complaint should be given to each Panel member when the composition of the Panel is confirmed.
4. The Chair of the Panel will write and inform the complainant, Principal, any relevant witnesses and members of the Panel at least 5 school days in advance, of the date, time and place of the meeting. The notification to the complainant should also inform him/her of the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend/advocate/interpreter. The letter will also explain how the meeting will be conducted.



5. The Chair of the Panel should invite the Principal (or other SLT member who responded to the complaint at Stage 2), to attend the Panel meeting and prepare a written report for the Panel in response to the complaint. The SLT member may also invite members of staff directly involved in matters raised by the complainant to respond in writing, or in person, to the complaint. Any relevant documents including the Investigating staff's report should be received by all concerned, including the complainant, at least 5 school days prior to the meeting.
6. The involvement of staff other than the Principal is subject to the discretion of the Chair of the Panel.
7. It is the responsibility of the Principal's PA (Clerk to the Panel) to ensure that the meeting is properly minuted.
8. The aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it has to be recognised that sometimes it may only be possible to establish facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has at least been taken seriously.
9. The Panel should remember that many parents are unused to dealing with groups of people in formal situations and may feel inhibited when speaking to the Panel. It is therefore recommended that the Chair of the Panel ensures the proceedings are as informal as possible.
10. If either party wishes to introduce previously undisclosed evidence or witnesses, it is in the interests of natural justice to adjourn the meeting so that the other side has time to consider and respond to the new evidence.
11. The meeting should allow for:
  - The complainant to explain their complaint
  - Panel to question the complainant
  - The Principal to explain the school's response
  - The Panel to question the Vice Principal and/or other
  - Members of staff about the school's response
  - Any party to have the right to call witnesses (subject to the approval of the Chair)
  - Final statements by both the complainant and the Principal.
12. The Chair of the Panel will explain to all concerned that the Panel will now consider its decision, and a written decision will be sent to both parties within 4 school days (14 days in total).
13. The Panel will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and (a) reach a unanimous, or at least a majority, decision on the complaint and (b) decide upon the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint and (c) where appropriate, suggest recommended changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again.
14. The written statement outlining the decision of the Panel must be sent to the complainant and Principal. The letter to the complainant should explain whether a further external appeal (stage 4) can be made, and if so, to whom (KHDA). If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the panel then they can request in writing to have their case referred to the Knowledge and Human Development Authority. The panel will then forward ALL documentation to the KHDA and request their judgement on the case. The panel will then wait for such a decision and act accordingly. If the



panel does not agree with such a decision then they reserve the right to appeal in accordance with the law of UAE and governance.

15. The school should ensure that a copy of all correspondence and notes are kept. These records should be kept separately from the student's personal records.

**Everyone should be aware of how to direct parents when they ask to see someone in the school to ensure maximum effectiveness of this policy and the efficiency of proper customer services. The following is the Escalation Procedure for staff members to follow when they have received a complaint or query from a parent:**

Transportation, Canteen or any Operational matters: [Operations Manager](#)

Registration and Admissions: [Registrar & Admission Secretary](#)

KHDA Matters: [KHDA Coordinator](#)

Accounts or Fees: [Accountant & Cashier](#)

Lateness, Absences or any Student Service Matters: [Data Manager](#)

If the matter is general classroom happenings: the [Class Teacher](#) should be contacted. This can happen using the Student Planner and GEMS Connect or via email.

After these people have been spoken to and if the matter has not been dealt with to the parent's satisfaction, please refer to the following structure, no matter the issue:

If the student is in EYFS: [Head of FS1, Head of FS2, or Deputy Heads](#)

If the student is in Primary: [Head of Year, Assistant Heads, or Deputy Heads](#)

If the student is SEN: [Head of Inclusion](#)

If the matter is specific to Curriculum, the [Heads of Departments and Head of Schools \(HOS\)](#) should be involved.

After these steps have been taken, then you may contact the School Vice Principal. If s/he is unable to resolve the issue then s/he must escalate it and email the Personal Assistant to School Principal or PRE to request a meeting for the Principal and the parent at [h.rimawi\\_mts@gemsedu.com](mailto:h.rimawi_mts@gemsedu.com).

In every meeting between parents and School Leaders, minutes should be taken and the minutes emailed to all parties within 3 business days. Copies of the minutes should be kept when the meeting involves parents and school. One copy in the student's folder with Registration and one copy with the staff person that lead the meeting. If the issue is further escalated, the minutes should go to the next person in line of escalation, giving that person a way of reviewing what has already been discussed.

When you have received a query from a parent and are unsure of the answer, inform the parent the parent that you do not wish to give them incorrect information so you will check for that answer and reply back to them within 2 business days. Keep track of the calls that you will need to make and the information you are giving out as well as the nature of the queries.





# Four Stage School Escalation Process

## Informal Complaint

concerns are resolved through the classroom/Lead teacher & HOD/ HOY / Manager (depending on the type of concern)



If the parents are not satisfied by the actions taken, they should follow the school formal complaints process



## Stage 1 Formal Complaint

Parents can discuss their concern with the appropriate member of staff or email the Parent Relations Executive [h.rimawi\\_mts@gemsedu.com](mailto:h.rimawi_mts@gemsedu.com)



When no satisfactory solution has been found within 5 working days, parents are asked if they wish for their concern to be considered further



## Stage 2 SLT involvement

Vice Principal (or other member of SLT) acknowledges the complaint orally, or in writing and makes sure the complaint is resolved within 10 working days. All complaints are logged on PULSE (Parent Feedback Portal) for review and follow up.

If the complainant wishes to take the complaint further s/he should notify the Principal within two weeks of receiving the outcome letter

The panel will then consider the complaint and decide upon the appropriate actions taken to resolve the complaint.

## Stage 4 External Appeal

Any unresolved complaints can be referred to KHDA by the schools Principal for consideration & final decision.

## Stage 3 Senior Appeal's Panel

The Principal's PA should arrange a complaints panel. The panel members should include the Principal and LAB (Local Advisory Board). Complaint to be handled within 7 working days



If the parent wishes to take the complaint further, s/he shall notify the panel within two weeks of receiving the appeal outcome.

