



ALOHA COLLEGE

Complaints Policy

Policy Leaders: Principal – Elizabeth Batchelor	Checked by: Human Resources Officer– Maria Galvez	Authorised by: Chair of Board – Rosa Gómez
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Complaints Policy



POLICY AIM

The majority of issues raised by parents, pupils or the community are concerns rather than complaints. The school is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. The prime, aim of the school's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible.



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The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints;
This Complaints Policy has three main stages;

- **Stage 1** – A concern is raised with a classteacher, subject teacher, Head of Department/Head of Sixth Form, member of Leadership / Headteacher, Principal.
- **Stage 2** – Formal complaint is heard by Chair of Governors
- **Stage 3** – Complaint is heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel.

POLICY PROCEDURE

Stage 1 – Raising a concern

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will usually result in a speedy response, which will resolve the concern. The school requests that parents make their first contact with a Tutor/Subject Teacher or a member of the Leadership Team. They may report serious concerns in writing to the appropriate Head of Section or to the Principal. In the event of it being a financial issue, Health and Safety, food, transport or premises the concern must be raised firstly with the Business Manager.

Sometimes the concern raised will require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an initial response within five working days and, if required, a subsequent substantive response.

The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However if a parent is not satisfied with the result at stage 1, they can write to the Chair of Governors within 10 school working days as set out below.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

If a parent wishes to make a formal complaint, they can write to the Chair of Governors stating their intention. The letter can be placed in a sealed envelope addressed to the chair, marked confidential and handed in to the Main Reception. The letter should state details of the complaint. The Chair will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and will then investigate the complaint with the school.

The investigation will be undertaken by the chair or a person appointed by the chair and acting on the chair's behalf. The nature of investigation will vary according to the complaint but **will** involve:

- Establishing **what** has happened so far, **who** has been involved and what action has been taken to date;
- conducting the investigation with an open mind.
- keeping notes of the investigation.

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The chair or the designated person will write to the complainant following the investigation and will outline his findings within 10 working school days.

If the parent remains dissatisfied they will need to let the school know within 10 school working days of receiving the chair's findings on the complaint. The complaint will then be received by a panel of the remaining governors.

Stage 3 – Formal Complaint

The final stage will involve a panel of Governors, and the last school-based stage of the complaints process. The aim of the appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and will aim to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. The hearing will normally take place within 10 school working days of the receipt of the written request. The panel will consider the chair's investigation and report and will also consider the representations of the complainant. All parties will be notified of the panel's decision in writing within three school working days after the date of the hearing. The decision of the Full Board of Trustees is final.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential excepts in so far as is required of the School by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

A parent reserves the right to challenge the decision of the Board of Trustees in a Court of Law.



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DEALING WITH UNREASONABLE, SERIAL OR PERSISTENT COMPLAINTS.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Principal will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking against the complaint.

If the behaviour continues the Principal will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Aloha College, causing a significant level of disruption, the school may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include barring an individual from Aloha College.

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COMPLAINANTS WHO BEHAVE IN AN UNACCEPTABLE WAY

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Schools will therefore act to ensure they remain a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of their community.

If a parent's behaviour is a cause for concern, a school can ask him/her to leave school premises. In serious cases, the Principal can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent may wish to make. Schools should always give the parent the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing.

The decision to bar should then be reviewed, taking into account any representations made by the parent, and either confirmed or lifted. If the decision is confirmed the parent should be notified in writing, explaining how long the bar will be in place.

Anyone wishing to complain about being barred can do so, by letter or email, to the Principal or Chair of Governors.