

COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION POLICY

POLICY FOR	Complaints Resolution
PERSON RESPONSIBLE	Head of School/Deputy CEO
REVIEW DATE	April 2024
REVIEWED BY	Assistant Principals and Head of School/Deputy CEO
APPROVED DATE	May 2024
APPROVED BY	Executive Principal / CEO
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	May 2025
RELATED POLICIES	Behaviour Policy, Grievance Policy, Employee Discipline.




Executive Principal / CEO

COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION POLICY

Declaration of Policy:

The Westminster School, Dubai (TWS) is committed to continuous improvement of academic and non-academic support services for its students and parents. The school also provides appropriate procedures to deal with complaints leading to positive resolution in almost all cases. Effective complaint resolution processes provide TWS with valuable opportunities to analyze recurring or persistent issues and ensure continuous development and improvement of services and student and parent satisfaction.

TWS has a commitment to make sure that all complaints are resolved in a quick, fair, equitable and humane manner and with due process. The school treats complaints seriously and aims to ensure all parties feel listened to and are treated with respect. The school will use its best endeavors to ensure a positive resolution is achieved.

Goal:

The TWS Complaints Resolution policy aims to reassure parents and any third party that:

- complaints against the school or its employees will be dealt with fairly and in an open and responsive way with the aim of achieving a quick and satisfactory resolution.
- the school is open and ready to listen to concerns and criticism and respond positively keeping in mind the welfare and the best interest of the students and staff/stakeholders in making decisions.
- transparency will be always adhered to through open communication with parents and staff.
- procedures are provided and followed which recognizes the rights of the complainant and the respondent with due process.
- steps and processes are consistently followed by people involved in handling and resolving conflicts.
- the process is accessible to all concerned dealing with the complaints and that they will be handled in an equitable and culturally sensitive manner
- system is in place to maintain confidentiality and secured records keeping
- feedback is provided equally to complainant and respondent.

Complaints Resolution Team (CRT):

Members of the Complaints Resolution Team are empowered to take the lead in resolving complaints using the protocols outlined in this policy. Members of the team have training in resolving complaints. The Complaints Resolution Teams consists of:



- Form Tutors (FT)
- Heads of House (HOH)
- Parent Relation Executives (PRE)
- Heads of Pastoral (HOP)
- Heads of Teaching Learning and Assessment (HTLA)
- Key Stage Leaders (KSL)
- Subject Leaders (SL)
- Assistant Principals (AP)
- STS Manager (for bus related complaints)
- Manager Schools Operation (MSO)
- Head of School/Deputy CEO
- Executive Principal/CEO

Role and Responsibilities of the Complaints Resolution Team (CRT):

Whether leading or involved in some other way with the resolution of a complaint the members of the CRT are expected to ensure that:

1. The three principles of justice of Independence, Impartiality and Integrity as outlined in the justice system of England and Wales are applied as well as those of justice, equality and the rule of law outlined in the Emirati Constitution. This asserts that all persons are treated equally 'without discrimination based on race, nationality, religious belief, or social status'.
2. The process used to handle and resolve complaints is fair, impartial and focused on achieving positive outcomes.
3. Complaints are treated confidentially and that information is only used for the purposes for which it was gathered.
4. Any barriers which deter or prevent students or complaints from accessing the complaints system are identified and appropriate action is taken to overcome them.
5. The complaint is handled in a timely manner with achievable deadlines clearly stated for each step in the resolution of the complaint.
6. The complaints policy is made available to all parties.
7. An initial response to the complaint is given within 2 working days
8. Appropriate written records of the complaint, investigation and outcome are kept.
9. Any recommendations or agreements that result from the process are implemented.



Reporting Process:

As an educational institution, there are different areas of service which may warrant complaints. The following process aims to ensure that the right person deals with the complaint at the correct level.

Informal complaints

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher or subject teacher. For other matters the Parent Relationship Executive (PRE) can be used. This can be achieved by:

- Writing a message to the teacher or PRE via email
- Telephoning the school to arrange a phone conversation with that member of staff
- Visiting the school to arrange an appointment with the teacher or PRE

It is essential that parents contact the relevant member of staff in the first instance. Parents should not escalate their concern to senior members of staff in the first instance as most problems can be resolved at a lower level. All staff are empowered to take decisions and will escalate an issue if they do not have the authority themselves. Staff or parents may escalate the concern according to the flow diagram below if the matter is not addressed in the first instance.

Should the problem not be resolved at the teacher level, then the complaint will be resolved using the levels in the flow diagram below.

If the complaint is about the Principal, and cannot be resolved directly with him, then the complainant may contact GEMS Education or the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA).

All complaints will be responded to initially within 2 working days of the complaint being made.

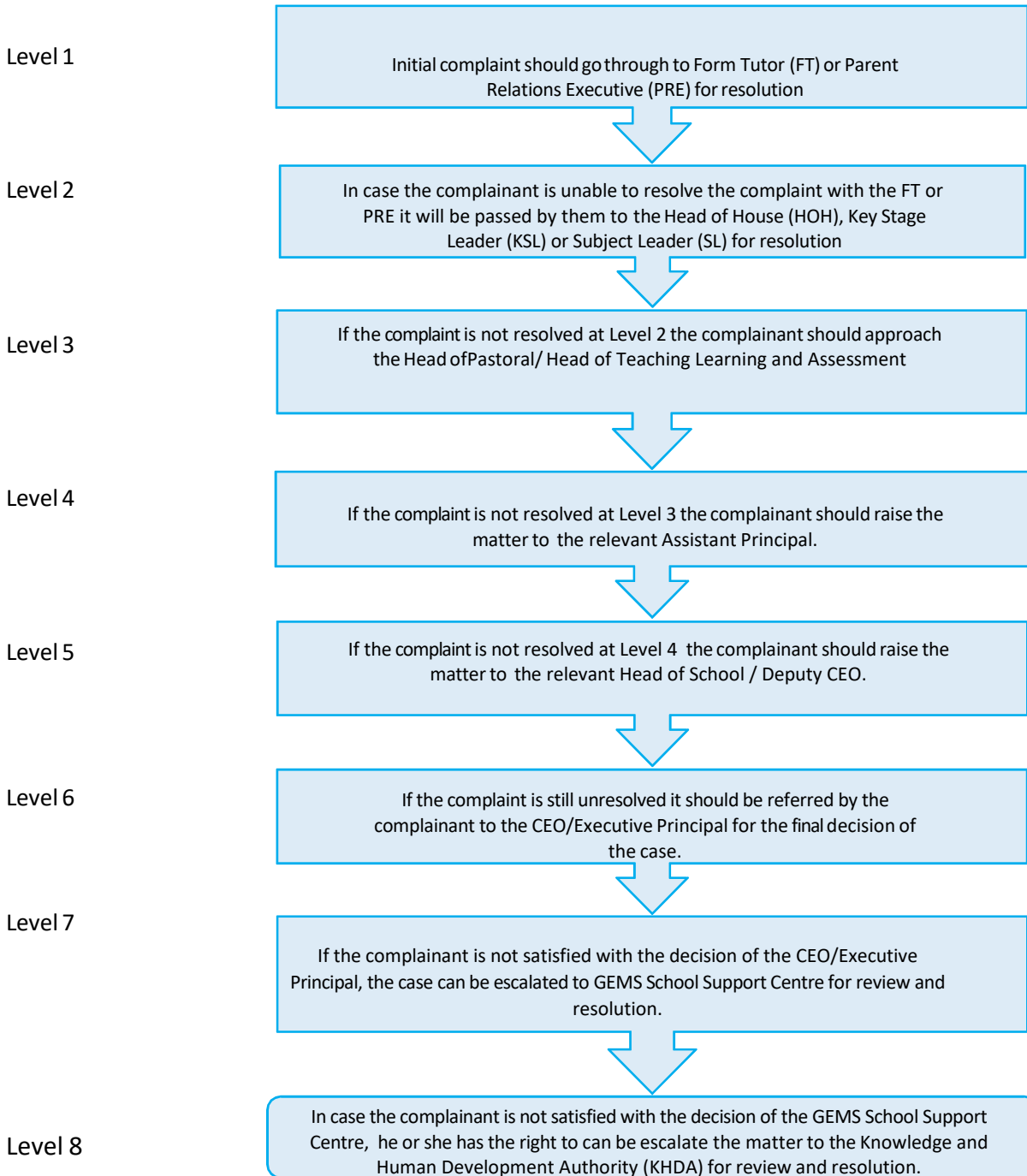
If the matter is not related to education or if the complainant is not a parent then the complaint must be made to the person responsible for that department by telephone, email or through an appointment. If the complainant is unsure of whom to refer the matter to then they can contact a school receptionist; refer to the parents' guide or refer to the school's website.

What to do if the matter is not resolved through informal discussion

Where a complainant feels that a situation has not been resolved through the process outlined below, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should call or make an appointment to discuss it with a member of the Executive Leadership Team in person (Levels 4-6 below). The Executive Leadership Team considers any such complaint seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.



An initial response to the complaint should be given within two working days and in most cases the investigation and outcome will be complete within five working days. Where a complaint is considered more complex and requires additional time for investigation, the lead investigator should inform the complainant in writing (either via email or letter) with the timeline. Transparency is an important factor in dealing with cases.



Most complaints are normally resolved at the informal stage.

Formal Complaints

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after Level 8, the school establishes a formal process by providing a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the Executive Principal/CEO. The panel will include at least three members who were not directly involved in the matter and will include at least one independent member. Complainants are allowed to attend the hearing and may be accompanied if they wish. The panel makes findings and recommendations, providing copies to the complainant and, where applicable, the person being complained about, with these documents also made available for inspection by the Executive Principal/CEO. The school maintains a written record of all formal complaints, noting whether they were resolved formally or proceeded to a panel hearing, along with actions taken as a result. All correspondence, statements, and records related to complaints are kept confidential unless disclosure is required by local laws.

Record Keeping:

The school will keep a written record of the incident, investigation and decision and attached to student file for future reference.

Confidentiality:

Concerns, complaints and records including the statements and correspondence of both parties will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Referral:

The Executive Principal / CEO may refer the respondent to GEMS School Support Centre for further investigation and resolution of the case if deemed necessary.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

Members of the Complaints Resolution Team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Complaint Resolution Policy annually. In case new legislation or guidance from GEMS School Support Centre, KHDA, UAE Ministry of Education or the Department for Education (UK), the policy will be amended in accordance with the policy and national law set forth. Should there be a conflict between UAE and UK law or guidance, UAE will prevail.



Appendix 1 – Appropriate people to hear complaints

At The Westminster School, Dubai parents, carers and other stakeholders may raise their concerns and difficulties about a range of matters. For a clearer understanding, key personnel and related functions are outlined:

Teacher, Head of House (HOH), Head of Pastoral (HOP), and Assistant Principal – Pastoral – Handle related complaints pertaining to SEND, Discipline, behaviour, mental health and wellbeing.

Teacher, Key Stage leaders, Heads of Teaching, Learning, and Assessments and Assistant Principals – Primary/Secondary – Handle complaints on academic issues.

Parent Relation Executive (PRE), and Manager Schools Operation (MSO) – Handle complaints pertaining to administration such as support staff, guards, contractual services and facilities.

Schools Transport Services (STS) Manager – handles complaints about bus services and STS employees (eg drivers)

Appendix 2: Procedures in Handling the Case:

1. Complainant will send the concern in writing addressed to concerned personnel stated above
2. An Investigating Officer from the Complaints Resolution Team (CRT) will be assigned and , if necessary, will conduct an investigation
3. Meetings will be conducted by the Investigating Officer for data gathering procedures on the complaints or allegations.
4. Complainant will be notified on the timeline, procedures and documents to be submitted to form part of the evidence as deemed necessary.
5. If an allegation is made against an employee, the complaint may lead to a staff disciplinary case held under the Staff Disciplinary Policy
6. The Executive Principal/ CEO decision is final although the complainant has the right to escalate the complaint to GEMS School Support Centre or KHDA for review and resolution.
7. Wherever possible the identity of both the complainant and respondent shall remain confidential. Where this is not possible the Investigating Officer will inform all parties before proceeding.
8. After investigating The Investigating Officer will draw a conclusion, make recommendations and initiate any actions required.
9. Written records of investigations, communication and outcomes will be kept on file for future review.



Complaints Resolution Form

Student Details	
Name of the Student	Computer ID:
Year / Section	
Name of the Parent	
Contact Number	
Email ID	
Complaint / Grievance received through	

Concern (please tick the below)			
Academics	Non-Academic	Pastoral	Operations

Please provide specific details of your complaint, including person/s involved and place.

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Date of the Incident		Approximate time of the incident	
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Did you discuss this matter with school staff? Yes, No. If yes, please specify the date(s) and the name of school staff?

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To be filled out by school staff:

Complaint Status			
Complaint Resolved: Yes / No			
Name		Designation	
Signature		Date	

Action Taken/Recommendation

Action Taken:

Name and signature of staff in-charge: _____ Designation: _____ Date: _____

Recommendation:

Name and signature of staff in-charge: _____ Designation: _____ Date: _____

To be filled out by school staff (Level 2 if required)

Complaint Status

Complaint Resolved: Yes / No

Name		Designation	
Signature		Date	

Action Taken/Recommendation

Action Taken:

Name and signature of staff in-charge: _____ Designation: _____ Date: _____

Recommendation:

Name and signature of staff in-charge: _____ Designation: _____ Date: _____



Note: This Policy is available In Arabic and Urdu upon request. Please contact the school PRE for assistance in accessing the translated version.



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