

Kuwait International English School



Whole School Complaints Policy

Kuwait International English School aims to provide the best educational experiences possible for all students. If parents have a concern about an aspect of their child's schooling, they are encouraged to follow the procedure in order for a quick and efficient resolution. This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Kuwait International English School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

There are 'informal' concerns and 'formal' complaints.

A 'concern' may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'. A complaint may be generally defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

It is in everyone's interest that complaints and concerns are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal procedures. Informal concerns are taken seriously and every effort is made to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. There are occasions when complainants would like to escalate the concern and have their concerns dealt with formally. In both cases, the school's procedure is invoked through the stages outlined within this procedure.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the Principal, Vice Principal or Head of Administration will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Principal, Vice Principal or Head of Administration will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern can be made in person, in writing or by telephone, a formal complaint must be made in writing. These concerns or complaints may also be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Complaints against school staff (except the Principal) should be made in the first instance, to the relevant Head of Department or Vice Principal. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints against Heads of Department or the Vice Principal should be made directly to the School Principal. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the School Principal should be addressed to the CEO of AL Rayan Holdings, via Al Rayan Head Office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Kuwait International English School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

Procedure:

Stage 1 (Informal Concerns)

- Informal concerns are usually minor issues that can be dealt with quickly and efficiently by the staff member.
- The parent should first approach the class teacher or form tutor for secondary, to address his / her concerns.
- If you do not feel that the problem has been dealt in a satisfactory manner, in Primary and Secondary there are Key Stage Coordinators to who will deal with your concerns.
- Concerns will be resolved by informal means, within school, wherever possible.
- After investigation, action is taken as far as possible to resolve the issue.
- The outcome of a concern is impartial.
- Informal concerns will be acknowledged by staff within 48 hours and resolved within a week, wherever possible.

Stage 2: (Escalated Concerns)

- If the complaint cannot be solved satisfactorily by the staff member / Key Stage Coordinator the complaint can be referred to the Senior Leadership Team of Secondary or Primary.
- Complaints will be acknowledged by Senior Staff within 24 hours and resolved within 5 working days, wherever possible.
- If the result is unsatisfactory to the complainant, the complaint can be taken to Stage 3.
- At this stage and onwards, complaints will be recorded formally.

Stage 3: (Direct Formal Complaints)

- If the parent feels the issue has not been dealt with at stage 2 or is of a more serious nature or would like to lodge a 'formal' complaint, this can be referred to the Vice Principal who will assess the validity of the complaint and either deal with it or pass it to the relevant member of staff. These complaints must be submitted in writing to the relevant member of staff.
- The Vice Principal will make provision to meet the complainant and discuss the issue.
- The Vice Principal will follow the school procedures to investigate the complaint or may empower a member of school senior staff to undertake the investigation.
- During the investigation, the Vice Principal (or investigator) will if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish. They will also keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.
- At the conclusion of their investigation, the Vice Principal will provide a formal written response within 5 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.
- If the Vice Principal is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.
- The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Kuwait International English School will take to resolve the complaint.

Stage 4: (Outcome of Formal Complaints)

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the issue, he or she is entitled to take the complaint directly to the School Principal.
- The School Principal will investigate the complaint and the outcomes of previous investigations. They will then make a ruling on the investigation & outcomes.
- The School Principal will follow the school procedures to investigate the complaint or may empower a member of school senior staff to undertake the investigation.

Appeals Process

If Complainants are not satisfied with how a complaint has been dealt with at school level, they may request their complaint be dealt with by Al Rayan Head Office or take their complaint to the Ministry of Education.

The School Principal will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigations & responses provided by the school.

A request to escalate to Head Office Level must be made in writing to Al Rayan Head Office within 2 weeks of receipt of the school stage response. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

A meeting will be organised with members of Al Rayan Head Office complaints committee. **This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.** A representative from Al Rayan Head Office will inform the complainant of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 2 weeks of receipt of the request. If this is not possible, the HO representative will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the representative will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

The complaints committee will consist of at least three representatives with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee.

The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

At least 7 school days before the meeting, a representative will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 5 school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 3 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from the school stage of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

Outcomes of Al Rayan Head Office complaints committee Meetings:

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and Kuwait International English School with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 14 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Ministry of Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Kuwait International English School. Thus giving the right of further appeal if necessary.

We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.

If at any stage the complainant starts legal action in relation to the issue, the process will cease and all further correspondence will be with the school's legal representative. Please note that the Head Office will not become involved in complaints unless the above procedure has been followed.

Anonymous complaints will usually be disregarded.

Time scales

You must raise the complaint within 4 weeks of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within 4 weeks of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Kuwait International English School other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

| Exceptions | Who to contact |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admissions to schools• Assessments of Special Educational Needs• School re-organisation proposals | Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with CEO – Al Rayan Holdings |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation | Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance of the Ministry of Education. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Officer (Miss Jihan Fahim or Mr David Mackenzie) or Designated safeguarding link at AL Rayan Head Office (Miss Lana Al-Ayyer) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exclusion of children from school | Complaints about exclusion of children from school are handled by AL Rayan Head Office & the Ministry of Education in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whistleblowing | We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. CEO – AL Rayan Holdings is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to |

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| | raise matters direct with their employer. You may also be able to complain direct to the Ministry of Education, depending on the substance of your complaint. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievances | Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff conduct | <p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will not always be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities | Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct. |

Appendix

Guidelines for investigating complaints:

- Confidentiality must be respected in all complaints.
- Concerns and complaints will be listened to, recorded and all will be taken seriously.
- Anyone who is questioned as part of the procedure must feel fairly treated and be given the opportunity to express their views.
- Establish what has happened so far and who has been involved.
- Clarify the nature of complaint and what remains unsolved.
- Gather evidence from all parties involved in the complaint and any CCTV evidence where require or available. CCTV footage is not allowed to be shared with anyone involved in the complaint unless Ministry approval is given.
- Meet with complainant to clarify what they feel would put things right.
- Interview those involved in the complaint - Interviewer must be persistent but impartial
- A record must be taken of the interviews and kept according to company Policies and Procedures or Ministry regulations.

Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- ask for assistance as needed
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
 - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
 - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
 - consideration of records and other relevant information
 - analysing information
- liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting.
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond
- prepare a comprehensive report for the headteacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

Committee Chair

The committee's chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- both parties are asked to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
- the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy

- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person
- the remit of the committee is explained to the complainant
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR.

Committee Member

Committee members should be aware that:

- The meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so no representative may sit on the committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant.
- They must treat all those involved in the complaint with respect.
- They must refrain from sharing the details of the complaint outside the committee and respect confidentiality.

Issues to consider when conducting a complaints Committee

- Many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting
- Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.
- Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the complainant does not feel intimidated.
- The welfare of all parties involved is paramount.