

INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION COMPLAINTS POLICY

Document control

This policy has been approved for operation within the Institute of Islamic Education

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COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy makes use of the procedures set out in the Independent Schools Council (ISC) guidance 'ISC Model Complaints Procedure', and the DfE guidance on Complaints Procedures for maintained schools, but adds further elements to turn them into a model policy for independent schools. All aspects of the work of the Institute are subject to this policy.

Concerns are regarded as different from 'concerns' which we deal with on an informal basis. Any 'complaints' received are subject to a formal procedure i.e. it cannot be easily resolved by the intervention of a Senior Manager.

This policy concerns complaints from **parents, students and others**. Deputy Head of Boarding and Welfare is appointed as the Complaints Co-ordinator. The policy does not cover complaints from members of staff as these are covered by the school's grievance procedures.

Types of Concerns and Complaints

The concerns/complaints received by the Institute could fall into one or more of the following categories:

Financial and administrative

Academic Study

Islamic Education

Boarding

Student welfare

Child protection

PROCEDURES

There are three possible stages in the complaints procedures

Stage 1 Informal Resolution

Concerns expressed by parents or students to any member of staff should be dealt with by that member of staff if he is able to do so. If the member of staff considers the issue to be beyond his/her competence the concern should be passed to the Deputy Head Boarding and Welfare.

Concerns/complaints which come to a member of staff from other sources should be passed immediately to the Deputy Head Boarding and Welfare/Complaints Co-ordinator who will inform the complainant of the action he proposes to take. All concerns will be followed up by a courtesy call by the Complaints Co-ordinator within 72 hours, whenever possible and the outcome recorded.

Stage 2 Formal Procedure

The complaint is heard by the Executive Headteacher. When a written formal complaint is received, the Head teacher, in consultation with the Complaints Co-ordinator, will decide on the appropriate action and deploy a relevant member of senior staff to make appropriate investigations, and attempt to resolve the issue. The school attempts to resolve the issue within 3-4 working days where possible.

If a resolution cannot be found, the Executive Headteacher/Deputy Head Boarding and Welfare/Complaints Co-ordinator should inform the complainant of their right of appeal to an independent panel.

If the complaint concerns a child protection issue or involves an allegation of abuse by a member of the school staff, the named person responsible for child protection complaints will be informed by the Complaints Co-ordinator.

Stage 3 Independent Panel Hearing

Complainants who are not satisfied by the school's decision regarding the complaint can request a hearing by a panel of three members. The complaint will be heard by an independent panel appointed by the Governing Body; the panel will consist of three people not directly involved in the matter. This could take up to 7 to 10 working days where possible. Two persons may be from the school not directly involved in the matter and 1 person to be completely independent.

Hearings by an Independent Panel

The complainant must be advised by the Deputy Head Boarding and Welfare/Complaints Co-ordinator to write to the Chair of the Governing Body giving details of the complaint. The Chair of Governors will identify the panel. The hearing will take place within 10 working days of the Chair receiving notice of the complaint where possible.

The role of the Panel

The panel will hear the appeal(s), consider all the views expressed and decide the outcome. The panel can make such findings and recommendations to the Governing Body it will provide its report to the Governing Body, the Executive Headteacher and the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about, within three working days of the hearing. (**Note:** for the purposes of the complaints procedure, 'working days' means term-time days. If a complaint is received at the end of a term, a resolution will be reached within a maximum of 10 weeks from the date of the complaint being lodged.)

The complainant must be told of his/her right to be accompanied by a friend, and where relevant, translations/interpreters will be arranged by the Institute in consultation with the parties. When the complainant is a student, the complaint will be given the same respect as a complaint lodged by an adult.

Governing Body Action

In general, the Governing Body will take one of the following courses of action:

Decide the complaint is not upheld either in whole or in part;

Uphold the complaint in whole or in part;

Decide on appropriate action to resolve the complaint; or

Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures.

The Governing Body's decision is binding. received, a copy of the appeal panel's decision, copies of any further correspondence with the school and any relevant supporting evidence.

Recommendations will be available to the proprietor and the head teacher on the school premises.

Reporting and Recording

In all cases it is important for parents, students or staff submit the complaint in writing so it can be recorded and traced. Supporting documents should be attached to the form.

The Institute will ensure that all correspondence, statements and records pertaining to the complaint are kept confidential and secure except where the Secretary of State or inspecting body under 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them. A written record of all complaints will be kept

for at least three years and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.

The Deputy Head Boarding and Welfare/Complaints Co-ordinator will consider the handling of complaints from time to time, and will discuss issues with staff where appropriate.

The Executive Headteacher will report to staff from time to time and to the Governing Body each term on the number and type of complaints received and their outcomes.

If the complainant is unhappy with the outcome and can demonstrate that the institute has broken the law, or acted unreasonably the complaint may be lodged with OFSTED or by writing to the Secretary of State (see contact details below). In the strict legal sense, acting unreasonably means acting in a way in which no reasonable authority would act. The complainant should include copies of any refusal letters received.

(1) Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) by e-mail enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or telephoning 0300 123 4666 (8am-6pm); and

(2) ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate) at www.isi.net or telephoning 020 7600 0100.

(3) The Secretary of State for Education. The final stage of appeal is to the Secretary of State for Education. Complainants should be advised to write to The School Complaints Unit (SCU) at: Department of Education, 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Manchester, M1 2WD.

Parents may ask to know the number of formal complaints received by the school in the last academic year.

