

Staff Grievance and Complaints Policy

Al Faisal International Academy

Muaitheer- Al Salam Street, Doha, Qatar 202461

alfaisalacademy.prim@education.qa

+974-44659256

+974-55652167

www.alfaisalinternational.com

Approved by	Governing Body
Last reviewed on	June 2024
Next Review	June 2025

At AFIA, we are committed to fostering and maintaining a working environment that is fair, inclusive, and free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimization, and bullying. We believe that every individual is responsible for their own behavior and should treat colleagues with dignity, respect, and courtesy. All employees should feel valued for their skills and abilities, contributing to a positive and collaborative workplace.

To support this commitment, the Grievance Procedure provides a mechanism for employees to raise concerns that are not addressed by other procedures.

Aims of the Grievance Policy

The Grievance Policy aims to:

- Ensure that concerns, problems, and complaints arising during employment can be raised easily and without fear.
- Promote the swift resolution of issues in a fair and reasonable manner.
- Maintain a transparent process that is independent of bias.

Responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to:

- Comply with this policy.
- Be mindful of their behavior and the impact it may have on others.
- Treat everyone with respect, dignity, and fairness.

The **Senior Leadership team** is responsible for ensuring the fair and consistent implementation of this policy and procedure. They must address grievances—whether verbal or written—equitably, without discrimination, and as promptly as possible. Additionally, SLT is responsible for effectively communicating the policy to staff to enhance awareness and understanding of the grievance process.

The **Director** is responsible for addressing any complaints raised by an employee concerning the Headteacher.

The **Governing Body** is responsible for handling complaints made against the Director.

Definition of a Grievance

A grievance refers to a concern, problem, or complaint raised by an employee with their employer regarding their work, working conditions, or relationships with colleagues.

While it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of all issues that may lead to a grievance, the following are some common examples:

Vision: Leading in education, with an Islamic identity, according to locally and internationally approved standards

Common Types of Grievances

General Work Issues: Concerns related to terms and conditions of employment, health and safety, working practices, or relationships with colleagues.

Bullying: Offensive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting behavior, including the misuse of power, that creates a hostile, degrading, or humiliating working environment. A reasonable person could justifiably consider such behavior as grounds for complaint.

Harassment: Unwanted behavior intended to or having the effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. Employees can raise complaints about behavior they find offensive, even if it is not directed at them.

Victimization: Less favorable treatment of an individual because they have raised a complaint, provided evidence, rejected advances, or opposed harassment, discrimination, or intimidation by another individual.

In all cases, the focus is on the impact of the behavior, not the intent of the perpetrator. Actions and comments are evaluated objectively to determine whether they can reasonably be deemed demeaning or unacceptable by the complainant.

Resolving a Grievance

It is in everyone's best interest to ensure grievances are addressed promptly, fairly, and—wherever possible—resolved informally. Employees are encouraged to first attempt to discuss the issue with their line manager or the person involved to seek an early resolution.

Informal Process

When an employee has concerns about the behavior of another individual, they should consider addressing the matter directly with the person involved. This includes:

1. Clearly stating that the behavior is causing concern or offense.
2. Explaining the impact the behavior is having on them.
3. Requesting that the behavior stops.

In many cases, the individual may not be aware that their actions are causing offense. Highlighting the issue in a respectful manner can often resolve the situation without further escalation.

Resolving a Grievance

If an employee feels unable to discuss the matter with their line manager or the person causing offense, they may seek support from a work colleague. This individual can raise the matter on the employee's behalf or accompany them during the discussion.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, or if specific circumstances make the informal route inappropriate, the formal grievance procedure should be followed.

Formal Process

If informal efforts to resolve the grievance are unsuccessful, the employee may proceed with the formal grievance procedure.

1. Filing a Grievance:

The employee must complete the Formal Grievance Form, providing detailed information about their concerns to enable effective handling of the grievance.

The form should be submitted to:

- The Deputy Director, if the grievance concerns a colleague.
- The Director if the grievance concerns the Deputy Director.
- The Governing Body, if the grievance concerns the Director.

Employees should retain a copy of the completed form for reference.

Encouragement to Use the Informal Process:

If an employee submits a formal grievance without first attempting an informal resolution and no specific circumstances make the informal route inappropriate, the manager should encourage the employee to engage in the informal process as an initial step.

Grievance Investigation

When it is determined that the informal process has been exhausted or is unsuitable, a thorough and impartial investigation must be conducted. This investigation should:

- Examine the allegations or issues raised in the grievance.
- Be impartial and ensure all parties are treated fairly.
- Base conclusions on objective facts and evidence.

Investigating Officer

In most circumstances, the Investigating Officer will be assigned as follows:

- If the grievance is raised against a colleague, the DD will act as the Investigating Officer.

- If the grievance concerns the DD, the Director will take responsibility for investigating the claims.
- If the grievance is about the Director, Chair or Vice chair of governing body will investigate the case.

Timescales

To ensure grievances are handled efficiently, investigations should be concluded as promptly as reasonably practicable. The Investigating Officer should:

- Aim to complete the investigation and provide the outcome to the employee within **5** school days of receiving the Formal Grievance Form.
- Inform all parties if an extension to this timescale is required due to the complexity of the case and agree on the revised timeline.

Grievance Meetings

Employee Raising the Grievance:

The Investigating Officer will arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss the grievance in detail within **2** school days of receiving the Formal Grievance Form. The employee is entitled to be accompanied to the meeting by a work colleague. The accompanying individual must not have a conflict of interest or any involvement in the grievance that could prejudice the meeting.

Purpose of the Meeting

The grievance meeting is conducted to:

1. Clarify the nature of the grievance and understand the concerns raised.
2. Identify any additional information or evidence needed to support the investigation.
3. Discuss the employee's proposals for resolving the issue.
4. Establish whether an extended timescale may be necessary for the investigation.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Investigating Officer should provide the employee with an indication of when they might reasonably expect a response to their grievance.

Timescale Adjustments

If the Investigating Officer anticipates that a response cannot be provided within 5 school days, due to the need for additional investigations, an extension to the timescale should be discussed and agreed upon with the employee.

In the case of unavoidable delays (e.g., due to annual leave or sickness), the Investigating Officer must:

1. Contact the employee in writing to provide an update on the progress of the investigation.
2. Agree on revised timescales for completing the investigation.

Employee Who is the Subject of the Grievance

When a grievance is raised against an employee, the situation should be approached with sensitivity and care.

1. Initial Notification: The Investigating Officer should privately inform the employee that a concern has been raised against them by a fellow employee.

2. Investigation Meeting:

The employee will be invited to a meeting to discuss the issue(s) in more detail as part of the investigation process. During this meeting, the Investigating Officer will explain the allegations made against the employee. Provide the employee with an opportunity to share their perspective and understanding of the situation. The employee is entitled to be accompanied to the meeting by a work colleague.

3. Witnesses:

In some cases, the Investigating Officer may need to interview witnesses as part of the investigation.

- Witnesses may be invited to a meeting to discuss the issue(s) in more detail.
- While every effort will be made to protect confidentiality, the Investigating Officer cannot guarantee an unqualified commitment to maintain the confidentiality of a witness.

4. Final Grievance Meeting: At the conclusion of the investigation, the Investigating Officer will arrange a final meeting with the employee who raised the grievance.

Purpose of the Final Meeting:

- Outline the key aspects of the investigation, including details of interviews conducted.
- Clarify that all areas of the grievance, as agreed in the initial meeting, have been addressed.
- Allow the employee to highlight any areas they feel have not been sufficiently investigated.
- Provide the employee with an opportunity to respond to any key issues that arose during the investigation and were not covered in the initial meeting.

Reporting:

Once the Investigating Officer has gathered all necessary facts and evidence, they will compile a report summarizing their findings and recommendations. This report will be used by the Headteacher, Principal, or Trustees to determine:

1. Whether the grievance is upheld in whole, in part, or not at all.
2. What actions, if any, need to be taken as a result.

Possible Outcomes

Below is a non-exhaustive list of potential outcomes following a grievance investigation:

Grievance Not Upheld: If there is insufficient evidence to support any of the allegations, the grievance will not be upheld, and no further action will be taken.

Grievance Upheld (in Whole or in Part): If evidence supports some or all of the allegations, the following outcomes may be considered:

No Further Action: The findings may not warrant additional measures beyond the conclusion of the investigation.

Formal Mediation: Mediation may be suggested to help resolve the grievance.

Action Plan: The SLT/GB may recommend creating an action plan to address behaviors or issues causing the grievance. The action plan could include specific objectives, targets, or training designed to foster improvement.

Permanent Redeployment: If ongoing contact between the parties involved is likely and deemed inappropriate, redeployment may be considered. While efforts will primarily focus on redeploying the individual against whom the complaint was made, the decision will consider the views of the complainant and ensure fairness in identifying which party is most appropriately redeployed.

5. Disciplinary Action:

If there is evidence of a conduct issue and a case to answer, disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the School's Disciplinary Policy and Qatar Labor Law.