

AAB Complaints Policy 2017/18

Signed on behalf of trustees by **G F Noumi** on 4/9/2017

Applicable to: Parents, guardians, staff and students at Andalusia Academy

Aims

- To allow the parents or guardians of current students (and past students if the complaint was raised when the student was still registered) to register a complaint or concern about the school where previous communication has not addressed their concern to their satisfaction.
- To ensure the complaint or concern is reviewed fairly.
- To ensure the procedures for making a complaint (informal, formal and panel hearing) are available to parents at the School.

Important Note: These guidelines are non-contractual in nature. They have been prepared for the information and guidance of all who may become concerned following a complaint raised with the school.

Making a Complaint

1. Parents or guardians must make a complaint to the Head of Primary or Principal in writing. The complaint may be made and considered initially on an informal basis. **(Stage 1.)** The Head of Primary / Principal will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 48 hours and consider and respond to the issue within 14 days in term time. Except in exceptional circumstances, complaints received during holiday periods will be dealt with as if received on the first day of the following term.
2. Where the complainant is not satisfied with the decision or response of the Head of Primary / Principal a formal complaint may be made in writing to the Chair of Governors **(Stage 2)** who will consider and respond to the issue within 14 days. If the Chair of Governors is unavailable and unable to respond within 14 days then the Vice Chair will act on her behalf.
3. If the complainant is still not satisfied with the response of the Chair of Governors, a complaint **(Stage 3)** may be submitted to a Trustees using the form Appendix A. This form is available on the website or from the School Office and must be returned to the Chair of

Trustees within fourteen working days of receipt of the Chairman of Governor's written notification of the decision in question.

4. Unless there are exceptional circumstances the appeal hearing will take place within twenty eight days of the receipt of an official complaint, and may be sooner if convenient to all parties.

5. Each member of the Complaints Panel will be supplied with a copy of any relevant documents. The complainant shall be entitled to copies of all those documents save any which, in the opinion of the Principal, should not be disclosed because of their confidential nature.

The Complaints Panel

This will consist of three members, two Governors and one member independent of the management and running of the school. The panel members will have no previous detailed knowledge of the case, and will not include the Chair of Governors. Selection of the Complaints Panel will be made by the Chair of Governors. One panel member will be independent of the management and running of the School.

The Complaint Hearing

1. This will take place at the School premises

2. Those present at the complaint hearing will normally be:-

- Members of the Complaint Panel
- The Principal
- The Complainant (Parents or Guardians)
- Clerk to the Governors or his/her deputy

The complainant may be accompanied by a friend or relation or by a member of the School staff if desired. The person will attend as a friend, not as a representative. Seven clear days' notice to the Clerk is required if the parent or guardian wish to be accompanied by a legal representative, or a friend who is legally qualified.

3. The proceedings will be chaired by one member of the Complaints Panel and will be conducted in an informal manner, and all statements made at the hearing will be unsworn. The proceedings will not be tape recorded but the Clerk will be asked to keep a minute of the main points that arise. All present will be entitled, should they wish, to write their own notes. The hearing shall be directed at all times by the Chair of the panel who will conduct the hearing in such a manner as to ensure that all those present have the opportunity of asking questions and making comments.

4. All those attending the hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners. The Chair may at his/her discretion adjourn, arrange a further meeting or terminate the hearing. If the hearing is terminated the original decision will stand.

5. If the Principal considers it necessary in the interests of the individual or of the School that the identity of any person should be withheld, the Chair of the panel may require that the name of that person and the reasons for withholding it be written down and shown to the Complaints Panel. The Chair at his/her discretion may direct that the person be identified.

6. When the Chair of the panel decides that all issues have been sufficiently discussed and if by then there is no consensus he/she may adjourn the hearing.

7. The requirements of natural justice will apply.

8. The decision of the Complaints Panel will be final. It will be notified to the complainant and the Principal by the Chair of the Complaints Panel or the Chair of Governors by letter or telephone within three days of the hearing.

9. The manner in which the School handles the complaint must meet Independent Schools Inspectorate regulations which:

- a) Provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is:
 - a. provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about;

- b) available for inspection on the school premises by the Governors and the Headmistress;
- c) Provides a written record to be kept of all complaints that are not resolved at the informal Stage 1. This includes
 - a. whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
 - b. action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld); and
 - c. c) provides that that all correspondence, statements and records relating to an individual complaint are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them. The Principal keeps the documentation securely in her office in the School's 'Complaints File'. Andalusia Academy also keeps a copy of all informal complaints, for management purposes and to enable patterns of concern to be monitored.