



SHERBORNE QATAR

COMPLAINTS POLICY

(in line with MOEHE Circular 4, 2023)

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1. Aims:

The school (defined as the Sherborne Qatar family of schools) aims to meet its statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents of pupils at the school, and others.

When responding to complaints, the school aims to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial,
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary,
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response,
- Respect the complainant's desire for confidentiality,
- Treat the complainant with respect and courtesy,
- Ensure that any decisions the school makes are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate,
- Keep the complainant informed of the progress of the complaints process,
- Consider how the complaint can feed into school improvement evaluation processes.

The school will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full. To support this, the school will ensure the existence of this policy is publicised and made available on the school website.

It is expected that all parents will contact the school in the first instance regarding any complaint so that they can follow due process as outlined in the policy below. Parents are not expected to contact the MOEHE in the first instance.

2. Definitions and scope

2.1 Definitions

The school adopts the DfE explanation regarding the difference between a concern and a complaint:

- **A concern** is defined as “an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought”. The school will resolve concerns through day-to-day communication as far as possible.
- **A complaint** is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action”.

2.2 Scope

The school intends to resolve *'concerns'* informally where possible, at the earliest possible stage. All parents are welcome to discuss their concerns with members of the school's staff individually and within specific parent communication forums held at each school site.

It should also be noted that every academic year parents are requested to fill out a school satisfaction questionnaire as the schools are eager to consider the concerns and positive experiences of our parent body.

This policy outlines the procedure relating to handling *'complaints'*.

This policy does not cover complaints procedures relating to:

- Admissions,
- Staff grievances,
- Staff discipline.

Arrangements for handling complaints from parents of children with special educational needs (SEND) about the school's support are within the scope of this policy. Such complaints should be made to the class teacher and /or the Heads of Learning Support within mainstream school provision and to the Headteacher of SEN provision, Sherborne Qetaf, they will then be referred to this complaints policy.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective and timely response to their complaint if they:

- Follow these procedures,
- Co-operate with the school throughout the process, and respond to deadlines and communication promptly,
- Treat all those involved with respect,
- Do not publish details about the complaint on social media.

3.2 The Complaints Committee

Members are appointed to review the complaint, establish the facts and consider a resolution. The resolution will then be communicated by the Complaints Committee.

The Complaints Committee comprises:

- the Headteacher of the School,
- The Director of Accreditation and Compliance.
- a relevant Deputy Head (Pastoral, Academic, Head of Pre-Prep, Head of Prep or Head of Juniors),
- the School Counsellor or School Welfare Officer,
- Head of Learning Support,
- the relevant Head of Year,
- a teacher of Islamic Studies,
- a relevant Head of Department or Class Teacher.

Selected members will work within the school's published Behaviour Policy. The Committee is also free to seek advice from the Private Schools Department (MOEHE) should they need support.

4. Making a Complaint:

In the first instance, parents should raise their complaint to the respective school's Complaints Committee in writing, via email:

- Girls' School – complaintssfg@sherborneqatar.org
- Prep School Al Rayyan – complaintsprepAR@sherborneqatar.org
- Prep School Bani Hajer – complaintsprepBH@sherborneqatar.org
- Qetaf – complaintsqetaf@sherborneqatar.org
- Senior School – complaintseniorschool@sherborneqatar.org

The complainant should provide details such as relevant dates, times, and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents, and what parents feel would resolve the complaint.

The committee will need the details of the complaint as set out above, as well as details from the complainant on how they feel any '*concerns*' have not been addressed.

4.1 Timescales:

The school will acknowledge receipt of any complaint within 24 hours.

If the complaint is serious (e.g. a safeguarding or health and safety concern) a time to meet the parent/s will be arranged immediately. For issues not associated with safeguarding or health and safety, a meeting will be arranged within two working days of the complaint.

The complainant is expected to raise the complaint at the time of the incident to a member of the school staff. The school will consider exceptions to this time frame in circumstances where there were valid reasons for not making a complaint at that time and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.

When complaints are made outside of the scheduled term time, the school will consider them to have been received on the next full school day in the academic year. If at any point the school cannot meet the time frame set out in this policy, the school will:

- Set new time frame with the complainant,
- Send the complainant details of the new deadline and explain the reasons for the delay.

In most cases the complaint will be closed within three working days of receiving the complaint. In more serious cases it may be necessary to refer the complaint to members of the Sherborne Qatar Executive Committee.

5. Investigating a Complaint

The school will try to clarify:

- What has happened,
- Who was involved,
- What the complainant feels would put things right,
- Find suitable solutions to the problems raised.

Members of the Complaints Committee will:

- Interview all relevant parties, keeping notes,
- Consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely,
- Prepare a comprehensive report which includes the facts and potential solutions,
- Report back to parents within the timeframe stipulated in this policy.

The Committee Chair will:

- Chair the meeting, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect throughout,
- Make sure all parties see the relevant information, understand the purpose of the committee, and are allowed to present their case.
- Make sure all parts (in consultation with parents) of the [SQ Complaints Form](#) are completed during the meeting.

If the complaint is resolved the parent and school will need to complete the [Ministry of Education's Complaints Form](#) for complaints as published on the school's website. The Complaints

Committee will send an email to the complainant stating that the closure process has been completed.

If the complaint cannot be resolved within three days, the complaint process will be reviewed by Sherborne Qatar Schools' Executive Committee.

6. Executive Committee Panel Review

In the first instance, the case will be referred by the school's Complaints Committee to the Clerk to the Board of Governors by email execsec@sherborneqatar.org.

The Clerk will:

- Be the contact point for the complainant and the Executive Committee Panel, including circulating the relevant papers and evidence from the Complaints Committee meetings,
- Arrange the further complaints hearing for the Executive Committee Panel,
- Record and circulate the minutes and the outcome of the hearing.

6.1 Convening the panel

The review panel will consist of at least 3 members of the Executive Committee who do not have direct knowledge of the complaint. At least one member will be independent of the management and running of the school. The panel will have access to the existing record of the complaint's progress. The panel will select a panel Chair from amongst themselves.

The complainant must have reasonable notice of the date of the review panel; however, the review panel reserves the right to convene at their convenience rather than that of the complainant. The Clerk will aim to find a date within two school days of the referral where possible. If the complainant rejects the offer of two proposed dates without good reason, the Clerk will set a date.

The hearing will go ahead using written submissions from both parties. Any written material will be circulated to all parties.

At the review panel meeting, the complainant and representatives from the school, as appropriate, will be present. Each will have an opportunity to set out written submissions prior to the meeting.

The complainant must be allowed to attend the panel hearing and be accompanied by a suitable companion if they wish. At the meeting, everyone will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called as appropriate to present their evidence. The panel, the complainant and the school representative will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions.

Once the complainant and school representatives have completed presenting their cases, they will be asked to leave, and evidence will then be considered. The panel will then put together its findings and recommendations from the case.

Members of the Executive Committee Panel will:

- Try to ensure that the nature of the complaint is clearly understood. If it is not obvious, then time will be given to the complainant to explain,
- Take each complaint seriously and ensure that the parents feel that their views matter,
- Consider the facts carefully. The school will not rush into a decision and hopes that the complainant will appreciate that the school's response will be "considered",
- Provide a detailed response to the complainant within five days.

7. The Outcome

The panel can:

- Uphold the complaint, in whole or in part,
- Dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part,
- If the complaint is upheld, the committee will:
 - Decide the appropriate action to resolve the complaint,
 - Where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future,
 - The school will inform those involved as well as the Ministry of Education and Higher Education of the decision in writing within 5 school days.

Again, if the complaint is resolved, the parent and school will need to complete the Ministry's form for complaints. The Chair of the Executive Committee Panel will send an email to the complainant stating that the closure process has been completed.

If the complaint is still not resolved, the school will be required to submit a full report of the complaint and all action that has been taken to the complaints email address of the Private Schools and Kindergartens Department (MOEHE).

8. Unreasonable persistent complaints

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore the school will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:

- Has made the same complaint before, and it's already been resolved by following the school's complaints procedure,
- Makes a complaint that is obsessive, harassing, prolific, defamatory or repetitive,
- Knowingly provides false information,

- Insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complaint's procedure,
- Pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner e.g. refuses to articulate the complaint, refused to co-operate with this complaint's procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the time frames it sets out,
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation goes on,
- Makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on school time,
- Seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value.

Steps the school will take:

The school will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns and provide a clear statement of the school's position and their options. The school will maintain its role as an objective arbiter throughout the process, including when the panel meets with individuals. The school will follow the complaints procedure as normal (as outlined above) wherever possible.

If the complainant continues to contact the school in a disruptive way, communications strategies may need to be put in place. The school may:

- Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address,
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term,
- Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf,
- Put any other strategy in place as necessary,
- Advise the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

9. Duplicate complaints

If the school has resolved a complaint under this procedure and receives a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, the school will assess whether there are aspects that had not previously considered, or any new information that needs to be taken into account.

If the school is satisfied that there are no new aspects, the school will:

- Tell the new complainant that it has already investigated and responded to this issue, and the local process is complete,
- Direct them to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education if they are dissatisfied with the school's original handling of the complaint. If there are new aspects, the school will follow this procedure again.

10. Recordkeeping

The school will keep a record of all complaints, including information about any actions taken, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the final outcome. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls. This material will be treated as confidential and held centrally and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel. Records of complaints will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law. The school is required to submit a quarterly report to the MOEHE including the number of cases that have been resolved and closed, and those that have not been resolved and closed.

11. Monitoring arrangements with the Board of Governors

The Board of Governors will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure by ensuring that complaints are handled properly and in accordance with directives from the Ministry of Education & Higher Education.

The Board of Governors will track the number and nature of complaints.

For the purpose of informing the Board of Governors, all complaints records are logged and managed by the Clerk to the Board of Governors.

This policy will be reviewed at least once every 3 years.

12. Appendix 1 SQ Complaints Form



SHERBORNE QATAR

Complaints Form - نموذج شكوى		
تاريخ فتح الشكوى :		Date
اسم ولي الأمر / الطالبة:		Complainant
هاتف ولي الأمر / الطالبة :		Complainant Telephone Number
اسم الطالبة		Pupil's Name
الصف		Form Group
نوع المشكلة:	إدارة	Management
	أكاديمية	Academic
	أخلاقية	Moral
	أمن وسلامة	Security & Safety
	مخالفة القيم المدرسية	Violation of School Values
Summary of Complaint موضوع الشكوى		

Procedures & Actions taken by the School الإجراءات التي تم اتباعها من قبل لجنة الشكاوى في المدرسة لحل المشكلة	
Conclusions & Agreement with Parents ما تم التوصل اليه مع ولي الامر	
Confirmation - إقرار	
نقر نحن أعضاء اللجنة بأن جميع البيانات المدونة صحيحة وبأن المعلومات الواردة في الشكاوى صحيحة وإن كافة الإجراءات الواردة أعلاه تم تنفيذها.	
As a Committee Member, I confirm the accuracy and authenticity of all the information provided.	
Name of Committee Member	اسم عضو اللجنة :
Signature	التوقيع :
Date	التاريخ :

13. Appendix 2 MOEHE Complaints Form

نموذج شكوى				
Date:			تاريخ فتح الشكوى :	
Complainant:			اسم ولي الأمر/ الطالب:	
Complainant Phone#:			رقم هاتف ولي الأمر/ الطالب:	
Against School\Kindergarten:			ضد مدرسة/روضة:	
Category of the Issue:	Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	إدارية	نوع المشكلة:
	Academic	<input type="checkbox"/>	أكاديمية	
	Moral	<input type="checkbox"/>	أخلاقية	
	Safety & Security	<input type="checkbox"/>	أمن وسلامة	
	Violation of Values	<input type="checkbox"/>	مخالفة للقيم والهوية	
ملخص شكوى ولي الأمر:				
<p>الإجراءات التي تم اتباعها من قبل لجنة الشكوى في المدرسة لحل المشكلة :</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>				



خاص بـلجنة الشكاوى

ما تم التوصل اليه مع ولي الامر:

رأي ولي الامر:

خاص بولي الأمر



إقرار - Endorsement

نقرن نحن أعضاء اللجنة بأن جميع البيانات المدونة صحيحة وبأن المعلومات الواردة في الشكوى صحيحة وان كافة الإجراءات الواردة أعلاه تم تنفيذها.

كما نقر بأنه وفي حالة عدم مصداقية البيانات الواردة بالشكوى أو تغيير الأقوال بأي حال من الأحوال يؤدي إلى بطلانها وبعرضنا للمسائل القانونية، وهذا إقرار منا بذلك.

ختم المدرسة:

اسم رئيس الفريق / العضو:

التوقيع:

التاريخ: