



Feedback & Complaints Policy

2022-2023

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Review period | Yearly

Responsible person | Head of School/CEO

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1. Introduction

At GEMS American Academy - Qatar, we understand our accountability to our parents and community.

All staff listen to what parents and stakeholders are saying through formal and regular channels eg Quality Assurance Process, Annual Parent Survey, Parent and Teacher interactions. There are also informal opportunities such as impromptu discussions between parents and staff, questionnaires, workshops and parent engagement sessions.

The school recognizes that a student's education will be enhanced by the whole-hearted support of parents working closely with our staff and leadership.

Many issues and concerns can and are handled without the need for formal procedures, if addressed early. In most cases the class teacher will receive the first approach and ideally the issue will be resolved at this level.

However, formal procedures will follow if initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful, and/or the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

2. Aims

There may occasionally be cause for dissatisfaction with some aspect(s) of the service provided by the school. This policy advises all persons on how to direct a complaint and the escalation procedures around this.

3. Feedback Procedure

Parents are able to access this policy by visiting the 'For Parents' section of our school website.

It is important for us to understand where our parents and visitors feel we could improve the service we offer. This can be done in the following ways:

- 3.1. Email or verbal conversation with our Parent Relation Executive
- 3.2. Email or verbal conversation with the relevant staff member
- 3.3. Feedback through the twice yearly GEMS Parent Survey
- 3.4. Feedback via online email address.

Where it is deemed that the issue is more pressing than simple feedback and lodging an informal or formal complaint is felt to be necessary, then the 'Complaints Procedure' should be followed as per section 4.

4. Complaints Procedure

As an educational establishment there are different categories of service which may warrant complaints where initial feedback has failed to improve the service or expectation. To ensure the right person deals with the right complaint it is important to outline the different categories indicated in the following information.

Complaints can be received formally in writing addressed to the relevant person. All formal complaints will be recorded and monitored via the school Leadership Team.

All complaints should be acknowledged within 24 hours of receiving it and dealt with within 7 working days. Where a complaint is considered more complex and requires additional time for investigation, the lead investigator should inform the complainant in writing (either via email or letter) with a realistic timescale.

4.1. Student's Teaching & Learning

- a. **Stage 1** - Initial complaint directed to the class teacher to be resolved and feedback provided.
- b. **Stage 2** - Forwarded to the relevant Middle Leader for investigation and feedback.
- c. **Stage 3** - Forwarded to the relevant principal or assistant principal for investigation and feedback.
- d. **Stage 4** - Forwarded to the Head of School/CEO for final resolution, if not resolved prior.

4.2. Student's Behavior, Emotional Well-being or Support

- a. **Stage 1** - Initial complaint directed to the class teacher to be resolved and feedback provided.
- b. **Stage 2** - Forwarded to the relevant Middle Leader for investigation and feedback.
- c. **Stage 3** - Forwarded to the relevant principal or assistant principal for investigation and feedback.
- d. **Stage 4** - Forwarded to the Head of School/CEO for final resolution, if not resolved prior.

4.3. Operations/Facilities/External Services

- a. **Stage 1** - Initial complaint directed to the Parent Relations Executive. Forwarded to the relevant department, team or external service provider. Feedback to be provided by the PRE or external service provider.
- b. **Stage 2** - Forwarded to the Manager of School Operations for investigation and feedback.
- c. **Stage 3** - Forwarded to the Head of School/CEO for final resolution, if not resolved prior.

4.4. A member of staff

- a. **Stage 1** - Initial complaint directed to the Parent Relations Executive. Complaint forwarded to the relevant line manager for investigation and feedback.
- b. **Stage 2** - Forwarded to the relevant principal or assistant principal for investigation and feedback.
- c. **Stage 3** - Forwarded to the Head of School/CEO for final resolution, if not resolved prior.

4.5. A member of the School Leadership Team

- a. To be directed to the Head of School/CEO for investigation and feedback.

4.6. The Principal/CEO

- a. To be directed to the GEMS Vice Principal Education and Cluster Lead for the GEMS Wellington/Qatar Schools.

If the issue is still not resolved, then the parent shall write an official letter to the GEMS School Support Centre (www.gemseducation.com>talk-to-us or call +971 4 347 7770). They shall review the matter and within 10 working days, issue a written report to both the Head of School/CEO and to the parent.

Each stage in the process of appeal should not exceed more than 5 working days. If the parent is still not satisfied, then the parent has the right thereafter to refer the matter to the Ministry of Education.

5. Independent Complaints Procedure

5.1 It is recognized that, on occasion, the complainant may not be satisfied with the result of a complaint at school level. Where this is the case, and only following the completion of the stages of complaints procedure detailed in Section 4, there is an option to put in writing a complaint in relation to either:

- a) The initial complaint
- b) The complaints procedure

5.2 All complaints relating to the above will be dealt with at GEMS School Support Centre where an independent investigation (including hearing where required) will be conducted and findings/recommendations presented to the complainant and the school.

5.3 Where recommendations are suggested, the School Leadership Team along with the Head of School/CEO will review this policy and make any changes where appropriate.

6 Responsibilities – All Staff

- 6.1. To understand the importance of handling and resolving the initial complaint and ensuring a resolution is found in an efficient and timely manner, to satisfy the complainant and to avoid further escalation.
- 6.2. To ensure the recording of complaints, implemented actions and relevant line managers are involved in any escalation of complaints including principals and assistant principals for any pastoral issues.
- 6.4. To ensure the relevant member of the School Leadership Team are involved immediately if a complaint escalates beyond their ability to offer an acceptable resolution.
- 6.5. To ensure they are comfortable in handling complaints.

7. Training

- 7.1. School Leadership Team to ensure all staff expected to handle complaints receive training in how to do so and how to record the complaint.
- 7.2. All staff to be made aware and understand the complaints policy and procedures.

8. Monitoring & Recording

- 8.1. The number of formal complaints per term should be an indicator of how the school is meeting the needs of its students and addressing customer satisfaction.
- 8.2. Patterns and trends should be highlighted by the School Leadership Team and pro-active investigations should take place in order to prevent re-occurrence.
- 8.3. Recording of complaints will be kept with the Head of School/CEO for inspection/review by GEMS School Support Centre should an escalation be required. All such records are kept securely to ensure confidentiality.

9. Evaluation

- 9.1. Each member of the School Leadership Team will be responsible for investigating the 'journey' of an unresolved complaint relating to their team in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the process in handling the complaint in accordance with this policy.
- 9.2. Feedback should be given on improvement to the process/policy to the Principal/Manager of School Operation.