



# Complaints Policy 2023



## **Introduction: Parents and Lantern Academy working together**

Children of any age are more likely to be happy and to achieve their best, if their parents take an active interest in their education and welfare during the time the child is in Lantern Academy.

It is natural that parents may, from time to time, be concerned about some aspect of their child's education. This may, for example, be due to a misunderstanding about the Lantern Academy's approach to aspects of the curriculum, or about the way we deal with discipline and behavioral problems.

We therefore welcome enquiries from parents about these and other matters and are confident that, in the vast majority of cases, we can reassure you by explaining our policies and practices, and how they affect your child.

With a commitment from all concerned to resolve any such concerns calmly and rationally, we can work with you to try to achieve the most appropriate solution in your child's interests.

## **Expressing your concerns**

Our policy is that parental concerns and complaints should be dealt with at Academy level, wherever possible. This is because we want to build and maintain good relations with you and to work with you to provide the best possible education for your child.

Wherever possible, we prefer to resolve any concerns informally, so as to make the best use of valuable time in supporting our children.

If, therefore, you have any concerns at all about your child's education or welfare, please contact us to arrange an appointment to discuss your concerns. We will then explain what action we can take to help to resolve the problem. You must not in any way disrupt the class during Academy times.

From time to time, situations can arise where parents feel that they must state their concern more formally. The procedures set out in this document explain how we will handle such cases.

## **Keeping our mutual cool!**

We recognise that parental concerns can give rise to stressful situations for families and the Academy Staff. We therefore ask you to bring your concerns to us in a spirit of positive willingness to seek a solution; and we will respond accordingly.

**As partners in your child's education, we all need to approach any difficulties calmly, and without aggression, so that we can work on the problem constructively together.**

1. This policy statement sets out the Lantern Academy's approach to dealing with parental concerns and complaints. Further details of how we handle them are contained in our procedures document, which you can obtain on request from the Academy.
2. We value good home/Academy relations and will, therefore, do everything we can to establish and maintain them. This includes seeking to resolve any concerns or complaints promptly, and to the satisfaction of all concerned.
3. We welcome feedback on what parents feel we do well, or not so well. We will consider carefully all feedback, whether positive or negative, and will review our policies and practices accordingly.
4. We will treat all concerns and complaints seriously and courteously and will advise parents and others of the Academy's policy for dealing with their concerns. In return, we expect parents and other complainants to behave respectfully towards all members of the Academy team. In particular, any disagreements should not be expressed inappropriately or in front of pupils.
5. The Academy's procedures will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary.
6. All Academy volunteers, teaching and non-teaching and members of the Academy Committee will receive training in handling parental concerns and complaints as appropriate. This may be on an individual basis or as a group activity.
7. Whilst we will seek to resolve concerns and complaints to the satisfaction of all parties, it may not be possible to achieve this in every case. We will, therefore, use our option to close a complaint before all the stages of the Academy's procedures have been exhausted, if this appears to be appropriate.

### **Our procedures for dealing with general concerns and complaints**

The majority of concerns from parents and others are handled under the following general procedures. The procedure is divided into three stages;

Stage 1: aims to resolve the concern through informal contact at the appropriate level in the Academy

Stage 2: is the first formal stage at which written complaints are considered by the Head Academy or the designated member of the Academy Committee, who has special responsibility for dealing with complaints.

Stage 3: is the next stage, once Stage 2 has been worked through. It involves a complaints review panel of the full Academy Committee and Academy head.

The three Stages will operate in the following way:

#### **STAGE 1 – YOUR INITIAL CONTACT WITH THE ACADEMY**

1. Many concerns will be dealt with informally when you make them known to us. The first point of contact should be the Head Academy who will deal with your concern and liaise with the relevant people.
2. We will see you, or contact you by telephone or in writing, as soon as possible after your concern is made known to us. All members of staff know how to refer, if necessary, to the appropriate person with responsibility for particular issues raised by you. He or she will make a clear note of the details and will check later to make sure that the matter has been followed up.
3. We will ensure that you are clear what action or monitoring of the situation, if any, has been agreed.

4. We will ensure that we speak directly to all appropriate persons who may be able to assist us with our enquiries into your concern.
5. We will discuss with you (normally within ten working days) the progress of our enquiries. You will have the opportunity of asking for the matter to be considered further, once we have responded to your concern.
6. If you are still dissatisfied following this informal approach, your concern will become a formal complaint and we will deal with it at the next stage.

## **STAGE 2 - FORMAL CONSIDERATION OF YOUR COMPLAINT**

This stage in our procedures deals with written complaints. It applies where you are not happy with the informal approach to dealing with your concern, as outlined under Stage 1 above.

1. Normally, your written complaint should be addressed to the Head Teacher. If, however, your complaint concerns the Head Teacher personally, it should be sent to the Academy marked "For the attention of the Chair of Academy Committee."
2. We will acknowledge your complaint in writing as soon as possible after receiving it. This will be within five working days.
3. We will enclose a copy of these procedures with the acknowledgement.
4. Normally we would expect to respond in full within **ten working days** but if this is not possible, we will write to explain the reason for the delay and let you know when we hope to be able to provide a full response.
5. As part of our consideration of your complaint, we may invite you to a meeting to discuss the complaint and fill in any details required.
6. Following the meeting, the Head Teacher or chair of Academy Committee will, where necessary, talk to witnesses and take statements from others involved. If the complaint centers on a pupil, we will talk to the pupil concerned and, where appropriate, others present at the time of the incident in question.
7. We will normally talk to pupils with a parent or carer present, unless this would delay the investigation of a serious or urgent complaint, or where a pupil has specifically said that he or she would prefer the parent or carer not to be involved. In such circumstances, we will ensure that another member of staff, with whom the pupil feels comfortable, is present.
8. If the complaint is against a member of staff, it will be dealt with under the Academy's confidential procedures.
9. The Head Madrassah, or chair of Academy Committee will keep written/typed, signed and dated records of all meetings and telephone conversations, and other related documentation.
10. Once we have established all the relevant facts, we will send you a written response to your complaint. This will give a full explanation of the Head Madrassah. If follow-up action is needed, we will indicate what we are proposing to do. We may invite you to a meeting to discuss the outcome as part of our commitment to building and maintaining good relations with you.
11. The person investigating your complaint may decide that we have done all we can to resolve the complaint, in which case we may use our discretion to close the complaint at this point.

## **CLOSURE OF COMPLAINTS**

Very occasionally, The Academy will feel that it needs to close a complaint even though the complainant is still dissatisfied.

We will do all we can to help to resolve a complaint but sometimes it is simply not possible to meet all of the complainant's wishes. It is simply a case of "agreeing to disagree" and moving on from there. If a complainant persists in making representations to the Academy – to the Head, designated committee member, chair of Academy Committee or anyone else, this can be extremely time-consuming and can detract from our responsibility to look after the interests of all the children in our care.

**For this reason, we reserve the right to close correspondence (including personal approaches, as well as letters and telephone calls) on a complaint where we feel that we have taken all reasonable action to resolve the complaint and especially where the complainant's action is causing distress to staff and/or pupils.**

The Executive Committee will support us in this position, and in exceptional circumstances, closure may occur before a complaint has reached

**However, wherever possible, we prefer to resolve any concerns informally, so as to make the best use of valuable time in supporting our children.**

Mohammed Shahid

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