



AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL OF ABU DHABI

COMPLAINTS
MANAGEMENT
POLICY &
PROCEDURES

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1. SCHOOL VISION

Australian School of Abu Dhabi (ASAD) fosters globally minded graduates through inclusive education, nurturing a sense of belonging, understanding, and respect. We empower students with skills, empathy, and awareness to contribute locally and globally.

2. SCHOOL MISSION

Australian School of Abu Dhabi (ASAD) provides a diverse curriculum with global perspectives to all students. We foster inclusion, embrace diversity, promote understanding, and empower students to excel academically and socially. Our commitment to inclusivity ensures every student feels valued and supported.

3. INTRODUCTION

The Australian School of Abu Dhabi (ASAD) is committed to fostering a positive, inclusive, and transparent educational environment in which students, parents, staff, and members of the wider school community feel respected, heard and supported. Open communication and the fair and timely resolution of concerns are essential to maintaining trust, safeguarding wellbeing and ensuring high standards of education and professional practice.

This Complaints Management Policy and Procedures outlines ASAD's approach to receiving, managing and resolving concerns, grievances and complaints in a consistent, objective, and respectful manner. It reflects ASAD's commitment to effective governance, accountability and continuous improvement and aligns with the expectations of the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) in relation to school operations, inspection standards, safeguarding and wellbeing.

The policy recognises that concerns and complaints may arise from time to time and that, when handled appropriately, they can contribute positively to school improvement. ASAD therefore encourages the early and informal resolution of issues wherever possible, while also ensuring that clear procedures are in place for formal complaints and appropriate escalation where necessary. Furthermore, the school ensures that these procedures are clearly communicated and accessible to parents and students.

4. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and consistent framework for the management of concerns, grievances and complaints and student requests for appeals relating to programme-related decisions taken by the school in the delivery of International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes, raised by parents, students, staff and other stakeholders of the Australian School of Abu Dhabi (ASAD).

This policy aims to:

- provide clear and accessible procedures for raising and addressing concerns, grievances, complaints and appeals
- ensure that all matters are handled fairly, objectively and in a timely manner
- promote early and informal resolution of issues wherever appropriate
- ensure that concerns, grievances, ~~and~~ complaints and appeals are taken seriously and investigated proportionately
- safeguard the wellbeing, rights and dignity of all members of the school community
- support effective governance, accountability and continuous improvement

- ensure compliance with applicable UAE legislation and the expectations of the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK)

Through the implementation of this policy, ASAD seeks to maintain trust and confidence within the school community by ensuring that concerns, grievances and complaints and appeals are managed transparently, consistently and without fear of retaliation.

5. SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the ASAD school community including parents, students, staff and other stakeholders.

It applies to concerns, grievances and complaints relating to any aspect of the school's operations, services or activities, including but not limited to teaching and learning, student wellbeing, safeguarding, behaviour, inclusion and learning support, health and safety, administration and professional conduct.

This policy also applies to complaints and student requests for appeals against programme-related decisions taken by the school, including decisions relating to assessment, reporting, progression, participation, or other matters associated with the school's educational programmes.

This policy applies across all year levels including Kindergarten and operates alongside other relevant school policies and procedures. It does not replace statutory, regulatory or contractual processes. Where a matter falls outside the ASAD's remit or involves serious allegations, it will be referred to the appropriate external authority in accordance with applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

6. DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Appeal	A request by a student or parent or legal guardian for a formal review of a programme-related decision taken by the school.
Concern	A query related to a matter that is causing some level of worry or unrest.
Complainant	The person who raises a complaint.
Complaint	Any expression of dissatisfaction by an individual.
Formal Complaint	Dissatisfaction expressed by an individual (parent, student or staff member), verbally or in writing, with the expectation that the matter will be addressed officially, possibly with an outcome that would require official approvals and/or management intervention.
Grievance	An official statement of a complaint over something believed to be wrong or unfair. Workplace grievances are any real or perceived problem staff experience during employment, including the perception of discrimination, harassment, or unfair treatment.
Informal Complaint	Dissatisfaction expressed by an individual (parent or staff member), verbally or in writing, with the expectation of having the matter addressed with a friendly dialogue and quick resolution.
Stakeholders	Individuals or groups with a legitimate interest in the school including parents, students, staff, governing bodies, service providers and members of the wider school community.

Whistleblowing	A term given to a complaint, when a person, often a staff member, feels the need to reveal information about an activity within a private or public organization that is deemed illegal, immoral, illicit, unsafe, or fraudulent.
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7. POLICY

This section sets out ASAD’s approach to the management of concerns, grievances and complaints and establishes the principles and processes that govern how such matters are handled across the school.

7.1 Guiding Principles

ASAD is committed to ensuring that all concerns, grievances and complaints raised by parents, students and staff are managed in a fair, transparent, consistent and timely manner. ASAD recognises the importance of accessible and effective processes that enable issues to be raised and addressed constructively, with due regard to age-appropriate processes that enable students to raise concerns and appeals independently or with support, while safeguarding the wellbeing, rights and dignity of all parties involved.

All parties involved in a concern, grievance or complaint are expected to engage respectfully and constructively, with a focus on resolution rather than blame.

In managing concerns, grievances and complaints, ASAD is guided by the following principles:

- **Accessibility:** processes are clear and accessible to parents, students and staff, with due regard to age-appropriate approaches for students
- **Fairness and objectivity:** matters are considered impartially, respectfully and without bias
- **Timeliness:** concerns, grievances and complaints are acknowledged and addressed within reasonable and defined timeframes
- **Proportionality:** issues are handled in a manner appropriate to their nature, seriousness and potential impact
- **Confidentiality:** information is handled sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis
- **Accountability:** concerns, grievances and complaints are appropriately documented and managed in line with school procedures and applicable legal requirements
- **Non-retaliation:** no parent, student or staff member will be subject to disadvantage or adverse treatment for raising a concern, grievance or complaint in good faith

ASAD encourages the early and informal resolution of concerns wherever appropriate. Where this is not possible, clear formal procedures will be followed.

All concerns, grievances and complaints will be:

- acknowledged appropriately
- considered objectively and without bias
- managed with due regard to confidentiality
- recorded in line with school procedures and applicable legal requirements
- resolved or escalated within reasonable and defined timeframes

ASAD will ensure that no individual is subject to disadvantage, retaliation or adverse treatment as a result of raising a concern, grievance or complaint in good faith.

7.2 Informal Concerns and Complaints Process

ASAD recognises that many concerns or complaints can be resolved quickly and effectively through early and informal discussion. Concerns and complaints should, where appropriate, be raised initially at the most appropriate level or directly with the individual concerned to enable timely and effective resolution. Parents, students and staff are encouraged to raise concerns at the earliest opportunity with the appropriate member of staff so that issues may be addressed constructively and without unnecessary escalation.

Informal concerns and complaints may be raised verbally or in writing and are expected to be communicated in a respectful manner. Abusive, threatening or inappropriate language or behaviour will not be accepted. Informal concerns and complaints will normally be managed by the relevant staff member or an appropriate member of the ASAD leadership team with responsibility for the relevant area, such as programmes, student behaviour management, wellbeing or inclusion. ASAD will make reasonable efforts to ensure that concerns raised informally are listened to, considered and responded to in a timely manner.

Informal concerns and complaints may be managed through discussion, clarification or agreed actions at classroom, team or leadership level, as appropriate. Where necessary, matters may be brought to the attention of senior leadership to support oversight, consistency and effective resolution.

While informal matters may not require a full investigation, brief records may be kept where appropriate to support resolution, identify recurring issues or inform further action.

If an informal concern or complaint cannot be resolved satisfactorily, or if the matter is serious in nature, it may be progressed to the formal complaints process set out below.

7.3 Formal Complaints Process

A formal complaint is appropriate where an informal concern or complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily, where the matter is serious in nature or where the complainant requests that the issue be addressed through a formal process.

Formal complaints should be submitted in writing to enable the matter to be clearly understood, appropriately recorded and managed. This may be done by email, letter or by using the school's formal complaints form ([Appendix A](#)), where available. Verbal complaints that require formal consideration will be documented by the school. A written complaint should include sufficient information to allow the matter to be understood and investigated, such as the nature of the concern, the individuals involved and the outcome sought.

Formal complaints will normally be managed by an appropriate member of the ASAD leadership team with responsibility for the relevant area. The Principal or a delegated senior leader will provide oversight and determine the outcome where appropriate.

Where a complaint or appeal relates to a programme-related decision, the review will be conducted by an appropriate member of the leadership team who was not directly involved in the original decision, where reasonably practicable.

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the school will ensure that it is acknowledged and considered objectively and without bias. The school aims to acknowledge formal complaints within **three (3) working days** of lodgement.

Formal complaints will be:

- assessed to determine the appropriate level of investigation and management
- investigated in a fair and proportionate manner by an appropriate member of staff or member of the ASAD's leadership
- documented in accordance with school procedures and applicable legal requirements
- responded to with findings and a proposed resolution, including the outcome of any investigation, normally within **ten (10) working days** of lodgement of the complaint

The investigation of a formal complaint may include meetings with the complainant and other relevant parties, consideration of relevant information or documentation and, where appropriate, consultation with senior leadership. Where a formal complaint involves multiple parties, complex issues or matters of a sensitive nature, additional steps may be taken to ensure the process is thorough, impartial and appropriate to the circumstances.

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of a formal complaint, this includes appeals against programme-related decisions taken by the school, the matter may be subject to further internal review or escalation in accordance with this policy.

7.4 Staff Grievances

ASAD recognises that staff may raise grievances relating to their employment, working conditions or treatment in the workplace. Staff grievances are distinct from general concerns or complaints and will be managed in a manner that is fair, confidential and consistent with applicable employment legislation and school procedures.

Staff are encouraged to raise grievances at the earliest opportunity, initially through informal discussion where appropriate. Where a grievance cannot be resolved informally, or where the nature of the matter requires formal consideration, it may be raised through the school's formal grievance procedures.

Staff grievances may be raised verbally or in writing and will be:

- acknowledged appropriately
- considered objectively and without bias
- investigated proportionately and confidentially
- documented in accordance with school procedures and applicable legal requirements
- responded to within reasonable timeframes

ASAD will ensure that staff who raise grievances in good faith are not subject to disadvantage, retaliation or adverse treatment as a result of doing so.

Where a grievance involves serious misconduct, safeguarding concerns or matters that fall outside the ASAD's remit, it will be escalated or referred in accordance with relevant policies and legal requirements.

7.5 Whistleblowing

ASAD is committed to promoting a culture of integrity, transparency and accountability and recognises the importance of providing a safe and trusted route for raising serious concerns in the public interest.

Whistleblowing refers to the disclosure of information relating to suspected unlawful, unethical, unsafe or improper conduct within the school. This may include, but is not limited to, matters involving serious misconduct, safeguarding failures, corruption, fraud, abuse of authority or breaches of legal or regulatory requirements.

Whistleblowing concerns are distinct from general concerns, complaints or staff grievances and are most commonly raised by staff. Such concerns may be raised where an individual believes that the matter cannot be appropriately addressed through normal management or complaints procedures or where senior leadership or governance is implicated.

ASAD will ensure that:

- whistleblowing concerns are taken seriously and considered promptly
- confidentiality is maintained wherever possible
- individuals who raise concerns in good faith are protected from retaliation, victimisation or adverse treatment
- concerns are investigated or referred appropriately in accordance with applicable laws and school policies

Whistleblowing concerns may be raised with an appropriate member of the ASAD leadership team, the Principal, the Director or, where appropriate, the governing board, particularly where senior leadership or governance is implicated or directly with relevant external authorities where required by law or regulatory obligations.

7.6 Safeguarding and Serious Matters

ASAD recognises that certain concerns, grievances and complaints are of a serious nature and require immediate attention, escalation or referral in accordance with safeguarding obligations and legal requirements. Such matters may not be suitable for informal resolution.

Matters that will be treated as safeguarding or serious matters include, but are not limited to:

- concerns relating to the safety, wellbeing or protection of a child or young person
- allegations of abuse, neglect or harm
- serious misconduct, corruption or unlawful behaviour
- allegations involving senior leadership, including the Principal and the Director or members of the governing board
- serious breaches of professional conduct or ethical standards
- matters involving privacy breaches or misuse of personal data
- issues that present a significant risk to individuals or the wider school community

Where a safeguarding or serious matter is identified, the school will:

- take immediate and appropriate action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those involved
- manage the matter in accordance with relevant safeguarding policies and procedures

- escalate the matter to an appropriate member of the ASAD leadership team, the Principal, the Director or the governing board, as appropriate
- refer the matter to relevant external authorities where required by law or regulatory obligations

Safeguarding and serious matters will be handled with the highest level of confidentiality and urgency, with information shared strictly on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with applicable legal and policy requirements.

7.7 Confidentiality and Records

ASAD is committed to handling all concerns, grievances, complaints and whistleblowing matters with due regard to confidentiality and privacy. Information relating to a concern, grievance or complaint will be shared only with those who have a legitimate need to know in order to manage, investigate or resolve the matter appropriately. All parties involved are expected to respect the confidentiality of the process.

Records of concerns, grievances, complaints and whistleblowing matters will be maintained in accordance with school procedures and applicable legal requirements, including data protection obligations. Records will include, where appropriate, details of the matter raised, actions taken, outcomes and any follow-up required. Records will be stored securely and accessed only by authorised personnel. Information will be retained only for as long as necessary and in line with applicable retention requirements.

7.8 Escalation and External Referral

ASAD seeks to resolve concerns, grievances and complaints fairly and effectively at the earliest appropriate stage. Where a matter cannot be resolved through the informal or formal complaints process, or where the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, the matter may be escalated in accordance with this policy.

Formal complaints may be reviewed by the Principal. Where a complainant remains dissatisfied following review by the Principal, the matter may be escalated to the Director for final internal consideration. The Director's review represents the final stage of the school's internal complaints and appeals process. The governing board may be involved where appropriate, particularly in matters involving senior leadership, governance or significant risk.

Where required by law, regulatory obligations or safeguarding responsibilities, or where a matter falls outside the school's remit, concerns, complaints or whistleblowing matters may be referred to relevant external authorities, including the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) or relevant law enforcement authorities.

Nothing in this policy prevents an individual from raising a matter directly with an external authority where required or permitted by law.

8. COMPLIANCE

ASAD is committed to ensuring that the management of concerns, grievances, complaints and whistleblowing matters is conducted in compliance with applicable laws, regulatory requirements and the expectations of relevant authorities.

This policy is implemented in alignment with:

- the governance, inspection and operational requirements of the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK)
- applicable UAE federal legislation, including laws relating to labour relations, criminal conduct and the protection of personal data
- safeguarding and child protection obligations
- the school's related policies and procedures

Details of this policy and its procedures are published on the school website and communicated to parents or legal guardians, students and staff through school communications. Age-appropriate guidance is provided to ensure that students understand how to raise concerns and request appeals.

All staff are expected to act in accordance with this policy and to cooperate fully with complaints, grievance and whistleblowing processes. Failure to comply with this policy may result in further action in line with school procedures. The school will regularly review the implementation of this policy to ensure ongoing compliance, effectiveness and alignment with regulatory expectations and best practice.

ADEK has the authority to monitor, review and regulate the school's compliance with applicable requirements. Non-compliance with ADEK policies, directives or inspection standards may result in regulatory action, directives for improvement or other measures as determined by ADEK in accordance with its statutory powers.

9. REFERENCES

- Department of Education and Knowledge, Abu Dhabi (ADEK) 2024 (September) ADEK_School_Governance Policy_v.1.1
- International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), 2020, Programme Standards and Practices.
- Federal Decree Law No. (3) of 2016 Concerning Child Rights (Wadeema)
- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments
- Federal Decree Law No. (33) of 2021 Concerning Regulating Labour Relations
- Federal Decree Law No. (45) of 2021 Concerning the Protection of Personal Data
- Ministry of Education (MoE). (2022). Code of Conduct for Education Professionals in General Education.

10. RATIFICATION & REVISION HISTORY

Document Title	Complaints Management Policy and Procedures
Version	v.2
Ratification Date	13 th May 2026
Next Review Date	May 2027

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL OF ABU DHABI

This form may be used to submit a formal complaint to Australian School of Abu Dhabi (ASAD). Use of this form is optional. Formal complaints may also be submitted in writing by email or letter.

COMPLAINANT DETAILS

Full Name: _____

Relationship to the school (please tick):

- Parent / Carer
- Student
- Staff Member
- Other stakeholder (please specify): _____

Contact details:

Email: _____

Phone: _____

STUDENT DETAILS (if applicable)

Student Name(s): _____

Grade/Year Level: _____

Complaint Details:

Date(s) of incident or concern: _____

Individuals involved (if known): _____

INFORMAL STEPS TAKEN TO RESOLVE CONCERN

Have you raised this matter informally with the school? (please tick)

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide brief details of whom you contacted and the outcome:

Please outline the outcome or resolution you are seeking, if any:

Declaration

I acknowledge that the information provided in this form will be recorded and managed by the school in accordance with its Complaints Management Policy and Procedures, confidentiality requirements and applicable data protection obligations. I understand that information may be shared on a need-to-know basis with relevant staff, senior leadership or external authorities where required to assess, investigate or resolve the matter.

Name: _____ **Signature:** _____

Date: _____

Office Use Only

Date Received:	Received By:
Date Complaint Acknowledged:	Acknowledged By:
Resolution:	
Date Resolution Finalised:	Name and Signature: