The British Muslim School · Lodge Road · West Bromwich · B70 8NX

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Approved by	Governing Body, September 2026
Review date	September 2027, or sooner if the law or guidance changes
Responsible person	Principal, Mr Muhammad Kadir Al Hasan (Stage 3: Chair of the Governing Body, Mr Mohammed Misbhaur Rahman)
Related policies	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Managing Allegations Against Staff, Whistleblowing Policy, Behaviour Policy (including Rewards, Sanctions and Searching), Anti-Bullying Policy, Data Protection Policy, Records Management and Retention Policy, Equality Policy

1. Purpose

The British Muslim School wants to hear when parents or pupils are unhappy, so that we can put things right quickly and fairly. Every complaint is treated as a genuine expression of dissatisfaction. No pupil or parent is treated less favourably because they have made a complaint in good faith.

This policy meets Part 7 (paragraph 33) of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as explained in "The Independent School Standards: guidance for independent schools" (DfE, April 2026), and Standard 14 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (DfE, 2022, technical update May 2026).

The standards require a procedure for complaints from parents of current pupils. We go further: this procedure is also open to pupils, including boarders, and to a parent whose complaint began while their son was still a pupil here.

In this policy, "parent" means anyone with parental responsibility for a pupil or who cares for him. "Working day" means Monday to Friday during term time, excluding bank holidays. Complaints received in the holidays are dealt with as quickly as possible, and the timescales start on the first working day of the next term unless the matter is urgent. This does not apply to the 30-day time limit for acknowledging a data protection complaint (section 9), which runs in the holidays too.

2. What this policy does not cover

Some matters have their own procedures, and we will tell you if one of them applies.

- Concerns about the safety or welfare of a child. These go straight to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Mr Mirza Saghar Hussain, the same day (see section 4).
- Allegations that a member of staff, a volunteer or a contractor has harmed a child or may pose a risk to children. These are dealt with under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Managing Allegations Against Staff (see section 4).
- Appeals against a suspension or exclusion. These are made in writing to a Committee of the Board of Governors within 7 days, under the Behaviour Policy.

- Concerns raised by staff about practice in the school. These are dealt with under the Whistleblowing Policy.
- Admissions decisions for prospective pupils.

A complaint about how the school has handled your personal data can be made under this policy. Section 9 explains the extra steps we take for these complaints.

3. Who deals with what

Complaint about	Stage 1 (informal)	Stage 2 (formal)	Stage 3 (panel hearing)
A teacher, boarding staff or other staff member	That member of staff, or a senior leader	The Principal	A panel arranged by the Chair of the Governing Body
The Principal	Not used: write to the Chair	The Chair of the Governing Body	A panel arranged by another governor nominated by the Board of Governors
The Chair of the Governing Body or a governor	Not used: write to the Principal	Another governor nominated by the Board of Governors	A panel arranged by that governor

The Principal, Mr Muhammad Kadir Al Hasan, can be reached at principal@thebritishmuslimschool.co.uk or through the school office on 0121 516 2264.

The Chair of the Governing Body, Mr Mohammed Misbhaur Rahman, can be reached at Misba70@yahoo.com, or by letter to the school marked "Private – for the Chair of Governors". The office passes these letters to him unopened.

Nobody deals with a complaint at any stage if they are the subject of it or were directly involved in the matter.

4. Complaints that raise a safeguarding concern

If a complaint suggests that a child may be at risk of harm, staff do not wait for the complaints procedure. They tell the DSL, Mr Mirza Saghar Hussain (m.hussain1@thebritishmuslimschool.co.uk; out of hours 07868663413), or a Deputy DSL (Mr Toqir Ul Islam or the Principal), the same day. The DSL follows the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, including a referral to Sandwell Children's Trust within 24 hours where this is needed.

If a complaint contains an allegation that a member of staff, a volunteer or a contractor has harmed a child, or may pose a risk to children, it is passed at once to the DSL, who acts as case manager. If the allegation is about the DSL, it goes to the Principal, and if it is about the Principal, to the Chair of the Governing Body. The case manager refers to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at sandwell_LADO@sandwellchildrenstrust.org immediately, and in any case within one working day where the harm threshold may be met.

The complaints procedure is paused while the safeguarding process runs. We tell the complainant what we can, without putting any child or investigation at risk. Any part of the complaint not covered by the safeguarding process continues afterwards.

5. Stage 1: informal concerns

Most concerns are best sorted out by talking. Parents can raise a concern with the teacher or member of staff concerned, by telephone, in person or in writing. Parents of boarders can contact the Head of Boarding, Muhammad Mahbub Kamal, or the boarding staff on duty. A parent may also ask for an appointment, and we aim to arrange one within 5 working days, or sooner if the matter is urgent.

At Stage 1:

- the member of staff records the concern, the date and the outcome in the complaints log;
- a senior leader is told, and may attend any meeting;
- we aim to resolve the concern within 48 hours and, at the latest, within 10 working days.

If the parent is not satisfied with the response, they may move to Stage 2.

6. Stage 2: formal complaint to the Principal

A formal complaint is made in writing to the Principal. Parents may use the form in Appendix A, which can be completed electronically on the school website or on paper, or write a letter or an email. The complaint should say what has happened, what has been done so far, and what the parent would like to happen.

- The Principal acknowledges the complaint in writing within 2 working days of receiving it.
- The Principal, or a senior leader he appoints who was not involved in the matter, investigates. The parent is invited to a meeting, normally within 5 working days of the complaint being received. Parents may bring a friend or relative to support them.
- The investigator speaks to the staff and pupils involved and looks at any records.
- The Principal writes to the parent with the outcome within 20 working days of receiving the complaint. The letter sets out the findings, the reasons, any action the school will take, and how to go to Stage 3.
- Where action has been agreed, the Principal checks it has been carried out within 10 working days, and may invite the parent back to review progress.

If an investigation needs longer, for example because a key witness is absent, the Principal writes to the parent before the 20 working days end to explain why and to give a new date.

7. Stage 3: panel hearing

If the parent is not satisfied with the Stage 2 outcome, they may ask for a panel hearing. The request is made in writing to the Chair of the Governing Body, using the form in Appendix B or by letter or email, within 10 working days of receiving the Stage 2 letter. The Chair will still consider a later request if there is a good reason for the delay.

Arranging the panel

- The Chair acknowledges the request within 2 working days.
- The Chair appoints a panel of at least three people. None of them may have been directly involved in the matters in the complaint.
- At least one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school. This person is not a member of staff, not a governor and not otherwise involved in managing the school (for example, the school's own solicitor would not be independent).

- The hearing takes place within 15 working days of the request being received. The Chair offers reasonable dates and times so that the parent can attend.
- At least 5 working days before the hearing, the panel members and the parent receive copies of the documents the panel will consider.

At the hearing

- The parent may attend and may be accompanied by a person of their choice, such as a friend or relative. This is not a right to legal representation, although the panel may agree to it.
- The panel hears from the parent and from the school. Each side may ask questions.
- If the parent chooses not to attend, the hearing still goes ahead and the panel considers the complaint on the papers.
- The hearing is private. A member of the panel or the school office keeps a note of it.

After the hearing

- The panel makes findings and recommendations. It may uphold the complaint in full or in part, or not uphold it.
- The panel sends a copy of its findings and recommendations to the parent and, where relevant, to the person complained about, within 5 working days of the hearing and no later than 25 working days after the request for a hearing.
- A copy is kept at the school and is available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Principal.
- The Principal tells the Chair, in writing, what action has been taken on the panel's recommendations.

The panel hearing is the final stage of the school's procedure.

8. Complaints from pupils, including boarders

Pupils may raise a concern or complaint with any member of staff they trust. Boarders may also raise a complaint with the Head of Boarding, Muhammad Mahbub Kamal, the boarding staff on duty, or the Independent Listener.

- The member of staff writes down the date, time and nature of the complaint in the pupils' complaints log, and the pupil may complete the form in Appendix C if he wishes.
- Pupils' complaints are dealt with quickly, normally within 5 working days. The pupil is kept informed and is told the outcome.
- A complaint about boarding is passed to the Head of Boarding. A complaint about a member of staff is passed to the Principal, and a complaint about the Principal to the Chair.
- A pupil may bring a friend or a member of staff with him to any meeting about his complaint.
- No pupil is punished or treated less favourably for making a complaint in good faith.
- If a pupil is not satisfied, his parent may take the matter up under Stages 2 and 3 of this policy.

Boarders can also contact, at any time and without going through the school:

- the Independent Listener, Mr Emdad Hussain (not staff and not a governor), emdadhussain@gmail.com, 07940705919;
- Childline, 0800 1111;
- the Children's Commissioner's Help at Hand service, 0800 528 0731.

These contacts are displayed in the boarding house. Boarding staff provide a phone in private for these calls without asking why.

9. Complaints about personal data

From 19 June 2026, section 164A of the Data Protection Act 2018 (inserted by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025) gives anyone whose personal data we hold the right to complain to the school if they think we have broken data protection law.

A data protection complaint can be made under this policy, or directly to the Data Protection Lead, Mr Guljar Ahmed, by email to info@thebritishmuslimschool.co.uk, by letter marked "For the Data Protection Lead", in person, or by using the form in Appendix A. The form can be completed electronically on the school website or on paper from the school office. For these complaints:

- we acknowledge the complaint within 30 days of receiving it, including in the school holidays, and in practice within 2 working days;
- we take appropriate steps to investigate it without undue delay, including making enquiries about its subject matter;
- we keep the complainant informed about progress, and tell them the outcome without undue delay;
- if the complainant remains unhappy, they may complain to the UK's data protection regulator, the Information Commission's Office (ICO): ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint, 0303 123 1113, or by post to 4th Floor, No.3 Circle Square, 5 Hawkshaw Street, Manchester, M1 7BL. The ICO normally expects the complaint to have been made to the school first.

The Data Protection Policy sets out the full procedure.

10. Unreasonable behaviour and repeated complaints

We expect courtesy from everyone involved. If a complainant behaves in an abusive or threatening way, or repeatedly raises a complaint that has completed every stage, the Principal (or the Chair, where the Principal is involved) may limit contact to written correspondence or to one named person, and will say so in writing. A complaint that has completed Stage 3 is not reopened unless new and relevant information comes to light.

We also ask complainants to respect the privacy of the staff and pupils involved while a complaint is under way.

11. Confidentiality

Correspondence, statements and records about individual complaints are kept confidential. Only those who need to know are told about a complaint. The records are shown to others only where the Secretary of State or Ofsted asks to see them, where the law requires it, or where information must be shared to safeguard a child.

12. Records

We keep a written record of every complaint made at Stage 2 or Stage 3. The record shows:

- the date, the complainant and the nature of the complaint;
- whether it was resolved at Stage 2 or went to a panel hearing;
- the action the school took as a result, whether or not the complaint was upheld;

- whether it was about the boarding provision.

We also record Stage 1 concerns, pupils' complaints, and complaints that were made but later withdrawn.

Correspondence, statements, the findings and recommendations of any panel, and other records of each complaint are kept in a separate confidential file in the school office. The log and the files are kept for at least 3 years after the complaint is closed, and longer where the Records Management and Retention Policy says so (for example, where a complaint involved a safeguarding matter, or a claim against the school is possible).

13. Number of formal complaints

The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure (Stage 2) during the preceding school year is published on the school website with this policy, and is available to parents and others on request from the school office.

14. If you are still unhappy

The Department for Education (DfE) registers independent schools and checks that they meet the Independent School Standards. It cannot investigate an individual complaint or change the school's decision on it, but it can act if the school has not met the standards, including the complaints standard. You can contact the DfE through its online "Contact the Department for Education" form on gov.uk.

Ofsted inspects the school and its boarding provision, and can take your concerns into account. Ofsted: 0300 123 1231, enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Anyone can report a concern about a child's safety to Sandwell Children's Trust on 0121 569 3100 (24 hours).

15. Monitoring

The Principal and the DSL review the complaints log every term. They look for patterns, analyse boarding complaints separately from day-school complaints, and agree any improvements. The Principal reports the number and nature of complaints, and the action taken, to the Governing Body each term. The Governing Body reviews the handling of complaints as part of its annual safeguarding audit.

This policy is published on the school website and is available from the school office. We explain it to parents when their son joins, to pupils in assemblies and in the boarding house, and to staff at induction.

Appendix A: Complaint form (parent or other adult)

Your name:

Address and postcode:

Telephone and email:

Pupil's name and year group:

Your relationship to the pupil:

What are you unhappy about? Please give the facts in date order, with dates and times where possible.

What have you done so far to resolve it, and with whom?

What would put things right?

Are you sending any documents? If so, please list them.

Signature and date:

For school use: date received; date acknowledged and by whom; complaint passed to; Stage (1, 2 or 3); data protection complaint (yes/no); boarding complaint (yes/no).

Appendix B: Request for a panel hearing

Send this form to the Chair of the Governing Body, Mr Mohammed Misbhaur Rahman, at Misba70@yahoo.com or by letter to the school marked "Private – for the Chair of Governors".

Your name:

Address and postcode:

Telephone and email:

Pupil's name and year group:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Date of the Principal's Stage 2 letter:

What are you unhappy about, and why is the Stage 2 outcome not acceptable to you?

What would put things right?

Are you sending any documents? If so, please list them.

Signature and date:

For school use: date received; date acknowledged and by whom; panel members; date of hearing.

Appendix C: Complaint form (pupil)

Your name:

Your year group:

Day pupil or boarder:

What are you unhappy about? Please say what happened, when and where.

What would help put things right?

Did anyone see what happened, or is there anything else that shows what happened?

Signature and date:

For school use: received by; logged by; passed to; date; outcome told to pupil on.

Approval and signatures

Approved by the Governing Body: September 2026.

Chair of the Governing Body: Mr. Mohammed Misbhaur Rahman. Signed: MR. Date: September 2026.

Principal: Mr. Muhammad Kadir Al Hasan. Signed: MKAH. Date: September 2026.