

Daffodil Grammar School for Girls

Complaints Policy and Procedure

School address: 163 Commercial Road, London, E1 2DA

Proprietor: ASM Anisuzzaman

Headteacher: Mr Stephen Montford

Complaints Lead: Eman Ahamed

Applies to: Parents and carers of pupils

Review cycle: Annual

1. Status of this policy and statutory basis

This policy sets out the formal arrangements by which Daffodil Grammar School for Girls manages complaints made by parents and carers. It is written in accordance with the requirements of the **Independent School Standards Regulations, Part 7**, which require every independent school to have, and to implement effectively, a complaints procedure meeting specified criteria.

The school confirms that this procedure:

- allows complaints to be made and considered on an informal basis in the first instance
- provides for complaints to be made in writing where informal resolution is not achieved
- provides for a hearing before a panel where the complainant remains dissatisfied
- ensures that the panel includes at least one person independent of the management and running of the school
- provides for the complainant to attend and be accompanied at the panel hearing
- ensures that findings and recommendations are communicated in writing
- ensures that a written record of complaints is kept, including outcomes and actions taken
- ensures that all correspondence, statements and records are kept confidential

The school recognises that compliance is not achieved by the existence of a written policy alone. This procedure must be understood by staff, applied consistently, and capable of being demonstrated in practice.

2. Purpose, ethos and underlying principles

Daffodil Grammar School for Girls is committed to maintaining high standards of teaching, care, behaviour and communication. However, the school recognises that concerns and complaints may arise, even within well-functioning organisations.

The purpose of this procedure is not only to resolve individual concerns but to provide a fair, transparent and structured mechanism through which dissatisfaction can be expressed, understood and addressed. A well-functioning complaints procedure is a core element of accountability and good governance.

The school approaches complaints with the understanding that most concerns arise from misunderstandings, miscommunication or differing expectations rather than deliberate failure. For this reason, the school places strong emphasis on early, informal resolution wherever possible. However, where concerns cannot be resolved informally, the school provides a clear and structured escalation process.

All complaints will be handled in accordance with the following principles:

The process must be fair. This means that no decision is pre-determined, that evidence is considered objectively, and that both the complainant and the school have the opportunity to present their position.

The process must be proportionate. Not all complaints require the same level of investigation, but each must be taken seriously and addressed appropriately.

The process must be transparent. The complainant must understand how the complaint will be handled, what steps will be taken, and how decisions are reached.

The process must be respectful. All parties must be treated with dignity. The existence of a complaint must not affect the pupil's experience at school.

The process must be timely. Complaints must be addressed without unnecessary delay, while still allowing sufficient time for proper investigation.

The process must be reflective. Where a complaint identifies a weakness in practice, the school will take steps to improve.

3. Definition of a concern and a complaint

The school distinguishes clearly between a concern and a complaint because this determines how the issue is handled.

A concern is typically an expression of unease or dissatisfaction that can be resolved quickly through explanation, clarification or minor adjustment. Concerns are often raised verbally and may not require formal recording.

A complaint is a formal expression of dissatisfaction about an aspect of the school's provision, actions or decisions, which requires investigation and a formal response.

The distinction is important because it allows the school to resolve issues efficiently at an early stage while ensuring that more serious matters receive the appropriate level of scrutiny.

4. Scope of the procedure

This procedure applies to complaints made by parents or carers of pupils currently attending the school.

It covers matters relating to education, behaviour, welfare, communication, administration and the application of school policies.

Where a complaint raises a safeguarding concern, the school will act immediately under its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Safeguarding concerns take precedence over the complaints procedure and may be handled through separate processes where required.

5. Accessibility and support

The school recognises that not all parents will find it easy to express concerns in writing or navigate formal procedures.

For this reason, the school will provide reasonable support where required. This may include explaining the process, clarifying expectations, or assisting a parent in setting out their complaint in writing.

The school will ensure that the procedure is accessible and that parents are not disadvantaged by language, literacy or other barriers.

6. Conduct and expectations

The school expects all parties involved in the complaints process to behave reasonably and respectfully.

While the school is committed to hearing concerns fully, it will not accept behaviour that is abusive, threatening or persistently unreasonable. Where such behaviour occurs, the school may take steps to manage communication while still ensuring that the complaint itself is addressed.

The school also expects complainants to engage constructively with the process and to allow reasonable time for investigation.

7. Timescales and procedural flow

The school will aim to resolve complaints within clear and reasonable timescales.

A formal complaint will normally be acknowledged within three school days. The investigation at Stage 2 will normally be completed within ten to fifteen school days, depending on complexity. Where a panel hearing is required, it will normally take place within twenty school days of the request, with a written outcome issued within five school days.

These timescales reflect good practice and inspection expectations. However, the school recognises that complex cases may require additional time. Where this occurs, the complainant will be informed and given a revised timeframe.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

8. Purpose and approach

The first stage of the procedure is designed to resolve concerns quickly and without the need for formal investigation.

The school strongly encourages parents to raise concerns as soon as they arise. Early communication allows misunderstandings to be clarified and issues to be resolved before they escalate.

At this stage, the emphasis is on dialogue, explanation and practical resolution.

9. How concerns are handled

A concern should normally be raised with the member of staff most closely involved in the issue. This may be a subject teacher, form tutor or relevant member of staff.

The staff member will listen carefully, seek to understand the concern fully, and respond appropriately. This may involve explaining a decision, correcting an error, or taking action to address the issue.

Where the matter cannot be resolved at this level, it may be referred to a senior member of staff.

10. Outcome of Stage 1

Where the concern is resolved, the matter is considered closed.

Where the concern remains unresolved, or where the parent wishes to pursue the matter formally, the complaint progresses to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Formal Written Complaint

11. Nature and purpose of this stage

Stage 2 provides a formal process through which complaints are investigated thoroughly and objectively.

At this stage, the complaint becomes part of the school's formal record and must be set out clearly in writing.

12. Submission and acknowledgement

The complaint must be submitted in writing to the Headteacher. If the complaint concerns the Headteacher, it must be submitted to the proprietor.

The school will acknowledge receipt promptly and confirm how the complaint will be handled.

13. Investigation process

The investigation will be conducted by the Headteacher or an appropriate senior leader.

The investigation will involve a careful review of all relevant information. This may include written documentation, staff accounts, and, where appropriate, pupil accounts. The investigator will consider whether policies have been followed and whether decisions were reasonable.

The process will be impartial. The investigator will not assume that the complaint is either valid or invalid at the outset.

14. Written outcome

The outcome will be communicated in writing.

The response will explain what was investigated, what conclusions were reached, and why those conclusions were reached. It will also explain any actions taken or to be taken.

The response will inform the complainant of their right to proceed to Stage 3 if they remain dissatisfied.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

15. Purpose of the panel stage

The panel stage provides an independent review of the complaint.

It does not simply repeat the investigation. Instead, it considers whether the complaint has been handled properly and whether the conclusions reached are reasonable.

16. Constitution and independence

The panel will consist of at least three individuals who have not been involved in the complaint.

At least one member will be independent of the management and running of the school. This is a critical safeguard to ensure impartiality and compliance with the Independent School Standards.

17. Hearing process

The complainant will be invited to attend the hearing and may be accompanied.

The panel will consider all relevant evidence and will hear from both the complainant and the school. The process will be structured but not adversarial.

The role of the panel is to review, question and evaluate, not to conduct a new investigation from the beginning.

18. Decision and outcome

The panel will reach a decision based on the evidence presented.

The decision will be communicated in writing and will include the reasoning behind the outcome. Where appropriate, the panel may recommend actions or improvements.

The panel's decision is final.

19. Record keeping and inspection readiness

The school will maintain a written record of all complaints, including the stage reached and the outcome.

This record will demonstrate that complaints are handled properly and will be available for inspection if required.

20. Final statement

Daffodil Grammar School for Girls is committed to handling complaints in a manner that is fair, transparent and consistent.