

OAKTREE PRIMARY SCHOOL

An Athena Education School

COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES POLICY

Resolving Concerns Fairly and Promptly — Aligned with KHDA

Policy Title	Complaints and Grievance Procedures Policy
Institution	Oaktree Primary School
Operator	Athena Education
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School Leader Signature	

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1. Policy Statement

Oaktree Primary School, as part of Athena Education, is committed to working in partnership with parents, carers and the community, and to maintaining a positive and fair working environment for staff. We welcome feedback and recognise that, from time to time, concerns, complaints or grievances will arise. When they do, we aim to resolve them fairly, promptly, respectfully and at the earliest possible stage.

This policy sets out the procedures for raising and resolving complaints from parents, carers and members of the public (Part A), and grievances raised by members of staff (Part B). The complaints procedure is aligned with the requirements of the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) and the Dubai Parent-School Contract, and the staff grievance procedure reflects UAE labour legislation. The safety and wellbeing of pupils remains our highest priority, and any concern that relates to a child's safety is dealt with immediately under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

2. Purpose and Aims

Through this policy, the School aims to:

- Provide clear, fair and accessible procedures for raising and resolving complaints and grievances;
- Resolve concerns as early and as informally as possible;
- Ensure complaints and grievances are handled promptly, sensitively and without bias;
- Keep those involved informed of progress and outcomes;
- Ensure no one is treated less favourably for raising a genuine complaint or grievance in good faith;
- Comply with KHDA requirements and the Parent-School Contract, and with UAE labour legislation;
- Use what we learn from complaints and grievances to improve the School.

3. Scope

This policy applies to complaints raised by parents, carers and members of the public about the School's actions, decisions or standard of service (Part A), and to grievances raised by members of staff about their own employment, working conditions or treatment at work (Part B). Certain matters are dealt with under separate procedures — for example, concerns about a child's safety (Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy), serious wrongdoing in the public interest (Whistleblowing Policy), staff conduct (Disciplinary Procedure), admissions and fees, and exclusions — and this policy signposts those where relevant.

4. Definitions

This policy uses the following terms:

Term	Meaning
Concern	An informal matter raised by a parent, carer or member of the public that can usually be resolved quickly through discussion.
Complaint	A formal expression of dissatisfaction about the School's action, lack of action, or standard of service, which requires a response and is dealt with under Part A.

Term	Meaning
Grievance	A concern, problem or complaint raised by a member of staff about their own employment, working conditions or treatment at work, which is dealt with under Part B.

5. Principles

The School's handling of complaints and grievances is guided by the following principles:

- Concerns and complaints are taken seriously and handled fairly, promptly and without bias;
- Matters are resolved at the earliest stage and as informally as possible;
- There are clear stages and timelines, and complainants are kept informed;
- Confidentiality is respected, and information is shared only with those who need it;
- No one is treated less favourably for raising a genuine complaint or grievance in good faith;
- Procedures are accessible to all, with reasonable adjustments where needed;
- The process is aligned with KHDA requirements and the Parent-School Contract.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Strategic Governance Advisory Board (SGAB)	Oversees this policy; hears complaints at the panel stage; ensures complaints are handled fairly and in line with KHDA requirements.
Principal	Responsible for implementation; handles formal complaints; ensures alignment with KHDA and the Parent-School Contract; oversees staff grievances.
Senior Leaders / Year Group Leaders	Address day-to-day concerns; support early and informal resolution; manage complaints delegated to them.
Class Teachers / Staff	Act as the first point of contact for many concerns; listen, respond courteously and resolve informally where possible; log and escalate as needed.
Human Resources / People Function	Supports the fair handling of staff grievances and maintains records.
All Staff	Respond to concerns promptly and respectfully and follow this policy.

7. Part A — Complaints Procedure (Parents, Carers and Public)

Most concerns can be resolved quickly through early, open conversation. Where they cannot, the following stages apply, in line with KHDA requirements and the Dubai Parent-School Contract. Timelines are indicative and the School will keep complainants informed if more time is needed.

Stage	What Happens	Raised With	Indicative Timeline
Stage 1 Informal	Raise the concern informally so it can be resolved quickly.	Class teacher or relevant member of staff (via the school office).	Acknowledged within 2–3 working days; resolved where possible within ~5 working days.
Stage 2 Formal	Submit a formal written complaint (Appendix A) if not resolved.	The Principal (or the SGAB if the complaint concerns the Principal).	Acknowledged within 2–3 working days; written response normally within ~10 working days.
Stage 3 Panel	Request a review by a Complaints Panel if still dissatisfied.	Complaints Panel (incl. an SGAB member and an independent person).	Panel normally meets within ~10 working days; written decision within ~5 working days of the meeting.
Stage 4 KHDA	Escalate to the regulator if internal stages do not resolve it.	Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA).	As per KHDA processes.

7.1 Stage 1 — Informal Concern

Concerns should be raised as soon as possible with the class teacher or relevant member of staff, who will aim to resolve the matter quickly. Many concerns are fully resolved at this stage.

7.2 Stage 2 — Formal Complaint

If a concern is not resolved informally, a formal written complaint may be made to the Principal using the Complaint Form (Appendix A). The School will acknowledge the complaint, the Principal (or a senior leader on their behalf) will look into it fairly, and a written response will be provided. Where the complaint concerns the Principal, it should be addressed to the SGAB.

7.3 Stage 3 — Complaints Panel

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request a review by a Complaints Panel convened by the School. The panel will include a member of the SGAB and at least one person who is independent of the management and running of the School, and none of its members will have been directly involved in the matter. The panel will consider the complaint and provide a written decision.

7.4 Stage 4 — Escalation to the KHDA

If the complaint remains unresolved after the School's internal stages, the complainant may escalate the matter to the KHDA, which governs the relationship between schools and parents through its Compliance & Resolution Commission and the Parent-School Contract.

Escalating to the KHDA

Complaints can be submitted to the KHDA through its website (www.khda.gov.ae), by email (info@khda.gov.ae), by telephone (+971 4 364 0000) or via the KHDA mobile app. Parents are encouraged to keep a copy of their Parent-School Contract, which sets out the agreed process.

8. Part B — Staff Grievance Procedure

This procedure enables members of staff to raise grievances about their own employment, working conditions or treatment at work, and to have them resolved fairly. It reflects UAE labour legislation, including Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021 on the Regulation of Labour Relations.

8.1 Informal Resolution

Wherever possible, a member of staff should first raise the matter informally with their line manager, who will seek to resolve it promptly and fairly.

8.2 Formal Grievance

If the matter is not resolved informally, the member of staff may submit a written grievance using the Staff Grievance Form (Appendix B) to their line manager, or to a more senior leader or Human Resources where the grievance concerns the line manager.

8.3 Grievance Meeting and Outcome

The School will arrange a grievance meeting, normally within around ten working days, at which the member of staff may be accompanied by a colleague where appropriate. The matter will be considered fairly and a written outcome will be provided, normally within around five working days of the meeting.

8.4 Appeal

If the member of staff is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal in writing, normally within five working days. The appeal will be heard by a more senior manager who has not previously been involved, and their decision concludes the internal process.

8.5 External Referral

If a grievance cannot be resolved internally, the member of staff may seek recourse through the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MOHRE), in line with UAE labour legislation.

9. Anonymous, Third-Party and Repeated Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be considered at the School's discretion, taking into account the seriousness of the issue and the information available. Complaints made on behalf of another person will be handled appropriately, with due regard to consent and confidentiality. While every genuine complaint will be taken seriously, the School may apply proportionate arrangements where complaints become persistent, vexatious or abusive, so that staff are protected while real concerns continue to be addressed.

10. Confidentiality, Records and No Detriment

Complaints and grievances are handled as confidentially as possible, and information is shared only with those who need it to resolve the matter or where disclosure is required by law or to protect a child. Records are kept securely and in line with the School's Data Protection Policy. No parent, carer or member of staff will be treated less favourably for making a genuine complaint or raising a genuine grievance in good faith.

11. Links to Other Procedures

Some matters are dealt with under separate procedures, which take precedence where they apply:

- Any concern about the safety or welfare of a child is dealt with immediately under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Concerns about serious wrongdoing or malpractice in the public interest are dealt with under the Whistleblowing Policy;
- Concerns about a member of staff's conduct may be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure;
- Matters relating to admissions, fees or exclusions are dealt with under the relevant policies and the Parent-School Contract.

12. Monitoring and Review

Complaints and grievances are logged and reviewed so that the School can identify themes, learn lessons and improve. The Principal reports to the SGAB on complaints and their resolution. This policy is reviewed at least annually, or sooner in response to changes in KHDA requirements, the Parent-School Contract, UAE legislation, the standards of Athena Education, or learning from experience.

13. Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following School policies and documents:

- Parent-School Contract (KHDA)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure
- Admissions and Fees Policies
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy

Appendix A: Complaint Form (Parents, Carers and Public)

Please complete this form to make a formal complaint (Stage 2) and submit it to the school office, marked for the attention of the Principal. The School will acknowledge receipt and respond in line with this policy.

1. Your name:
2. Contact details (phone & email):
3. Pupil's name and year group (if applicable):
4. Date of complaint:
5. Details of your complaint (what happened, when, and who was involved):
6. What steps have you already taken to resolve it?
7. What outcome are you seeking?

Signature: _____ Date: _____ For office use — Received by: _____ Date: _____
 Ref: _____

Appendix B: Staff Grievance Form

Please complete this form to raise a formal grievance (Stage 8.2) and submit it to your line manager, or to a more senior leader or Human Resources where the grievance concerns your line manager.

1. Your name:

2. Your role / position:

3. Date:

4. Details of your grievance (what has happened, when, and who is involved):

5. Steps already taken to resolve the matter informally:

6. What outcome are you seeking?

Signature: _____ Date: _____ For office use — Received by: _____ Date: _____
Ref: _____