

# AMIGS Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure 2024-2025

## 1. Overview

AMIGS is committed to providing quality educational services to the highest possible standards. We recognise that notwithstanding our best intentions and actions, situations may occur that give cause for concerns and complaints. One of the ways in which we continue to improve is by listening and responding to the views of our beneficiaries. Lessons learned through handling concerns and complaints will undoubtedly contribute to our continuous improvement.

The majority of concerns/complaints may fall into the following categories, for example:

Financial, administrative and breach of contract;

Academic (syllabus, pace of teaching and learning, student progress and attainment);

Pastoral care (discipline, conflict resolution, Mental Health and well-being);

Child protection (allegations against staff, handling of sensitive issues).

### **The difference between a concern and a complaint**

A **concern** may be defined as ‘**an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought**’.

A **complaint** may be defined as ‘**an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action**’.

It is in everyone’s interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the ‘complaints procedure’. We take concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the school’s complaints coordinator will refer you to a member of our senior leadership team (SLT) who will deal with your concern appropriately. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, they will confer with the complaints coordinator, who will direct a member of our senior leadership team (SLT) to support them in that regard. In both cases, the ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is very important to us. **The Head Teacher is the Complaints Coordinator (CC) at AMIGS.**

We understand, however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, the school will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this ‘complaints procedure’.

The purpose of the Complaints Policy is to outline a method by which complaints can be dealt with in the most efficient, and fair manner with the least disturbance possible. This policy does not cover complaints from members of staff as these are covered by the employer’s Grievance Policy.

If our procedure is not followed by a Complainant, the School will not be able to deal with the matter effectively.

## **The Complaints procedure consists of 3 stages:**

Stage 1 - Informal Stage

Stage 2 - Formal Stage

Stage 3 - Appeal

## **2. Directing a Complaint**

A Complainant is responsible for directing the complaint to the appropriate Staff Member. Please use the guidance below:

If a complaint is about a particular academic subject (as described above) and is at Stage 1, the teacher of that subject should be approached. This would best be done via email in the first instance, so there is a clear record and timeline.

If a complaint is about pastoral care (as described above) and is at Stage 1, the Form Tutor or Pastoral Lead must be approached.

If a complaint is more serious and is at Stage 2, the CC must be approached.

Any child protection issues must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who is the Headteacher or the Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) [the Deputy Head] in his absence / unavailability.

All other complaints falling outside the above should be referred to the CC.

If the complaint is against the Head Teacher, and it can't be resolved at Stage 1, the complainant should write details of the full complaint for the attention of the Chair of Governors and submit same to the school admin at reception or alternatively at [governors@amigs.uk](mailto:governors@amigs.uk)

### **Time scales**

The complainant must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

### **Complaints received outside of term time**

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

### 3. Stages

#### Stage 1: Informal Stage (Verbal)

A Complainant should bring a complaint either to the staff member concerned or directly to the CC. The following procedure must be followed:

The Complainant will approach the staff member/Complaints Coordinator and request an appointment. Alternatively, or if the staff member is not in, a Complainant may at any time request a meeting by emailing [office@amigs.uk](mailto:office@amigs.uk)

A Complainant may not approach a member of staff to discuss the complaint without booking a meeting in advance.

Where time permits a meeting will be arranged within 24 hours of a request.

Meeting - this will last for no more than 10 minutes.

The Staff Member/CC will keep a note of the meeting.

The Complainant will state clearly (and calmly) what the complaint is.

If the matter is minor, is reported to the appropriate personnel and concerns no other individual it will be dealt with immediately.

If Stage 1 does not resolve the issue, Complainants will be asked to put their complaint in writing and move to Stage 2.

#### Stage 2: Formal Stage

If it is not possible to resolve a complaint informally the Complainant should raise the matter formally and without unreasonable delay with the CC. The Complainant will make a complaint in writing giving full details, any supporting documents/evidence and so on. If by hand, this will be given in to the school admin at reception. If electronically, then it must be emailed to [headteacher@amigs.uk](mailto:headteacher@amigs.uk)

Once this has been received:

The CC will arrange for a formal meeting (possibly at a neutral venue if necessary) to be held without unreasonable delay after the complaint has been received. This will normally be within 5 working days. A meeting may be scheduled outside of school hours.

In preparation for the meeting the CC will consult the relevant staff and/or make investigations.

At the meeting, the Complainant will be allowed to discuss their complaint.

The outcome of the Formal Meeting will be communicated to the complainant by the CC by postal letter or email without unreasonable delay, and usually within 5 working days of the Formal Hearing.

If a Complainant is not happy with the decision, he/she will have a right to move to Stage 3 - the Appeal.

### **Stage 3: Appeal**

Where a Complainant feels that their complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved they may appeal by writing out their appeal in full and submitting it to the school admin at reception, or email the same in to [governors@amigs.uk](mailto:governors@amigs.uk)

If an Appeal Panel decides to hear the Appeal, Appeals will be heard without unreasonable delay, usually within 10 working days, and at a time and place (possibly at a neutral venue) that will be notified to the Complainant in advance.

The Appeal Panel will consist of at least three people not directly involved in the matters relating to the complaint: at least the Chair of Governors and one of whom will be completely independent of the management and running of the School.

The Complainant may attend the Panel meeting accompanied by one person if they wish.

In general, the Panel will take one of the following courses of action:

Dismiss the complaint in whole or part;

Uphold the complaint in whole or part;

Decide on appropriate action to resolve the complaint; or recommend changes.

Decision taken at this stage will represent the final stage of the School's complaints procedure and is binding.

The decision and any actions taken by the Panel will be communicated to the Complainant by postal letter or email and usually within 5 working days of the Appeal meeting.

If the appeal is against a decision of the Headteacher / School regarding a sanction such as exclusion / expulsion, then, the panel may choose to:

Uphold the decision of the Head and, if minded to do so, with agreement of the Head, discuss the pupil's leaving status (i.e. permanent exclusion, required removal, or withdrawal) with a view to reaching an agreement; or if they wish, recommend the decision of the Head to be reviewed and, if minded to do so, recommend the Head reviews their decision including recommending an alternative sanction.

#### **4. Important Notes**

Where complaints proceed to Stage 2 and Stage 3, all correspondence, statements and written records relating to the complaints and their outcomes will be maintained by the School.

All complaints are dealt with in confidence. The details of the complaint are shared with appropriate individuals and third parties only so far as it is required to properly investigate and process the complaint. The written records of any complaints will be kept confidential unless otherwise required to be disclosed by Law. Likewise, complainants are required to treat in confidence any information disclosed to them as a result of the complaint.

If the complaint concerns a child protection issue or involves an allegation of abuse by a member of staff then the Nominated Person, who is the School's Head Teacher, should be informed immediately.

Any Complainant who behaves aggressively or uses abusive or threatening language to a member of staff, student or other parent will be asked to leave the premises immediately. Please see our Parents & Visitors

Behaviour Policy. A record of the incident will be kept on file, and it may be that the Complainant is prevented from entering the School premises. The Head Teacher's view of what constitutes the above will be final.

The School does not accept petitions or collective complaints.

The School does not accept complaints made on behalf of a third party.

If the matter is taken by a Complainant to a member of staff not concerned with the matter, the Complainant will be directed to the correct individual / complaints coordinator. It will be the Complainant's responsibility to ensure the matter is taken to the correct member of staff. If the correct member of staff is not present, an appointment must be sought by emailing our admin at [office@amigs.uk](mailto:office@amigs.uk). In any cases of doubt, members of staff should seek the advice of the Head Teacher who has the responsibility for mentoring colleagues.

## 5. Serious Complaint by a Student

If a serious complaint is made by a student, the member of staff should immediately inform the CC who will discuss the issue with the relevant member of staff in order to determine what the course of action should be.

## 6. Number of Formal Complaints

The number of formal complaints received/processed at Stage 2 or Stage 3:

Academic year 2020-21: Zero

Academic year 2021-22: Zero (as at 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021)

Academic year 2022-23: Two

Academic year 2023-24: One (as at 21<sup>st</sup> December 2023)

Academic year 2024-2025 Zero (as at 18/09/2024)

Date Document Updated / Reviewed	Document Updated by	Date of Next Review
September 2024	NG	August 2025