BRIGHTON COLLEGE
AL AIN

Complaints Policy

Academic Year 2026/27

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Document control

Document	Complaints Policy
Academic year	2026/27
Applies to	Brighton College Al Ain - whole College, FS1 to Year 13
Policy owner	Headmistress
Prepared by	Deputy Head Whole College
Governing Board oversight	Governing Board, through the General Manager, Bloom Education
Version	3.0
Approval	Headmistress and Governing Board
Review cycle	Annual, and sooner where UAE law, ADEK requirements or College arrangements change

> **Where there is any difference between this policy and a mandatory UAE or ADEK requirement, the UAE/ADEK requirement takes precedence and the College will update this policy accordingly.**

1. Policy statement

Brighton College Al Ain values its partnership with parents and its community. Most concerns are best resolved quickly and informally by talking to the right member of staff, and the College encourages parents to raise a concern as soon as it arises.

When a concern is not resolved, or when someone wishes to make a formal complaint, they can expect it to be taken seriously, handled fairly, confidentially and promptly, and answered in writing. Nobody will be treated less favourably because they have raised a concern or made a complaint, and a pupil will never be disadvantaged because their parent has done so.

The College uses complaints to learn and improve. Complaints are reviewed regularly by the College Leadership Team and reported to the Governing Board.

2. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out how the College receives, investigates and resolves complaints, in line with the ADEK School Compliance Policy, the ADEK School Governance Policy and the ADEK School Parent Engagement Policy. It applies to complaints from:

- parents and carers of current pupils
- parents of former pupils, where the complaint relates to the time their child was on roll
- prospective parents, including complaints about the admissions process
- pupils
- members of staff, where the complaint concerns the College's ethical practice or a breach of its policies (see Section 9)
- other members of the community, such as visitors and contractors

2.1 Matters handled under other procedures

Some matters have their own procedures because ADEK or UAE law sets specific requirements. These are handled as follows:

Matter	Procedure
Safeguarding or child protection concerns	Reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. A safeguarding concern is never delayed by this complaints procedure.
Appeals against suspension or expulsion	Handled by the Appeals Committee under the College Behaviour Policy and the ADEK School Student Behaviour Policy (Section 8).
Staff employment grievances	Handled under the Bloom Education grievance procedure in the Staff Handbook.
Exam results and access arrangements	Handled under the College Examinations Appeals Procedure and the rules of the relevant awarding body.
Admissions decisions for pupils with additional learning needs	Handled under the Inclusion Policy and the ADEK School Inclusion Policy, which include notification to ADEK.

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Concern	An expression of worry or doubt about a matter that the person wants the College to look into. Concerns are normally resolved informally at Stage 1.
Complaint	Any expression of dissatisfaction concerning the College by an individual, made formally or informally (ADEK School Compliance Policy).
Formal complaint	A complaint submitted in writing at Stage 2, using the form in Appendix 1, by email or by letter.
School Complaints Committee	The committee required by the ADEK School Compliance Policy to investigate and resolve complaints. It is chaired by the Headmistress, who may delegate this role (see Section 6).
Complainant	The person making the complaint.
Working day	A day that is not a Saturday, a Sunday or a UAE public holiday.

4. Principles

- Complaints are acknowledged quickly and resolved at the earliest possible stage.
- Complaints are investigated fairly by someone with no prior involvement in the matter.
- Complaints are dealt with confidentially. Information is shared only with those who need it to resolve the complaint, or where the law, ADEK or safeguarding requires it.
- Complainants receive a written response, with reasons, within the timescales in this policy.
- Complaints can be made in English or Arabic, and the College will make reasonable adjustments for anyone who needs help to make a complaint.
- Complainants and staff are treated with courtesy and respect throughout. The College expects the same in return, in line with the Parent Code of Conduct (Section 11).

5. Stage 1: informal resolution

Most concerns can be resolved quickly by talking to the right person. Parents should first contact:

Concern about	Contact first
Day-to-day matters, learning or wellbeing	The class teacher (Prep School) or the tutor (Senior School)

Concern about	Contact first
Progress, behaviour or pastoral care	The Head of Year or Head of House
Additional learning needs	The relevant Head of Inclusion
Fees, transport or uniform	The Finance Office or the relevant service lead
Unresolved matters or a member of staff	The relevant Head of School

The member of staff will listen, record the concern and the date it was received, and aim to resolve it **within 5 working days**. They will tell the parent what action has been taken. If the parent is not satisfied, the member of staff will explain how to make a formal complaint at Stage 2.

A parent may go straight to Stage 2 where the matter is serious, or where it would not be appropriate to raise it informally.

6. Stage 2: formal complaint to the School Complaints Committee

6.1 Making a formal complaint

A formal complaint should be made in writing to the Headmistress, using the form in Appendix 1 or by email. It should set out what the complaint is about, any steps already taken to resolve it, and the outcome the complainant is seeking. Complaints should be raised as soon as possible, and normally within three months of the matter complained about.

6.2 The School Complaints Committee

The School Complaints Committee is chaired by the Headmistress, who may delegate the chair to a member of the College Leadership Team. Its members are the Headmistress (Chair), the Deputy Head Whole College and one Head of School. No member of the Committee will have had prior involvement in the matter. Where a complaint is made against the Headmistress, she is excluded from the Committee and replaced by a member of the Governing Board.

6.3 Timescales

Step	Timescale
Written acknowledgement of the complaint	Within 24 hours of receipt
Offer of a meeting with the complainant, where helpful	Normally within 5 working days of receipt
Written response from the Committee, with its decision and reasons	Within 10 working days of receipt

These timescales are set by the ADEK School Compliance Policy. If a complaint is received during a College holiday, the College will still acknowledge it within 24 hours and will agree the timescale for the response with the complainant.

6.4 Investigation

The Committee, or a senior member of staff it appoints, investigates the complaint. This may include meeting the complainant, speaking to the staff and pupils involved, and reviewing relevant records. The complainant may bring one other adult to a meeting for support. Written notes are kept of every meeting with the complainant.

6.5 Outcome

The Committee's written response sets out whether the complaint is upheld in full, in part or not upheld, the reasons for the decision, and any action the College will take. It also explains how to request a review by the Governing Board and the right to appeal to ADEK.

7. Stage 3: review by the Governing Board

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Committee's decision, they may ask the Governing Board to review it. This should be done in writing to the General Manager, Bloom Education, **within 5 working days** of receiving the Committee's decision, setting out why the complainant is not satisfied and the outcome they are seeking.

- The General Manager acknowledges the request within 24 hours and appoints a review panel of at least three people with no prior involvement in the matter, at least one of whom is independent of the management and running of the College.
- The panel reviews the complaint, the investigation and the Committee's decision. It may meet the complainant, who may bring one other adult for support. Legal representation is not normally appropriate.
- The panel sends its written decision, with reasons, to the complainant and the Headmistress within 10 working days of receiving the request.
- The panel's decision is the College's final decision. Panel members may reach their decision by majority.

A review by the Governing Board is optional. It does not affect the complainant's right to appeal to ADEK.

8. Stage 4: appeal to ADEK

If the complainant believes their complaint has not been properly handled, they have the right to appeal to ADEK against the College's decision, as set out in the ADEK School Compliance Policy. ADEK will carry out its own investigation and may make an unannounced visit to the College. Complaints can be made to ADEK through the TAMM platform or by calling 800 555.

8.1 Appeals against suspension or expulsion

Appeals against a decision to suspend or expel a pupil follow the separate timescales in the ADEK School Student Behaviour Policy and are heard by the College Appeals Committee, which does not include the Headmistress, the Vice Principal or any member of staff with a conflict of interest:

Step	Timescale
Parent appeals a suspension	Within 1 working day of the decision
Parent appeals an expulsion	Within 10 working days of the decision
College issues its final decision	Within 2 working days (suspension) or 7 working days (expulsion)
Parent may complain to ADEK if the College does not respond within 3 working days or if they reject the final decision	Within 5 working days

9. Complaints by staff

Members of staff may raise a complaint with the School Complaints Committee where they are concerned about a breach of the College's ethical practice or policies, in line with the ADEK School Governance Policy. Personal employment grievances are handled under the Bloom Education grievance procedure. Concerns about the conduct of a member of staff towards a pupil are reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

10. Complaints about the Headmistress or the Governing Board

A complaint about the Headmistress should be sent to the General Manager, Bloom Education, who will arrange for it to be investigated by the School Complaints Committee, with a member of the Governing Board replacing the Headmistress. A complaint about a member of the Governing Board should be sent to the Chair of the Governing Board or the General Manager. The complainant retains the right to appeal to ADEK.

11. Conduct during a complaint

The College expects everyone involved in a complaint to behave courteously, in line with the Parent Code of Conduct in the parent-school agreement and the ADEK School Parent Engagement Policy, which asks parents to resolve concerns in a professional manner. Staff will not be expected to tolerate abusive, threatening or offensive behaviour, in person, in writing or on social media. Where this occurs, the Headmistress may set reasonable conditions on contact, such as communicating through one named member of staff. In serious cases, a parent may be asked to leave the College premises or be denied access, as the ADEK policy allows.

Where a complainant repeatedly raises a complaint that has already been fully considered through this procedure, the Headmistress may write to explain that the procedure has been exhausted and that the College will not respond further on the same matter. The complainant's right to appeal to ADEK is not affected.

Anonymous complaints are considered where they contain enough information to investigate, particularly where they raise a safeguarding concern, but the College may be unable to respond to the complainant.

12. Confidentiality and record-keeping

Correspondence, statements and records relating to complaints are kept confidential, except where disclosure is required by ADEK, the police, safeguarding procedures or other legal authority. The College keeps a record of every complaint, including:

- the date the complaint was received and acknowledged
- the stage at which it was resolved
- a record of all meetings between the Committee and the complainant
- the outcome, and any action taken, whether or not the complaint was upheld

Records are stored securely in line with the ADEK School Records Policy and UAE data protection law, and kept for at least three years. The College shares complaint records with the Governing Board and with ADEK on request.

13. Monitoring and review

The Headmistress reports complaints data to the Governing Board each term, including the number and nature of complaints, the stage at which they were resolved, whether timescales were met, and the lessons learned. The College Leadership Team reviews this information to improve College practice. This policy is published on the College website and in the Parent Handbook, and is available on request in English and Arabic. It is reviewed annually by the Headmistress.

14. Key contacts

Role	Contact
Headmistress	Sarah Weaver: sweaver@brightoncollegealain.ae
Deputy Head Whole College	Melanie Black: mblack@brightoncollegealain.ae
Head of Prep School	Jamie Liddell: jliddell@brightoncollegealain.ae
Head of Senior School	Alex Stagogiannis: astagogiannis@brightoncollegealain.ae
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Melanie Black: mblack@brightoncollegealain.ae
General Manager, Bloom Education	Craig Lamshed: clamshed@bloomeducation.ae
ADEK	TAMM platform	800 555

15. Related documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

- Behaviour Policy and Appeals Procedure
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Parent-School Agreement and Parent Code of Conduct
- Parent Handbook
- Bloom Education Staff Handbook and Code of Conduct
- Records and Data Protection procedures

Change history

Version	Summary	Owner	Date
1.0	Policy update	OBH	Aug 2024
2.0	No changes	VSH	Sep 2025
3.0	Full rewrite in the Brighton College format to align with the ADEK School Compliance, Governance, Parent Engagement and Student Behaviour policies: School Complaints Committee; 24-hour acknowledgement and 10-working-day response; right to appeal to ADEK; suspension and expulsion appeals; staff complaints; prospective parents included; UK EYFS and DSIB references removed; contacts updated	MBL	Nov 2026

Approval and sign-off

Policy owner	Sarah Weaver, Headmistress
On behalf of the Governing Board	Craig Lamshed, General Manager, Bloom Education
Approval date	Nov 2026

Appendix 1: Formal complaint form

Please complete this form and send it to the Headmistress at [complaints email address], or hand it to the College Reception in a sealed envelope marked "Confidential". You will receive an acknowledgement within 24 hours.

Your name	
Relationship to the pupil	
Pupil's name and year group	
Telephone	
Email	
Preferred language for correspondence	☐ English ☐ Arabic

What is your complaint about? Please include dates and the people involved.

What steps have you already taken to resolve it, and with whom?

What outcome are you seeking?

Signature	
Date	

For College use	
Date and time received	
Acknowledged (date and time)	
Reference number	
Response due (10 working days)	

Appendix 2: Complaints procedure at a glance

	Stage	What happens	Timescale
1	Informal resolution	Talk to the class teacher, tutor, Head of Year or Head of School. The concern is recorded and resolved.	Aim: within 5 working days
2	Formal complaint	Write to the Headmistress. The School Complaints Committee investigates and replies in writing with its decision and reasons.	Acknowledged within 24 hours. Response within 10 working days
3	Governing Board review (optional)	Write to the General Manager within 5 working days of the Stage 2 decision. A panel of at least three, including one independent member, reviews the decision.	Acknowledged within 24 hours. Decision within 10 working days
4	Appeal to ADEK	If the complaint has not been properly handled, appeal to ADEK through TAMM or 800 555. ADEK carries out its own investigation.	Set by ADEK

Safeguarding concerns are never delayed by this procedure. Report them immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.