

KAMUZU ACADEMY



PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Developed: 25th OCTOBER 2024

AIMS

The aim of this procedure is to ensure a fair, effective and as rapid as possible resolution to all parental complaints.

The term 'parents' refers to those who have parental responsibility for a student at Kamuzu Academy.

Key Principles:

I. Time limits

Effective and fair resolution of concerns usually requires that they are brought to the Academy's attention promptly. To be considered under this procedure, complaints should normally be brought within one month.

II. Record Keeping

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential and will only be shared if necessary, for example if requested by an inspection team or as part of legal obligations.

III. Professional judgement

If the judgement of a member of an Academy staff is the subject of a complaint, the Headmaster will determine whether the judgement was exercised fairly and reasonably according to the standards of Kamuzu Academy. There may be more than one fair and reasonable response to a situation.

IV. Role of Governors

If a Governor is approached by a parent, the Governor should refer the parent to the Headmaster. In the case of a written complaint, the Parent Liaison Officer should send a waiting reply and refer the matter to the Headmaster and the relevant committee or Chair of Governors for discussion and resolution. With prompt referral, many concerns can be resolved informally.

Complaints procedure

Stage 1-informal resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be made, considered and resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint, they should normally contact the class teacher (Primary) or tutor/housemaster/housemistress (Secondary) or the relevant Deputy Headmaster as appropriate (Deputy Headmaster Pastoral for behavioural issues and Deputy Headmaster Academic for learning issues). In many cases, matters can be resolved straightaway to the parent's satisfaction. In some cases, it may be necessary to consult with other colleagues within the school including the relevant Deputy Headmaster.
- Whoever receives a complaint (teacher or deputy headmaster) will record the complaint and engage the Academy management system and if the matter cannot be resolved within 10 school days, the parent will be advised to proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2- Formal resolution

Part A-School level

- If an informal resolution cannot be reached, the complaint should be put in writing to the Headmaster as soon as possible. Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Headmaster will initiate an independent investigation of the matter, in consultation with the relevant Deputy Headmaster as appropriate.
- Once the Headmaster is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed in writing within ten days of receipt of the formal complaint.
- The Headmaster will keep records of all meetings and interviews for three years

Part B-Board of Governors level (Parent Liaison Officer)

- If the parents are not satisfied with the Headmaster's response, they should write to the Parent Liaison Officer (Human Resources Officer, Kamuzu Academy, Private Bag 1, Mtunthama, Kasungu, Malawi) within 10 working days. The Parent Liaison Officer at the Academy shall then refer the matter to a Parent Liaison Officer of the Board.
- The Board's Parent Liaison Officer will convene an appropriate committee of the Board of Governors (BOG) to investigate the matter and will endeavour to respond to the parent within 15 school days of receiving the complaint. Written records will be kept and in complex cases the committee will advise the parent of the timescale for the investigation.
- If the complaint is made to the BOG Parent Liaison Officer before a formal complaint is made to the Headmaster, the matter would normally be referred to the Headmaster to investigate.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3.

Stage 3- Board of Governors Panel Hearing

- If parents are not satisfied with the response of the BOG Parent Liaison Officer, they may request a panel hearing of the Board of Governors by writing to the Chair of the Board of Governors setting out the reasons for the request.
- The BOG Chair will then convene a temporary Complaints Committee to hear the complaint.
- A hearing should take place within 25 days of receipt of the letter and parent is entitled to be accompanied to the panel hearing.
- All documents relating to the complaint should be shared within 7 days in advance of the hearing.

After hearing the complaint, the Complaints Committee will respond in writing within 5 working days. This report will inform the complainant and, where appropriate, the person complained about of their decision and reasoning, together with any recommendations for dealing with such matters in the future.