Complaints Policy

Introduction

Alamiyah Montessori is committed to providing excellence in Montessori Education for children and families. We seek to achieve this by partnering with parents and working in an open and responsible way to build the trust and respect of all the families we serve. We believe that the only way to continually improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of pupils, parents and staff, and in particular by responding positively to concerns and resolving issues as they arise.

Aims

Our aims are to:

- ensure that providing any feedback both positive and negative is as easy as possible
- promptly resolve any concerns/complaints swiftly and confidentially (if appropriate)
- treat every person fairly and courteously throughout the complaints process
- place the child at the centre of any complaints process
- provide information in a timely manner about any action taken to resolve the complaint.
- be as transparent as possible about the situation
- maintain objectivity and independence in investigations into complaints
- be as responsive as possible throughout the complaints process

Approach

Definition:

Alamiyah Montessori defines a concern as any expression of dissatisfaction whether spoken or written to any member of staff.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction as a formal complaint in the form of written communication addressed to the Manager which requires a formal response.

Alamiyah takes informal concerns as seriously as complaints and as a result few concerns develop into formal complaints. Most concerns can be resolved quickly and informally, however in rare cases where concerns cannot be acceptably resolved, then the formal procedure should be followed.

An anonymous complaint will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances. These would include serious concerns such as child protection issues or allegations of misconduct, where the setting might consider it appropriate to contact outside agencies.

Purpose

The complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all concerns and complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

Responsibility for Action

Manager, Executive Director and Board of Trustees

Complaints Procedure

Points to Note:

- The setting has **concerns forms** which are available to parents at all times.
- Complainants are aware of the persons to which they can speak to in order to raise any issues. The first point of contact is their child's teacher/key teacher. If the issue cannot be resolved by the teacher then the Manager will get involved. If the issue cannot be solved at this point then it is escalated to the Executive Director and then the Board of Trustees.

- Complainants have access to multiple methods of communication within the setting in order to raise a concern. Complainants can express their concern in person, over the telephone or in writing using a paper form or email.
- Record keeping - We keep a **log of all concerns and complaints** and their outcomes, whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or whether they proceeded to the Senior Management Team or the Board of Trustees.
- Records are made available to OFSTED inspectors.
- A record of the number of complaints registered during the previous setting year is available on the website in the complaints section of the parent handbook which is published annually.

Our operational procedure for complaints is as follows :

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most concerns will be resolved swiftly and informally. Should you, as a complainant, have a concern or complaint then you can contact the setting. This can be done in person, by telephone, or in writing a letter or email to admin@alamiyahschool.org. The administrative team will ensure that the concern/complaint is taken to the relevant person to be dealt with. If the concern or complaint relates to an issue regarding the setting they should contact their child's teacher or key teacher (Children's House) at the earliest opportunity.

In many cases, the matter will be resolved promptly, without delay and with the utmost priority, which results in the parent/carer's satisfaction.

In the case where the complaint relates to a teacher, the parent or carer should contact the Manager (manager@alamiyahschool.org). If the complaint relates to the Manager, the parent/carer should instead contact the Head of Appeals and Complaints (appealsandcomplaints@alamiyahschool.org). The Head of Appeals and Complaints is an independent member of the Board of Trustees who is not involved in the management of the setting but takes care of governance. If the complainant is a staff member then they

should contact their line manager and report their concern through the 'Staff Grievance Policy'.

The person dealing with the issue will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. The Manager will be informed of the parent/carer's complaint or concern.

We usually aim to resolve concerns/complaints at stage one within a reasonable time frame and anticipate that parents will be happy with the resolution, however if the complainant is not happy with the outcome they can write to the Manager within 5 working days to pursue the complaint formally in accordance to stage two of this procedure. If we do not hear from the complainant within 5 term time working days of the resolution then the issue will be considered resolved.

Stage 2 – Registering a Complaint

Stage 2a – How to register a Complaint

If the concern or complaint cannot be resolved to provide a satisfactory outcome at stage one, then the complainant should put their complaint in writing to the Manager manager@alamiyahschool.org

If the complaint relates to the Manager or the Executive Director, the complainant should instead write to the Head of Appeals and Complaints appealsandcomplaints@alamiyahschool.org. The Head of Appeals and Complaints will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and complete a **Complaints Record Form**.

Stage 2b – Investigation

The Manager or the Trustee in charge of Head of Appeals and Complaints will send a letter of acknowledgement to the complainant advising that the complaint has been received and will be investigated as a matter of priority.

The Manager will investigate the issues that have been raised. In most cases he/she, or another **Trustee** who is detached to the complaint, will speak to or meet the complainant concerned to discuss the matter, usually within 10 term time working days of receiving the complaint in writing. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the Manager or another Trustee to carry out further investigations and these will begin as soon as possible. The Manager/Trustee will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Manager/Trustee is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the complainant will be informed of this decision in writing with reasons. If the matter relates to the EYFS, the complainant will be informed of this decision within 28 calendar days of receipt of the complaint by the Manager/Trustee. If the matter does not relate to the EYFS, the setting will usually aim to resolve the complaint within 28 term time working days of receiving the complaint. The setting keeps written complaints from parents/carers/public in a complaints file. If the complainant is still not satisfied with the decision, they should request a panel hearing under Stage 3 of this procedure within 5 working days. If the complainant does not respond within 5 working days the matter will be considered resolved.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If, following a failure to reach an earlier resolution, a complainant can request a panel hearing. The complainant would be expected to put this request in writing to the Executive Director of the setting or if the complaint relates to the Executive Director, they should put the request to the Board of Trustees, giving reasons why they remain dissatisfied. On receipt of this request a Complaints Panel will be convened.

The **Trustees** are responsible for appointing the panel. The panel will consist of three people who are not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and were not involved with investigations at stage 2, one of whom shall be independent of the

management and running of the setting and should not be a regular 'service provider' e.g. solicitor, accountant.

The Trustees will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place, this will usually be within **25 term time working days** of receiving the written notice from the complainant.

The Trustees will be flexible in arranging the panel hearing as far as is reasonable in order to give the Complainant the ability to attend the hearing.

The Complainant will be invited to the Complaints Panel hearing by letter. If the complaint is made outside of term time, it may not be possible to meet this timescale.

NOTE: If a parent decides not to attend the hearing, the setting will still proceed with the hearing in conformity with its complaints policy.

The complainant (e.g. parent) may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not be permitted.

Role of the Complaints Panel

1. Reject the complaint in whole or in part
2. Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
3. Make a decision on the appropriate action to resolve the complaint
4. Make recommendations of changes to the setting's policies or procedures to make sure that incidents of a similar nature do not occur again.

The Complaints Panel will make a concerted effort to resolve the complaint where possible, within a reasonable timeframe.

The Complaints Panel upon reaching a decision, will write to notify the complainant. In exceptional circumstances where further investigation is required, the Complaints Panel will decide how this will be carried out.

After careful consideration of all of the facts they consider relevant, the Complaints Panel will reach a decision and make findings and recommendations. The decision, findings and

recommendations shall be provided to the complainant and if relevant the person complained about. A copy will also be made available on the setting premises for inspection and to the Manager.

The Complaints Panel will write to the complainant, informing them of the decision and the reasons for it and setting out any recommendations.If the matter relates to the EYFS, the complainant will be informed of this decision within 28 calendar days of receipt of the complaint. If the matter does not relate to the EYFS, the setting will usually aim to resolve the complaint within 28 term time working days of receiving the complaint. The decision of the Panel will be final.

Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the complaint procedure the setting and the complainant will want to keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology.
- An explanation.
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
- An assurance that the event that was the basis of the complaint will not recur.
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure it does not happen again. Details of any disciplinary procedures that have taken place as a result of the complaint are not released.
- An undertaking to review setting policy or procedure in light of the complaint.
- An explanation that there is insufficient evidence and thus the complaint cannot be upheld.
- An explanation that, following investigation, the concern is not substantiated by the evidence.

- An admission that the setting could have handled things better is not the same as an admission of negligence.

Contacting OFSTED

Parents may complain directly to OFSTED if they believe that Alamiyah Montessori is not meeting the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements. OFSTED can be contacted on 0300 123 4666 or by emailing Enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

The role of the Area Child Protection Committee

If you are concerned about the welfare of a child the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Team should be contacted immediately.

If a child appears to be at risk, the setting follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Team from Integrated Family Services at the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham outlined in the Safeguarding Children Policy.

In these cases, both the complainant and the setting are informed and the Manager will work with the Local Safeguarding Team to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint is conducted followed by any appropriate actions.

Monitoring and review

The Trustees monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. All stage 2 complaints received by the setting will be logged by the Manager, and records maintained of how they were resolved. Trustees examine this log on an annual basis.

Trustees take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents and staff, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

If a complainant believes the Board of Trustees has acted illegally or arbitrarily in handling the complaint, then the complainant may make representations to OFSTED.

All Senior Management Team members are fully aware of procedures and trained accordingly and will be involved in reviewing the policy. All staff are made aware that the Manager and Board of Trustees will handle all formal complaints.

Record Keeping

Records will be kept of all complaints. Key information will include the date, the nature of the complaint, who was informed, what action was taken, and whether the complaint was resolved following a formal procedure or proceeded to a Panel Hearing. Complaints records will be held on file for 7 years from the date the complaint was resolved. After this time they will be deleted and destroyed.

All complaints cases will be handled with confidentiality and will not be accessible to any unauthorised personnel. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where disclosure is required in the course of the setting's inspection or as requested by the Registration Authority; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

The setting's complaints procedure is included in information given to new parents and carers, it is available in the parent handbook which all parents/carers are provided and a copy of this policy is available on the Alamiyah website with details of how to register a complaint.

Confidentiality

All conversations and correspondence will be treated with discretion. Accordingly, personal information will only be shared between necessary individuals on a 'need to know' basis.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner or if there is any change in statutory guidance or legislation. See 'Policy Review Schedule'.

Adopted in a meeting at Alamiyah Montessori on 08/09/2025

Last Reviewed: 01/09/2026

Signed by Nasim Bobat (Manager) and S Motara (Director/Nominated Person)

on behalf of Alamiyah Montessori