



Office No 6, 15 North Street
East London
5201

Kufuzu School of Accounting & Sciences (Pty) Ltd

Complaints Policy

1. Circulation

1.1 This policy is addressed to the Senior Management Team, to all members of the teaching and support staff, pupils and adult learners. A copy can be downloaded from the School's website.

1.2 This policy can be made available in large print or other more accessible format, if required. If you require assistance with making a complaint, for example because of a disability, please contact the Complaints Co-ordinator who will be happy to make appropriate arrangements.

2. Application

2.1 Separate procedures apply in the event of a child protection issue, or if the Head removes or expels or does not allow a pupil to progress through the Schools, and the parents, adult learners and pupil's seek a Governors' review of that decision.

3. Parent(s)/You/Adult Learners

3.1 Includes a current or legal guardian or education guardian and may, at our discretion, include a parent whose child has recently left the Schools, as long as the complaint was initiated whilst the pupil was still registered at one of our schools. This also includes adult learners and employee's learning on a part time basis that will be paying fees for themselves.

4. Four stages

4.1 This policy describes a four stage procedure:

4.1.1 **Informal Stage**

Informal raising of a complaint or difficulty notified orally or in writing to a member of staff.

4.1.2 **Stage 1**

A formal complaint in writing to the relevant Head (Senior Management Team).

4.1.3 **Stage 2**

A formal complaint in writing to the Principal or to the Chair of the Governing Body.

4.1.4 **Stage 3**

A referral to the Complaints Panel.

5. Timescales

- 5.1 We aim to resolve any complaints in a timely manner. Timescales for each stage are set out below in the relevant paragraphs. When we refer to working days, we mean Monday to Friday, when School is open during term time. The dates of terms are published on the School's website.
- 5.2 Superseding the possible timescales involved at each stage of this process is our aim to conclude all complaints within half a school term.
- 5.3 A complaint about the safety of your child should be notified immediately to the person you believe is best placed to take urgent action and should be confirmed in writing to the Principal.
- 5.4 Complaints received within the last week of term may take longer than the published schedule as it is not always possible to complete a full investigation due to school

Policy Aim and Statement

6. Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that a complaint is managed sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level, and resolved as soon as possible. Doing so is good practice, it is fair to those concerned and it helps to promote adult learners (paying for themselves), parents' and pupils' confidence in our ability to safeguard and promote welfare. We will try to resolve every complaint in a positive way with the aim of putting right a matter which may have gone wrong and, where necessary, reviewing our systems and procedures in light of the circumstances.

7. Statement

We need to know as soon as possible if there is any cause for dissatisfaction. We recognise that a difficulty which is not resolved quickly and fairly can soon become a cause of resentment, which would be damaging to relationships and also to our School culture. Parents and pupils should never feel (or be made to feel) that a complaint will be taken amiss or will adversely affect a pupil or his/her opportunities at this School. The policy, however, distinguishes between a complaint which can be resolved informally and a formal complaint which will require investigation.

8. Management of complaints

8.1 Complaints Co-ordination –Academic Head;

The Principal has appointed the Academic Head of School to be responsible for the co-ordination and administration of the complaints procedure. If the Academic Head is unavailable or is the subject of the complaint, his/her duties will be carried out by another senior member of staff. The main responsibilities of the complaints co-ordination are to:

- 8.1.1 be the first point of contact for a formal complaint while the matter remains unresolved and keep records;
- 8.1.2 co-ordinate the complaints procedures in School;
- 8.1.3 arrange assistance for parents who require this, for example, because of a disability;
- 8.1.4 maintain an on-going training programme for all School employees in relation to complaints;
- 8.1.5 monitor the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to complaints;

8.1.6 report regularly to the Principal with respect to complaints

8.2 Complaints Log;

8.2.1 Every formal complaint to the Schools will be noted, together with the action taken, in the complaints log

9. Informal Stages:

We expect that most complaints, where a parent or pupil seeks intervention, reconsideration or some other action to be taken, can be resolved informally. Examples might include dissatisfaction about some aspect of teaching or pastoral care, or about allocation of privileges or responsibilities, or about a timetable clash or some other aspect of the Schools' systems or equipment, or a billing error. Your complaint will be acknowledged by telephone, fax, e-mail or letter within **twenty four hours** during term time, indicating the action that is being taken and the likely timescale. Complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are taken very seriously and may need to be dealt with at Stage 1 or Stage 2. Any complaint not being resolved within the time period can be escalated to a formal complaint.

10 Stage 1: Formal Complaint

10.1 Notification

An unresolved complaint under the Informal Stage, or a complaint which needs investigation, or dissatisfaction with some aspect of the Schools' policies, procedures, management or administration should be set out in writing with full details and sent with all relevant documents and your full contact details in an envelope addressed to the relevant Head/Senior Management Team. Your complaint will be acknowledged by telephone fax, e-mail or letter within **twenty-four hours** during term time, indicating the action that is being taken and the likely time scale. A Complaints Form will be completed and sent to the Complaints Co-ordinator.

11 Stage 2: Review of formal complaint

11.1 Further steps

11.1.1 If you are dissatisfied with the decision under Stage 1, your complaint may be renewed in writing to the Principal or to the Chair of Governors.

11.2 Notification

11.2.1 You should write to the Principal or Chair of Governors within **three working days** of receiving the Stage 1 decision. Your letter to the Principal should give full details of your complaint and enclose all relevant documents and your full contact details. Your letter will normally be acknowledged by telephone, fax, e-mail or letter within **twenty-four hours** during term time, indicating the action that is being taken and the likely time scale.

11.3 Investigation

11.3.1 The Principal or Chair of Governors may ask a senior member of staff and/or one or more Governors to act as **Investigator**. The Investigator may request additional information from you and will probably wish to speak to you personally and to others who have knowledge of the circumstances. The outcome of the investigation will be reported to the Principal or Chair of Governors who will then notify you by telephone, fax, e-mail or letter of his decision and the reasons for it. Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to your complaint.

11.4 Outcome

The aim will be to inform any complainant of the outcome of an investigation and the resolution to the complaint within **ten working days** from the receipt of the Stage 2 complaint. Please note that any complaint received within one month of the end of term or half term is likely to take longer to resolve owing to the presence of School holidays and the unavailability of personnel. Please note that

whilst **all** complaints are investigated, the School reserves the right not to **progress** complaints which Governors consider vexatious.

12 Stage 3: Reference to the Complaints Panel

12.1 Complaints Panel (**Complaints Panel**) hearing is a review of the decisions taken by the Principal or the Chair of Governors (See Stage 2, above). The Panel will not consider any new areas of complaint which have not been previously raised as part of the complaints procedure.

12.2 Grounds for Progressing the Complaint; in their application, the parents/learner must state the grounds on which they are progressing the complaint and the outcome which they seek. For the avoidance of doubt, a mere disagreement with the decision of the Principal or Chair of Governors will not of itself be grounds sufficient for reference to the Complaints Panel.

12.3 The role of the Panel; the Panel's task is to establish the facts surrounding the complaint/s that has/have been made by considering:

12.3.1.1 the documents provided by both parties and any representations made by you, the Principal or the Chair of Governors.

12.4 If, after establishing the facts, the Panel consider that the complaint is made out, they will uphold the complaint. If the Panel consider that the complaint is not made out, they will dismiss the complaint. They will make these decisions on the balance of probabilities.

12.5 It is not within the powers of the Panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, pupils, or parents. The Panel may make recommendations on these or any other issues to the Principal or to the full body of Governors as appropriate.

12.6 Composition; we have constituted a Complaints Panel comprising members of the School Governing Body and at least one member who is independent of the governance, management and running of the School.

12.7 Notification; to request a hearing before the Complaints Panel please write to the Clerk to the Governors, the Chair of Governors (**or the Vice-Chair if Stage 2 has involved the Chair**) within **three working days** of the decision regarding the complaint. Your request will usually only be considered if you have completed the procedures at Stages 1 and 2. Please ensure that a copy of all relevant documents and your full contact details accompany your letter to the Clerk, Chair or Vice-Chair. Please state in your letter the outcome that you desire and all the grounds of your complaint. Please also send the Clerk, Chair or Vice-Chair a list of the documents which you believe to be in the School's possession and wish the Panel to see. The Clerk will acknowledge your request in writing within **twenty four hours**. If you require assistance with your request, for example, because of a disability, please contact the Clerk who will be happy to make appropriate arrangements.

12.8 Convening the Panel; the Clerk to the Governors, Chair or Vice-Chair will convene the Complaints Panel as soon as reasonably practicable, but the Panel will not normally sit during half terms or school holidays. The Panel will consist of a minimum of three individuals who are not directly involved in the matter detailed in the complaint, and one person who is independent of the management and running of the school. You may ask the Clerk to tell you who has been appointed to sit on the Panel.

12.9 Notice of hearing; every effort will be made to enable the Panel hearing to take place within **ten working days** of the receipt of your request. As soon as reasonably practical and in any event, at least **five working days** before the hearing, the Clerk will send you written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing, together with brief details of the Panel members who will be present. The hearing will normally follow the procedure set out below.

12.10 Attendance; you will be invited to attend the hearing and may be accompanied by one other person such as a relative, teacher, or friend. It is not necessary for that person to be legally qualified but if you do wish to be accompanied by a legally qualified person, acting in their professional capacity, please notify

the School at least **five working days** before the hearing. Your child aged 13 and above may attend part or all of the hearing at the discretion of the Chair. Copies of any additional documents you wish the Panel to consider should be sent to the Clerk at least three clear working days prior to the hearing.

12.11 Chair; the hearing will be chaired by one member of the Panel (chosen by themselves) and will be conducted in an informal manner.

12.12 Hearing; all statements made at the hearing will be unsworn. All present will be entitled, should they wish, to write their own notes for reference purposes. The Clerk will be asked to take a handwritten minute of the proceedings.

12.13 Evidence; the Chair will conduct the hearing in such a way as to ensure that all those present have the opportunity of asking questions and making comments in an appropriate manner. The hearing is not a legal proceeding and the Panel shall be under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses but may do so and / or may take written statements into account.

12.14 Conduct; all those attending the hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners or, after due warning, the hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the Chair. If terminated by the Chair due to the conduct of the complainants, the original decision will stand. Any person who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way the hearing is conducted must say so before the proceedings go any further and his/her comment will be minuted.

12.15 Adjournment; the Chair may, at his/her discretion, adjourn the hearing for further investigation of any relevant issue. This may include an adjournment to take legal advice.

12.16 Decision; after due consideration of the matters discussed at the hearing, the Panel shall reach a decision unless there is an agreed position. The Panel's decision, findings and any recommendations may be notified orally at the hearing or subsequently and shall be confirmed in writing to you by electronic mail where appropriate within five **working days**. If you do not wish to receive the decision by electronic mail, a copy will be given or posted to you. The decisions, findings and any recommendations will be available for inspection on the School premises by the Governing Body and the Head. Reasons for the decision will be given. The decision may include recommendations and will be sent to you, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Head and, where relevant, any person about whom the complaint has been made.

12.17 Private proceeding; a hearing before the Complaints Panel is a private proceeding. No notes or other records or oral statements about any matter discussed in or arising from the proceeding shall be made available directly or indirectly to the press, other media, or any third party.

13 Confidentiality and Record Keeping

13.1 Confidentiality

13.1.1 A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at Stage 1 or proceed to a panel hearing. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year will be reported to Governors annually, is posted on the school's website and will be supplied to parents on request, and any action by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

13.1.2 The findings and recommendations of a panel hearing and the actions taken by the school as a result of the complaint, will be available for inspection on the School premises by the Governors and the Principal.

13.2 Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them."

Approval date: 30 November 2019

.....

Masibulele Phesa CA(SA)-CEO