

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

1. Introduction

The school has in place processes for dealing with complaints and grievances made in respect of services provided by the school or against staff members, which includes employees, contractors and volunteers, which are raised by students and/or parents/carers. These processes will incorporate principles of procedural fairness.

A complaint or grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the school about an educational and/or operational matter relating to services provided by the school or the behaviour or decisions of a staff member, contractor or volunteer, including misconduct.

Any parent/carer or student that has a concern about the conduct of a staff member, should raise their concern in accordance with section 2 of the school's Policy & Procedures Manual.

The school will seek to resolve complaints informally where possible but acknowledges that in some cases a person may wish to make a formal complaint.

2. Raising a Complaint or Grievance

1.1 For Parents/Carers and Community Members

Informal complaints may be raised by the complainant directly with the class teacher or other staff member involved. However, if this is not appropriate the complaint can be made directly to the Principal. Some complaints, because of their seriousness, should be referred immediately to the Principal. Parents, students and community members are free to approach the Principal at all times when they feel that it is necessary.

Any complaint about the conduct of a staff member should be raised directly with the Principal in the first instance.

Should the matter not be resolved through informal processes, the complainant may raise the matter formally with the school. A formal complaint can be made in writing to the Principal.

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint concerning the Principal the complaint should be made in writing to the Chairperson of the School Board.

For Students

In the first instance, complaints should be raised with the class teacher responsible. If this is not appropriate, the complaint should be raised with the Principal.

Depending on the matter, the teacher will deal with the complaint or will refer it to the school Principal if it is a serious matter.

Privacy is maintained at all times.

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, he can refer to the Principal who will take all the necessary measures to give a fair answer. A written complaint will receive a written answer even if the matter is discussed orally.

2. Handling Complaints

2.1 Assessing a Complaint

The Principal generally will assess the complaint and determine:

- whether the complaint is one to be addressed under this policy or is a staff grievance or reportable conduct matter which are dealt with by the relevant policies, see section 4 and

- the priority of the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised; and
- whether the school may be required to report the matter to the Office of the Children's Guardian, Police, Department of Communities and Justice or other relevant authorities should the complaint relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

2.2 Managing a Formal Complaint

The Principal will acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing as soon as practicable.

The Principal will manage a formal complaint by:

- a) advising the complainant of the likely steps that will be undertaken by the school in relation to the complaint;
- b) if appropriate, advising the relevant parties of the complaint at the relevant time and providing them with an opportunity to respond;
- c) collecting any additional information the Principal considers necessary to assess the complaint;
- d) making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved; and
- e) advising the complainant in writing, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution of the decision and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

The school Principal keeps a record of all formal complaints.

There may be circumstances where some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the Principal will determine, on a case by case basis the most appropriate method of handling the complaint.

A complainant and the relevant parties that the complaint is about may choose to have an appropriate support person present at any meeting with representatives of the school about the complaint. However, the school maintains the right to determine whether the person's preferred support person is appropriate and may not approve the attendance of a support person where they are determined to be inappropriate.

3. Related Policies

Complaints about reportable conduct will be addressed in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy.

Complaints regarding a grievance between staff members about work matters, including work relationships and decisions made by other staff members which impact on their work, will be addressed in accordance with the school's Staff Grievance and Dispute Procedures.

4. Confidentiality

All parties involved in complaints handling are required to maintain appropriate confidentiality, including in relation to handling and storing records.