



Queenwood Cares: Our Community Feedback Guide

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Queenwood Cares: Our Community Feedback Guide

Queenwood welcomes feedback from all members of the School Community, welcoming compliments, and taking seriously complaints or concerns. This Guide is designed to assist members of the School Community in understanding the School's compliments, complaints and dispute resolution process.

WHAT IS A COMPLIMENT?

We hope there will be times when we exceed your expectations and you want to share the positive experience you have had with Queenwood. We are always pleased to receive your positive comments as it is useful for us to know when we have done a good job so that we can promote good practice throughout Queenwood and give credit to our staff where credit is due.

WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to Queenwood, related to the School's services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, and where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

QUEENWOOD'S COMMITMENT

Queenwood is committed to handling feedback effectively and efficiently. To this end, the School has established a program that includes the capture, management and reporting of feedback. Analysis of compliments and complaints received and the implementation of rectification action where deficiencies are identified are key to Queenwood's commitment.

QUEENWOOD CARES: OUR COMMUNITY FEEDBACK GUIDE

INFORMAL FEEDBACK RESOLUTION

Teaching and learning works best when parents and teachers work together to address any feedback. The vast majority of issues causing concern in schools come from misunderstandings or incomplete understandings. In most cases these issues can be resolved through informal discussions or meetings with the relevant staff members. Similarly, compliments can also be handled through informal discussions or meetings with the relevant staff members.

HOW CAN YOU MAKE A FORMAL COMPLIMENT OR COMPLAINT?

If you have been unable to resolve a matter informally, or simply wish to make a formal compliment or complaint, you can do so by any of the following means:

- Emailing the relevant Community Feedback Officer (see below) or the Community Feedback Manager: feedback@queenwood.nsw.edu.au
- Writing a letter to the School addressed to the relevant Community Feedback Officer
- Telephoning the School and asking to speak about a compliment or complaint to the relevant Community Feedback Officer

RELATED POLICIES

The School takes seriously any reasonable complaint made by a parent, student or member of the community. Whilst some complaints will fall under the community feedback guide, there are other policies, which may more suitably address the issue:

- Complaints or allegations of staff misconduct that meet the criteria of a whistle blowing disclosure will be addressed in accordance with Queenwood's *Whistle Blower Policy*.
- Disclosures about reportable conduct will be addressed in accordance with Queenwood's *Child Protection Policy*.
- Disclosures regarding a grievance between staff members about work matters, including work relationships and decisions made by other staff members, which affect their work, will be addressed in accordance with Queenwood's *Staff Grievance Procedure*.
- Unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying complaints will be addressed in accordance with Queenwood's *Bullying (Staff) Policy*.

QUEENWOOD CARES: OUR COMMUNITY FEEDBACK GUIDE

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK OFFICERS

The following senior staff members are designated Community Feedback Officers and are authorised to manage formal compliments or complaints.

Junior School

Community Feedback Officer	If feedback is about...
Classroom Teacher	Classroom issues, pastoral care, student wellbeing
Pastoral Care Coordinator	Pastoral care, student wellbeing support
Head of Specialised Programs	Specialised Programs
Catalyst Coordinator	Catalyst Programs
Head of Music	Music
Deputy Head of Junior School and Director of Sport (K – 6)	Sport
Director of Admissions and Marketing	Enrolment, induction, communications
Chief Operations and Finance Officer	Fees, finance, facilities
Head of Junior School	Any other feedback or feedback not solved in the first instance by another Feedback Officer
Principal	Child Protection including allegations of staff misconduct or reportable conduct ¹

Senior School

Community Feedback Officers	If feedback is about...
Tutor	First instance for pastoral care, student wellbeing
Subject teacher	First instance for any subject related issues
Year Coordinators	Support pastoral care, student wellbeing, tutor
Heads of Department	Support for curriculum matters, specialised programs, catalyst
Director of Curriculum	Reports, examinations, academic operations Feedback not solved in the first instance by Heads of Department, Head of Specialised Programs or Catalyst Coordinator
Chief Operations and Finance Officer	Fees, finance, facilities
Director of Admissions and Marketing	Enrolment, induction, communications
Director of Wellbeing	Pastoral care, student wellbeing not solved in the first instance by the Tutor or Year Coordinator
Deputy Principal	Feedback not solved in the first instance by any other Feedback Officer
Principal	Child Protection including allegations of staff misconduct or reportable conduct ²

¹ Please refer to Appendix A: Procedures for Handling Allegations of Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct

² Please refer to Appendix A: Procedures for Handling Allegations of Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct

COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

All formal compliments and complaints will be logged and managed in accordance with the procedures below.

Step 1

All formal compliments and complaints are logged in the Community Feedback Register and then screened by the Deputy Principal or, in the case of complaints against the Principal, by the Chair of the Council of Governors.

Step 2

All compliments and complaints will be acknowledged in writing, as soon as practicable but within 3 business days. The acknowledgement for a compliment will indicate that it has been received and will be passed onto the relevant staff member. The acknowledgment for a complaint will indicate next steps and the key point of contact for the complainant.

Feedback received during, or close to, school holiday periods may require longer response times, depending upon the availability of relevant members of staff.

Step 3

A Community Feedback Officer will be appointed by the School and they will conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination.

Step 4

Following the determination, the School will provide a written response to the person making the complaint. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

Step 5

If the initial response is not accepted and the person making the complaint requests a review, the Principal will determine whether the matter will be reviewed internally by an Appeals Panel or directly by the Principal.

The Appeals Panel is selected by the Principal and comprised of a minimum of two senior staff with the requisite independence from the issue at hand to address the appeal on its merits. The School aims to initiate this review process within 5 business days of the person making the complaint advising

QUEENWOOD CARES: OUR COMMUNITY FEEDBACK GUIDE

the School that they do not accept the initial response and requesting the response be reviewed.

The Appeals Panel may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Appeals Panel will review the matter, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination.

The Appeals Panel will formulate a resolution if appropriate.

The Appeals Panel aims to make a determination about a dispute within 20 business days from the date that the review process is initiated.

The School will then provide a written response to the person making the complaint. The matter will be closed if the response of the Appeals Panel is accepted.

Step 6

The outcome of the investigation, the response, and any review by the Appeals Panel or the Principal will be entered in the Community Feedback Register. Where appropriate, corrective actions will be implemented to address any deficient processes revealed during the investigation.

Step 7

If the matter remains unresolved following the appeals process, the person making the complaint may pursue external dispute resolution alternatives.

There is no avenue of appeal to the Council of Governors (except where a complaint is in relation to the conduct of the Principal).

TIMEFRAMES

Whilst the School will endeavour to respond within the timeframes specified above, during or close to school holiday periods this may not be possible due to the absence of relevant staff. In such cases, the School will respond as soon as is reasonably practicable and will advise the person making the complaint of the likely timeframe for responding to the complaint.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

Information in relation to a complaint will be treated confidentially as far as is reasonably practicable with respect to both a person making a complaint and any person against whom a complaint is made. Access to information in relation to a complaint will be limited to authorised staff only.

Personally identifiable information about a person making a complaint will only be made available for the purpose of investigating and addressing the complaint, unless the person making the complaint consents, or the disclosure is required or authorised by law.

Queenwood recognises that a person making a complaint may want to raise concerns in confidence and will endeavour to protect the identity of any such person who does not want his or her name disclosed.

This may, however, prevent or place limitations on the ability of the School to properly investigate and / or address the complaint.

A complaint may also be made anonymously. Anonymous complaints are much less powerful and are very difficult, if not impossible, for the School to investigate and / or address properly. As such, the School encourages any person making a complaint to provide his or her name.

MANAGING UNREASONABLE COMPLAINTS

Whilst Queenwood is committed to being accessible and responsive to all people who approach us with complaints, our success depends on:

- our ability to resolve the complaint in the most effective and efficient way possible;
- the health, safety and security of our staff; and
- our ability to allocate resources fairly across all the complaints we receive.

For this reason, when people behave unreasonably in their dealings with us, their conduct can significantly affect our ability to manage the complaint. As a result, we will take proactive and decisive action to manage any conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects us and will support our staff to do the same in accordance with this policy.

Appendix A: Handling Allegations of Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct

Complaints involving allegations of staff misconduct and reportable conduct are managed in a different manner to other complaints received by the Queenwood. This is because often these complaints are of a sensitive nature and raise potential privacy and confidentiality issues.

Queenwood requires all staff to comply with Codes of Conduct and standards of professional behaviour (including our Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries policy) that are intended to prevent staff misconduct and reportable conduct.

Staff are required to report any breaches of these Codes or standards.

It is also critical that the broader School community reports incidents of or concerns about staff misconduct and reportable conduct (both defined below) to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students, and that the School complies with its legislative reporting obligations.

Queenwood has a legal obligation to investigate and report to the NSW Children's Guardian all allegations of reportable conduct made against staff at the School as defined by the Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW) (Children's Guardian Act).

For the purposes of this policy, "staff" and "staff member" is defined to include teaching and non-teaching staff, Council members, volunteers, contractors and external providers.

DEFINITION OF STAFF MISCONDUCT

The School defines "staff misconduct" as conduct by a staff member that:

- breaches the School's Code of Conduct or other key policies/procedures
- displays purposeful neglect of duties/responsibilities
- involves alcohol and/or other substance abuse
- is physically, verbally or emotionally abusive
- endangers the safety or wellbeing of students or others at the School.

Staff misconduct is considered a child protection incident or concern.

QUEENWOOD CARES: OUR COMMUNITY FEEDBACK GUIDE

DEFINITION OF REPORTABLE CONDUCT

The Children's Guardian Act defines reportable conduct as including:

- any sexual offence or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including child pornography offences or an offence involving child abuse material) including grooming behaviours
- any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child
- any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.

Reportable conduct is considered a child protection incident or concern.

CONDUCT THAT WOULD NOT CONSTITUTE REPORTABLE CONDUCT

Some examples of conduct that would not constitute reportable conduct include touching a child to get their attention, guide them or comfort them, a teacher raising their voice to attract attention or restore order in a classroom, or conduct that is established to be accidental.

MAKING A COMPLAINT ABOUT OR ALLEGATION OF STAFF MISCONDUCT OR REPORTABLE CONDUCT

If you would like to make a formal complaint or allegation of staff misconduct or reportable conduct, you can do so by:

1. Sending an email to the Principal
2. Phoning the school and asking to speak with the Principal

If the Principal is the subject of your complaint or allegation of misconduct or reportable conduct, please contact the Chair of the Council of Governors.

INVESTIGATING AND MANAGING STAFF MISCONDUCT AND REPORTABLE CONDUCT

The School initially investigates all complaints and allegations to determine whether the conduct in question amounts to staff misconduct, as defined in this policy, or reportable conduct that must be further investigated and reported to the NSW Children's Guardian. All investigations uphold the principles of procedural fairness and confidentiality - information is only shared with those who need to know.

Staff Misconduct

When a complaint or allegation does not include conduct that is defined as reportable conduct following the School's initial investigation, and it is

QUEENWOOD CARES: OUR COMMUNITY FEEDBACK GUIDE

determined through the School's investigation that staff misconduct has occurred, the School will notify the complainant of the finding and corrective actions that will be taken. Staff misconduct is managed through the School's procedures relating to staff grievances, discipline and termination.

Reportable Conduct

After the Principal becomes aware of a reportable allegation or conviction against a staff member, they **must** ensure that an appropriate investigation of the reportable allegation or conviction is conducted and completed within a reasonable time.

The Principal **must** notify the Children's Guardian of the findings of the School's internal investigation into the matter within seven (7) days.

The Principal **must** inform the affected child and their parents/carers about any reportable conduct investigation unless it is "not in the public interest" to inform them.

Sometimes, where reportable conduct obligations arise, the School will also have other mandatory reporting obligations. In these situations, the School will prioritise its procedures for mandatory reporting to the Department of Communities and Justice and/or to Police and will seek advice from those agencies on the best way to proceed with the reportable conduct internal investigation.

MAKING A FINDING OF REPORTABLE CONDUCT

If the School's internal investigation results in a finding of reportable conduct, following the School's notification to the NSW Children's Guardian, we will conduct a final risk assessment of the conduct, the staff member and the circumstances, and take action to mitigate ongoing risks.

DISCLOSING INFORMATION TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

A parent or carer of a student who is an alleged victim of staff misconduct or reportable conduct has a legitimate interest in being told that their child is an alleged victim and of the nature of the complaint or allegation. The parent/carers and student also has a legitimate interest in being informed of the process, progress and findings of any investigation, and of any action that might be taken after the investigation is completed. Section 57 of the Children's Guardian Act imposes disclosure obligations and prohibitions on the Principal.

QUEENWOOD CARES: OUR COMMUNITY FEEDBACK GUIDE

The disclosure obligations and prohibitions apply to information about a reportable conduct investigation. This includes information about the progress of an investigation, the findings and any action taken in response to the findings.

The Principal or an investigator working for the Principal must inform the affected child and their parents/carers about the reportable conduct investigation unless it is “not in the public interest” to inform them.

The Principal or an investigator working for the Principal must not disclose information about a reportable conduct investigation to anyone other than the affected child and their parents/carers. However, there are some exceptions to this rule. Disclosures can be made to certain people and entities, such as investigators and carers, if the disclosure is made to promote the safety or wellbeing of the child.

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

The NSW Children’s Guardian provides information on reportable conduct and the School’s obligations to report.

RELATED POLICIES

Our Child Protection Policy

Working with Children Checks

Managing Child Protection Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School

Managing Child Protection Disclosures by Students or Former Students

Staff and Student Professional Boundaries

Child Protection Code of Conduct

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Key Information Fact Sheet for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

Appendix B: Version Control

Version	Status/Amendments	Date	Author
1	Document created	November 26, 2021	Sharanya Banerji
2	Update guide with newly created titles and reportable conduct procedures	January 4, 2024	Sharanya Banerji