

Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures



Introduction

Purpose and Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to Queenwood in handling complaints made in respect of services provided by the school or against staff members, which include employees, contractors, and volunteers.

This procedure does not extend to personal grievances between parents, guardians, or other members of the school community.

Whistleblowing Complaints

This procedure does not extend to complaints which are whistleblowing disclosures. The procedure for processing whistleblowing complaints is dealt with in the School's [Whistleblowing Policy](#).

In summary a whistleblowing disclosure is a disclosure which:

- a. is made by a Council member, staff member, a person who supplies goods or services to the school, including a volunteer, an employee of a supplier or a relative of any of these people;
- b. involves alleged misconduct, an improper state of affairs or circumstances, or illegal activity, and
- c. is made to a senior staff member, or officer of the school, the school's auditor or a person who the school has authorised to collect such disclosures.

Reportable Conduct Complaints

If a complaint that concerns the behaviour of a staff member may constitute reportable conduct, the matter will be addressed in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy. Refer to the school's [Child Protection Policy](#) for information about reportable conduct. Complainants are not required to assess whether their concern meets the threshold of reportable conduct before making a complaint. A complaint about a reportable conduct matter may be current or historical. Timeframes for investigation of complaints relating to reportable conduct are dependent on the individual matter and may be over an extended period of time, particularly in the case of a historical allegation. The school is bound by privacy or other confidentiality requirements when conducting investigations of reportable conduct allegations, which may limit the information that can be shared with the complainant regarding the outcome of an investigation.

Any concern about a child's wellbeing or the conduct of an employee, volunteer, contractor or member of the school community may be reported under this policy.



Related policies

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

Complaints regarding unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying between staff are generally addressed in accordance with the school's Staff Bullying Policy and Work Related Aggression and Violence Policy.

Confidentiality

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

Complaints

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.

Complaints may be made by a student or parent/carer or any member of the school community.

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.

Raising a Complaint

The complainant

Complaints may be raised by a complainant directly with the person involved (if the complainant feels comfortable to do so). However, if the complainant does not feel comfortable doing so or the matter is one where it may not be appropriate to do so, a complaint can be made to the Deputy Principal or Principal. 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 between the parties directly in the first instance, a complaint can be made in writing to the Principal, via [email](#).

Where a person wishes to make a complaint concerning the conduct of the Principal, the complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of the School Council, via [email](#).



This is not a general right of review of decisions made by the Principal – it applies where the grievance is about the Principal's conduct (as opposed to an operational matter or decision that is not agreed with).

In this situation, the references in this policy relating to the role of the Principal or Delegate should be read as references to the Chair of the School Council.

The School

The Principal or the Principal's Delegate will generally acknowledge receipt of a complaint raised with the School in writing as soon as practicable.

Handling Complaints

Assessing a complaint

The Principal or Delegate will generally assess the complaint and determine:

- a. whether the complaint is one to be addressed under this policy or is a staff grievance or reportable conduct matter or a whistle blowing matter; and
- b. the priority of the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised; and
- c. 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.

The Principal or Delegate may seek further information from the complainant in relation to the complaint in order to make that assessment.

Managing a formal complaint

The Principal or Delegate will generally manage a 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 School considers necessary to assess the complaint.
- d. making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved ("resolution decision").



If appropriate, advising the complainant in writing, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution decision of the Principal or Delegate and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

There may be circumstances where some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the School 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 by the School to be inappropriate.

Contact

If you have any queries about this policy, you should contact the [Risk and Compliance Manager](#).

