



Related Policies

Child Protection (ACT) – Responding to Complaints Against Employees

Child Protection (NSW) – Responding to Allegations of Reportable Conduct and Allegations of Misconduct that May Involve Reportable Conduct Made Against Employees

Complaints Contact Officers

Grievance and Dispute Handling – Employee with Management

Grievance and Dispute Handling – Management with Employee

Legal Responsibilities and Authority

Purpose

This policy describes the process for effectively managing complaints whilst protecting the right of all parties involved and seeking solution to the problem in the best interests of all affected.

Policy

Schools are required to develop and implement clear, fair and effective policy on the management of complaints.

A commitment to respond positively to critical feedback ensures that people have the opportunity to contribute to the continued improvement of the schools in the system. It is expected that all staff will demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that a culture of consultation and open dialogue is nurtured at every level, giving every member of the school community the opportunity to express dissatisfaction as well as satisfaction.

Complaints need to be addressed responsively, openly and in a timely manner to increase levels of satisfaction and to maintain harmonious relations in the wider community. Staff should be encouraged to develop an open expectation of a cooperative and genuine effort to resolve any valid complaint.

Definitions

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided, a decision made or the performance of staff.

Complainant: A student, parent or community member making a complaint.

Procedures

Complaints which may involve reportable allegations (Child Protection complaints) must be resolved in accordance with Child Protection – ACT/NSW Policies.

Many complaints or issues can be resolved informally at school level with no need to follow a prescribed process. However, appropriate practice and procedure in dealing with complaints must be clearly communicated to the school community, especially for situations, which are more complex. School policy should include:

- procedures to be followed for an interview with the person designated as the first point of contact for addressing particular complaints (this is usually the Principal, Deputy Principal or a teacher);
- procedures to be followed if a formal complaint is directed against a teacher. (In this situation parents should be encouraged to first bring the complaint to the teacher concerned as open discussion often removes the need for a formal complaint);
- requirements for complaints to be put in writing if a resolution cannot be reached through an interview;
- procedures relating to situations where no satisfactory outcome is achieved and the matter needs to be taken for further deliberation to the CEO depending on the nature of the complaint;
- requirements for record-keeping and documentation of the process, procedures followed and resolution.

While parent complaints are to be dealt with at school level initially, in situations where no resolution is achieved, or where the concern is in regard to systemic policy or practice, a complaint can be made in writing to the Director of the Catholic Education Office using the Complaint Notification Form.

Normally, all complaints should be handled by personnel with no links to the issue of concern using a fair, unbiased manner to facilitate transparency and objective assessment of the situation under consideration.

The person about whom a complaint is made must be given opportunity to respond to the complaint.

Staff dealing with a complaint must protect the confidentiality and privacy of those involved by ensuring relevant information is accessible only to those with a genuine need to know.

Complainants should be confident that there will be no discriminatory action taken against them as a result of a complaint being lodged.

Complaints should be monitored to track the nature, frequency and resolution details for future reference. Written complaints are to be acknowledged promptly in writing.

References

Nil

Complaints

Forms

Complaint Notification Form

Approved by:	CEO Heads of Division
Issuing Group:	Human Resources Division
Implementation Date:	2005
Revision Date:	2008
CEO Contact Officer:	Principal Human Resources Officer: Child Protection & Legal Issues