



Complaints Handling Policy

| | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Introduction..... | 2 |
| 2. | What is a complaint?..... | 3 |
| 3. | Who can make a complaint? | 3 |
| 4. | Raising a complaint..... | 3 |
| 5. | Handling of complaints..... | 4 |
| 6. | Procedural fairness..... | 4 |
| 7. | Confidentiality and privacy..... | 5 |
| 8. | Compliance and records | 5 |
| 9. | Reporting..... | 5 |
| 10. | Accessibility..... | 5 |
| 11. | Contact..... | 5 |
| 12. | Document Control | 6 |
| 13. | Approval..... | 6 |



Complaints Handling Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope

This policy sets out the approach of St Andrew's Cathedral School and St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School (collectively referred to as "the School") in handling complaints made in respect of services provided by the School or against staff members (which for the purposes of this policy includes employees, contractors, volunteers and members of the School Council) or about the behaviour of a student of the School.

This policy does not extend to personal grievances between parents, guardians or other members of the School community, or to certain types of complaints (as set out in Clause 1.3 below) which require specific treatment and are therefore dealt with in accordance with other School policies.

1.2 Rationale

The School is committed to fostering harmony and transparency. We invite feedback and complaints on the basis that it helps the School to rectify issues and facilitate continuous improvement of our services. We are committed to the effective management of complaints in a manner which is underpinned by principles of procedural fairness. The School will seek to resolve complaints informally where possible but acknowledges that in some cases a complainant may wish to make a formal complaint.

1.3 Matters covered by other policies

Some complaints require specific treatment and are therefore dealt with under other School policies. This policy does not extend to complaints of the following nature.

Child protection complaints. Any concern about a child's wellbeing should be addressed in accordance with the School's Child Protection Policy and the School's Procedures for Handling Allegations of Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct.

Employee grievance complaints. 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, should be addressed in accordance with the School's Grievance Procedures and Procedural Fairness Guidelines.

Unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying complaints. These types of complaints should be addressed in accordance with the School's Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Policy.

Whistleblowing disclosures. These are disclosures about alleged misconduct, illegal activity or an improper state of affairs, and must be made in a certain manner in order for the discloser to qualify for protection. Whistleblowing disclosures should be addressed in accordance with the School's Whistleblower Policy.



2. What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the School about an educational or operational matter relating to services provided by the School or about the behaviour or decisions of an employee, contractor, volunteer or member of the School Council (collectively referred to in this policy as “staff members”) or about the behaviour of a student of the School.

3. Who can make a complaint?

Complaints may be made by any stakeholder of the School. This includes students, parents and guardians as well as members of the community and general public. A person who makes a complaint to the School is referred to as a “complainant” in this policy.

4. Raising a complaint

4.1 Informal complaints

Informal complaints may be raised by a complainant directly with the person involved (other than if the complaint relates to a student of the School). 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 may be made to the Deputy Head of School (Secondary) or the Deputy Head of School (Primary) or the Head of Gawura School. These roles are collectively referred to as the “Deputy Head” in this policy. If the matter concerns one of the Deputy Heads, then the complaint should be made to the Head of School.

4.2 Formal complaints

If the matter is not resolved through informal processes or if a complainant wishes to make a formal complaint from the outset, then the complainant may raise the matter formally with the School. A formal complaint should be made in writing to the relevant Deputy Head by email to:

- **Secondary School:** DeputyHeadSS@sacs.nsw.edu.au
- **Junior School:** DeputyHeadJS@sacs.nsw.edu.au
- **Gawura School:** HeadGS@sacs.nsw.edu.au

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint concerning a Deputy Head, then the complaint should be made to the Head of School by email to hos@sacs.nsw.edu.au and in this situation, references in this policy to the Deputy Head should be read as a reference to the Head of School.

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint concerning the Head of School, the complaint should be made to the Chair of the School Council by email to chair@sacs.nsw.edu.au and in this situation, references in this policy to the Deputy Head should be read as a reference to the Chair of the School Council.



5. Handling of complaints

5.1 Acknowledgment

The relevant Deputy Head will acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint by email or otherwise in writing to the complainant as soon as practicable.

5.2 Assessment of complaints

The relevant Deputy Head will assess the complaint and determine:

- whether the complaint should be addressed under this policy or another relevant School policy (see Clause 1.3 above);
- the priority for addressing the complaint, having regard to the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised and any relevant legislative timeframes; and
- whether the School is required to report the matter externally (e.g. to the Police, Department of Communities and Justice or Office of the Children's Guardian) where the complaint relates to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

5.3 Managing complaints

The relevant Deputy Head will manage a formal complaint by:

- a) advising the complainant in writing of the likely steps that will be undertaken by the School in relation to the complaint;
- b) advising other relevant parties, if appropriate and at an appropriate time, and providing them with an opportunity to respond in order to afford procedural fairness;
- c) collecting any additional information the School considers necessary to manage the complaint;
- d) making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved ("resolution decision"); and
- e) advising the complainant, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, in writing of the resolution decision 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 approach for handling the complaint.

A complainant and the person/s that the complaint relates to may have an appropriate support person present at any meeting with representatives of the School about the complaint. However, the School maintains the right not to approve the attendance of any support person deemed inappropriate in the circumstances.

6. Procedural fairness

Principles of procedural fairness will be adopted by the School in its handling of complaints under this policy.



7. Confidentiality and privacy

All persons involved in complaints handling processes are required to maintain appropriate confidentiality, and privacy considerations must be taken into account in relation to handling and storage of records.

8. Compliance and records

The Deputy Head of School (Secondary) monitors compliance with this policy and ensures that the School's records relevant to this policy, including a register of complaints and appropriate archives, are securely maintained and retained for at least seven years after the last correspondence relating to each complaint.

9. Reporting

The relevant Deputy Head will report to the Head of School immediately in relation to any formal complaint received which would be regarded objectively as being serious, sensitive or of significant impact to the School. The relevant Deputy Head will report to the Head of School on a regular basis in relation to other complaints. The Head of School shall determine the nature and particularity of the reporting required.

The Head of School will report to the School Council a summary of complaints - urgently if the matter would be regarded objectively as being serious, sensitive or of significant impact to the School, and otherwise as part of regular reporting by the Head of School to the School Council. The School Council shall determine the nature and particularity of the reporting required.

Reporting of particulars shall be redacted to protect confidentiality and privacy, as is reasonably appropriate depending on the nature and sensitivity of the matter.

10. Accessibility

The Deputy Head of School (Secondary) is responsible for ensuring that this policy is published on the School's website.

11. Contact

For any queries about this policy, contact the Deputy Head of School (Secondary) by email at DeputyHeadSS@sacs.nsw.edu.au.



12. Document Control

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| Owner | Head of School |
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13. Approval

| Approver | Date of Approval |
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| Governance Committee | 25 March 2021 |
| School Council | 25 March 2021 |