



ST ANDREW'S
CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

Complaints Handling *Policy*



*A Kindergarten to Year 6 school
for First Nations children within
St Andrew's Cathedral School*

ABN: 34 429 367 893
CRICOS Registration: The Council of
St Andrew's Cathedral School 02276M

St Andrew's Cathedral School
Gadigal Country
Sydney Square
Sydney NSW 2000, Australia
T +61 2 9286 9500

www.sacs.nsw.edu.au

Complaints Handling *Policy*

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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 our services and/or operations or about the behaviour and/or decisions of a staff member (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 which require specific treatment and are therefore dealt with in accordance with other School policies, as set out in Clause 1.3 below.

1.2. Rationale

The School welcomes feedback from all members of the School community and takes complaints and concerns seriously. The School is committed to handling complaints effectively and efficiently in a manner which is underpinned by principles of procedural fairness, mutual respect and a spirit of cooperation. 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 types of complaints require specific treatment and are therefore dealt with under other School policies. This Complaints Handling Policy does not extend to complaints of the nature outlined below.

Child safety incidents or concerns including reportable conduct

Complaints or concerns about a student's protection, safety or wellbeing including complaints and allegations of reportable conduct should be addressed in accordance with the School's Procedures for Handling Allegations of Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct (which is available on the School's website) and the School's Child Protection Policy.

Parent concerns including academic, pastoral or wellbeing matters

Complaints or concerns by parents and guardians of current students relating to academic, pastoral or wellbeing matters should be addressed in accordance with the Parent Communication and Visiting Procedures which are available on the Parent Portal.

Overseas student complaints

Complaints by overseas students at the School should be addressed in accordance with the School's Overseas Student Policy and Procedures.

Privacy complaints

Complaints regarding privacy and/or the way the School manages personal information should be addressed in accordance with the School's Privacy Policy which is available on the School's website.

Staff 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 Internal Grievance Resolution Procedure.

Unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying complaints between staff

Complaints regarding unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying between staff should be addressed in accordance with the School's Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy.



Whistleblowing complaints

Whistleblowing complaints are addressed in accordance with the School's Whistleblower Policy which is available on the School's website.

In summary, a whistleblowing disclosure is a disclosure which:

- is made by a School Council or Foundation Board member, staff member, a person who supplies goods and services to the School, including a volunteer, an employee of a supplier, associates of the School or a relative of any of these people;
- involves alleged misconduct, an improper state of affairs or circumstances, or illegal activity; and
- 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.

2. What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the School relating to our services and/or operations or about the behaviour and/or decisions of a staff member (which, for the purposes of this policy, includes employees, contractors, volunteers and members of the School Council) or about the behaviour of a student at the School.

3. Who can make a complaint?

Complaints may be made by any stakeholder of the School, which includes current and former parents and guardians, current and former students, members of the School community and the 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

Most issues causing concern at the School can be handled quickly and in an informal matter. We therefore ask that, where appropriate, complainants first raise their concern directly with the relevant staff member. As a general rule, while it may seem faster or more efficient to go to the highest level of authority, it is usually more appropriate to commence with the person who knows the relevant student/s or details of the incident best.

For parents and guardians of current students, the process and general hierarchy for contacting staff relating to academic, pastoral or wellbeing issues relating to their child is outlined in the Parent Communication and Visiting Procedures which are available on the Parent Portal.

Contact details for key areas of the School including telephone numbers, email addresses and postal addresses are available on the 'Contact us' page on the School's website at www.sacs.nsw.edu.au/contact-us/. If you are unsure who at the School to contact, please telephone our School Reception on +61 2 9286 9500.

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 through any of the following means:



1. By sending an email to the relevant area of the School as follows:

- Secondary School: DeputyHeadSS@sacs.nsw.edu.au
- Junior School: DeputyHeadJS@sacs.nsw.edu.au
- Gawura: HeadGS@sacs.nsw.edu.au
- Support and Operations: edss@sacs.nsw.edu.au

2. By writing a letter to the School addressed to:

The Complaints Manager
St Andrew's Cathedral School
Sydney Square
Sydney NSW 2000
Australia

3. By accessing the External Feedback / Complaints Form which is available on the 'Contact us' page on the School's website at www.sacs.nsw.edu.au/contact-us/.

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint relating to the Head of Gawura, the complaint should be made to the Deputy Head of School (Primary).

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint relating to a Deputy Head of School or the Executive Director School Services, the complaint should be made directly to the Head of School through any of the following means:

1. By sending an email to the Head of School: hos@sacs.nsw.edu.au

2. By writing a letter to the Head of School addressed to:

Head of School
St Andrew's Cathedral School
Sydney Square
Sydney NSW 2000
Australia

In this situation, relevant references in this policy relating to the role of the Deputy Head of School or the Executive Director School Services should be read as a reference to the Head of School.

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint relating to the Head of School, the complaint should be made to the Chair of the School Council through any of the following means:

1. By sending an email to the Chair of the School Council: chair@sacs.nsw.edu.au

2. By writing a letter to the Chair of the School Council addressed to:

Chair of School Council
St Andrew's Cathedral School
Sydney Square
Sydney NSW 2000
Australia

In this situation, relevant references in this policy relating to the role of the Deputy Head of School or the Executive Director School Services should be read as a reference to the Chair of the School Council.

5. Handling of formal complaints

5.1. Acknowledgment

The relevant Deputy Head of School or the Executive Director School Services will generally acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint, except those made anonymously, by email or otherwise in writing to the complainant as soon as practicable.

5.2. Assessing a formal complaint

The relevant Deputy Head of School or the Executive Director School Services will assess the complaint and determine:

- whether the complaint is one to be addressed under this policy or is a matter which is dealt with by another relevant School policy (see Clause 1.3 above);
- the priority of the complaint, having regard to the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised and any relevant legislative timeframes; 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.

5.3. Managing a formal complaint

The relevant Deputy Head of School or the Executive Director School Services will generally manage a formal complaint by:

- advising the complainant of the likely steps that will be undertaken by the School in relation to the complaint, unless the complaint was made anonymously;
- if appropriate, advising the relevant parties of the complaint at the appropriate time and providing them with an opportunity to respond;
- collecting any additional information the School considers necessary to assess and/or manage the complaint, and investigating the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness;
- deciding how the complaint will be resolved ('resolution decision'); and
- advising the complainant in writing (unless the complaint was made anonymously), and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution decision and, if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

If the response is not accepted, the matter will be reviewed internally by the Head of School or their delegate, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The matter will be closed if the response of the Head of School, or their delegate, is accepted.

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 for 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 in the circumstances and may not approve the attendance of a support person where they are determined by the School to be inappropriate.



6. Complaints by overseas students

Complaints by overseas students at the School should be addressed in accordance with the School's Overseas Student Policy and Procedures. If an overseas student is not satisfied with the outcome of the School's internal complaints handling process, they may make a complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman which investigates complaints about certain types of issues that overseas students or intending overseas students may have with private education and training in Australia. The services of the Commonwealth Ombudsman are free. The contact details for the Commonwealth Ombudsman are as follows:

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Call: 1300 362 072 within Australia or +61 2 6276 0111 from outside Australia

Enquiries: 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday

Postal: Commonwealth Ombudsman, GPO Box 442, Canberra ACT 2601

Website: <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/international-student-complaints>

7. Confidentiality and privacy

The School is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process. This includes maintaining the privacy of information relating to the person making the complaint and any person named in the complaint, as far as is appropriate in the circumstances.

8. Analysis and reporting

The School is committed to conducting regular analysis of complaints received, identifying any systemic issues arising and implementing rectification action where deficiencies are identified.

The relevant Deputy Head of School or the Executive Director School Services will report to the Head of School immediately in relation to any formal complaint received which is regarded as being sufficiently serious, sensitive or of significant impact to the School. The relevant Deputy Head of School or the Executive Director School Services will report to the Head of School on a regular basis in relation to other complaints, including informal complaints.

The Head of School will report to the School Council a summary of complaints - urgently if the matter is regarded as being sufficiently 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.

9. Contact

Queries about this policy should be directed to the Executive Director School Services by email at edss@sacs.nsw.edu.au.



10. Document control

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11. Approval

Approver	Date of Approval
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School Council	25 May 2023