



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 services provided by the School or against staff members (which, for the purposes of this policy, includes employees, contractors and volunteers).

This policy does not extend to personal grievances between parents, carers 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. Approach

The School welcomes feedback, compliments and complaints from all members of the School community. Compliments and complaints provide valuable information about what is working well and areas which can be improved which in turn helps to promote continuous improvement of our services.

Reflecting our Christian foundation, the School's approach to complaints handling seeks to resolve conflicts, restore relationships and foster forgiveness and unity. The School takes complaints and concerns seriously and 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 while upholding justice and protecting the vulnerable.

The School will seek to resolve complaints informally where possible and encourages complainants to address their concerns directly with the relevant staff member in the first instance before escalating through higher channels. However, the School recognises that there may be situations where the complainant does not feel comfortable doing so or the matter is one where it may not be appropriate to do so.

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

1.3. Related policies

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 will be addressed in accordance with the School's ***Child Safe Policy*** and ***Procedures for Handling Allegations of Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct***, both of which are available on the School's website.

Overseas student complaints

Complaints by overseas students enrolled at the School on a study visa will be addressed in accordance with the School's ***Overseas Student Policy and Procedures***.

Parent complaints or concerns regarding academic, pastoral and cocurricular matters

Complaints or concerns by parents and carers of current students relating to academic or pastoral matters, including concerns relating to music, sport, outdoor education and other cocurricular activities, should be addressed in accordance with the sequence and hierarchy of contact set out in the ***Parent Communication and Visiting Procedures*** which is available on the Parent Portal.

Privacy complaints

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



Staff complaints and grievances

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, or about unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying will be addressed in accordance with the School's **Internal Grievance Resolution Procedure** or the School's **Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy**, as applicable.

Student complaints and grievances

Complaints regarding a grievance between students will be addressed in accordance with the School Rules, Codes of Behaviour and other procedures set out in the Student Diary and/or bullying prevention and student wellbeing procedures, as applicable. The School's **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy** and the **Student Discipline Policy** are available on the School's website.

The School has strategies in place that give students a voice and the opportunity to be heard, including age-appropriate mechanisms for students to provide feedback and make complaints, anonymously if they wish. This includes the Student Reporting Form for older students and the Junior School and Gawura School letterbox for younger students. These facilities are in addition to the established channels such as staff structures including Heads of Year, Heads of House and Heads of Department initially followed by more senior positions.

Teacher accreditation

Complaints regarding teacher accreditation processes will be addressed in accordance with the School's **Teacher Accreditation Procedures**.

Whistleblowing complaints

Complaints which are whistleblowing disclosures will be 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 (paid or unpaid), an employee of a supplier, an associate 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. Compliments and complaints

A compliment is an expression of praise, commendation or admiration. People who have had positive interactions with the School are encouraged to provide feedback on their experience and/or a compliment where this is considered warranted. Compliments help the School and its staff to understand what they are doing well. Compliments may be provided directly to staff members and/or through the same channels as set out in this policy for complaints.

A complaint 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. A person who makes a complaint to the School is referred to as a 'complainant' in this policy.

Compliments and complaints may be made by current and former parents and carers, current and former students or any member of the School community or the general public.

3. Raising a complaint

3.1. 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 carers of current students, the process and general hierarchy for contacting staff relating to academic and pastoral issues relating to their child, including concerns relating to music, sport, outdoor education and other cocurricular activities, is outlined in the **Parent Communication and Visiting Procedures** which is 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 to contact, please telephone our School Reception on +61 2 9286 9500.

3.2. 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 with the School through any of the following means:

1. by sending an email to either:

- Head of School: hos@sacs.nsw.edu.au
- Executive Director of Operations: edss@sacs.nsw.edu.au

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

The Head of School
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 complaint concerning the Head of School, the complaint should be made to the Chair of the School Council by either:

1. sending an email to the Chair of the School Council: chair@sacs.nsw.edu.au
2. 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 Head of School should be read as a reference to the Chair of the School Council.

4. Handling of formal complaints

4.1. Receipt and acknowledgment

After receiving a complaint, the Head of School will delegate the complaint to the appropriate staff member to be handled. The Head of School's delegate will generally acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint by email or otherwise in writing as soon as practicable.

4.2. Assessing a formal complaint

The Head of School's delegate 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
- 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.

4.3. Managing a formal complaint

The Head of School's delegate 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;
- 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;
- making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved ('resolution decision'); and
- if appropriate, advising the complainant in writing, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution decision and, if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

If the response is not accepted, the matter will be reviewed internally by the Head of School, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The matter will be closed if the response of the Head of School is accepted. If the complaint was about the Head of School, the Chair of the School Council will review the matter.

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.



5. Document control

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6. Approval

Approver	Date of Approval
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