



Type: School Policy	Name: Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure	Policy No: SCH POL-020
Implementation Date: 2015	Last Reviewed: 2018	Review Date: Triennial

COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

St Hilda's School is committed to providing a safe work environment for all staff and students. The purpose of this Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure is to establish a framework for the handling of complaints that relate to the operation of St Hilda's School.

Related Documents

Complaints Management in Anglican Schools Policy and Procedures by the Anglican Church Southern Queensland (ACSQ)

Professional Standards Canon – Corporation of the Synod of the Diocese of Brisbane

Student Protection in Anglican Schools Policy and Procedures – Anglican Church Southern Queensland (ACSQ)

Staff Code of Conduct

Volunteer Code of Conduct

Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Procedures - Staff

St Hilda's School acknowledges that as either a member of staff, a student, a parent or a member of the wider community one can feel aggrieved about something that is happening at a school which appears unsatisfactory, or unreasonable. A complaint, about any policy or procedure, decision, behaviour, act or omission (whether by the Principal, members of the Leadership Team or other staff or students) you consider to be unsatisfactory or unreasonable, can be lodged.

It is always our aim to seek to resolve issues through direct discussion. However there may be instances in which it is not possible to take up the issue with the other party directly or doing this does not resolve the matter. It is in such cases that the Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures should be utilised.

A distinctive feature of the Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that complaints are addressed in a timely and confidential manner at the lowest appropriate management level, in order to prevent minor problems or concerns from escalating. It is expected complaints will be brought forward and resolved in a respectful manner recognising the dignity of each person concerned in the process. The policy recognises that a number of more minor or simple matters can be resolved quickly and simply, by discussion between the appropriate people.

However, the level of investigation will be commensurate with the seriousness, frequency of occurrence, and severity of the complaint.

Scope and application:

This policy applies to all circumstances except the following:

- issues dealt with under the Exclusion Policy and Procedures
- suspected risk of harm or risk of significant harm to a child which is addressed via the Child Protection Policy
- performance and discipline of employees which are managed in accordance with the Performance Policy
- industrial and legal instruments.

Natural Justice and Procedural Fairness:

The principles of Natural Justice and Procedural Fairness, as outlined in the relevant School policies, apply to all complaints.

Confidentiality:

To maintain confidentiality in so far as that is reasonable all participants in the process should restrict the information about the complaint to those who need to know of the complaint.

This policy and procedures will be reviewed every three (3) years.

If the complaint is against the Principal the complaint will be put in writing and forwarded to the Chair of the Council of St Hilda's School

If the complaint is against a member of the Leadership Team the complaint will be put in writing and forwarded to the Principal.

Terms and definitions:

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions apply:

complaint

an expression of dissatisfaction made to the School, related to its operation, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected

complainant

a person, organization, or its representative, making a complaint

Complaints-handling framework

Commitment

The organization is actively committed to effective and efficient complaints handling. It is particularly important that this is shown by and promoted from, the School's Leadership Team.

A strong commitment to responding to complaints will contribute to the improvement of the School's operation and processes.

This commitment is reflected in the definition, adoption, and dissemination of the policy and procedures for the resolution of complaints. Management commitment is shown by the provision of adequate resources, including training.

Policy

The policy is made available to, and known by all staff. The policy is made available to parents and other interested parties via the School's website.

A complaints-handling management representative will manage the process and report findings to the Principal.

All personnel in contact with customers and complainants will:

- be trained in complaints handling,
- comply with any complaints-handling reporting requirements determined by the organization
- treat customers in a courteous manner and promptly respond to their complaints or direct them to the appropriate individual
- display good interpersonal and good communication skills.

All personnel will:

- be aware of their roles, responsibilities, and authorities in respect of complaints,
- be aware of what procedures to follow and what information to give to complainants
- report complaints which have a significant impact on the organization.

Operation of complaints-handling process:

Communication

Information concerning the complaints-handling process is made available on the School's website.

Receipt of complaints

Upon reporting of the initial complaint, the complaint should be recorded on Complaint Register.xlsx (found in Leadership section of School's T Drive – accessed by staff with authorization).

The complaint is tracked on the Complaint Register.

Acknowledgement of complaints

Receipt of each complaint should be acknowledged to the complainant immediately (for example, through post, phone, or e-mail).

Initial assessment of complaints

After receipt, each complaint is initially assessed in terms of criteria such as severity, safety implication, complexity, impact, and the need and possibility of immediate action.

Investigation of complaints

Every reasonable effort is made to investigate all the relevant circumstances and information surrounding a complaint. The level of investigation will be commensurate with the seriousness, frequency of occurrence, and severity of the complaint.

Response to complaints

Following an appropriate investigation, the organization will offer a response, for example, correct the problem and prevent it happening in the future. If the complaint cannot be immediately resolved, it will be dealt with in a manner intended to lead to its effective resolution as soon as possible.

Communicating the decision

The decision or any action taken regarding the complaint, which is relevant to the complainant or to the personnel involved, will be communicated to those involved as soon as the decision or action is taken.

Closing complaints

If the complainant accepts the proposed decision or action, the decision or action should be carried out and recorded.

If the complainant rejects the proposed decision or action, the complaint should remain open.

This should be recorded and the complainant should be informed of alternative forms of internal recourse available.

The organization should continue to monitor the progress of the complaint until all reasonable options of recourse are exhausted or the complainant is satisfied.