

Dubbo Christian School Policy



COMPLAINT FROM OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

RANGS Reference	
Date of Last Review	
Board approval required	
Owner	Principal

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the school, where a response or resolution is reasonably expected or legally required. A complaint can be about any aspect of the services provided including the behaviour or decisions of staff, practices, policies and procedures or the way in which the school has handled a complaint.

Complaints can be made in many different ways, e.g. in person, by telephone, in writing, online. Complaints should be made in the first instance to the Principal, unless the Principal is the subject of the complaint in which case it should be made to the Board Chair.

The Principal will immediately escalate to the Board Chair if the complaint is serious or if there are risks to the school. Any identified risks and risk management actions should then be documented by the Principal.

Some complaints are not dealt with by the school. Where there are allegations of criminal conduct, there must be a report to Police. Where there is a risk of significant harm to a student contact the Child Protection Helpline. For other risks of a child protection nature or if unsure, complete the Mandatory Reporter Guide, record the outcome and take any required action.

Complaints will be acknowledged as soon as possible, if possible within 3 working days. This can be done in person, by telephone, email or formally in writing. If acknowledgement is made verbally, it should be documented.

Acknowledgement will;

- let the complainant know that they will be kept up to date with progress
- keep the matter as confidential as possible by only sharing information with those who need to know about the complaint issues
- listen carefully to the issues and resolve the complaint directly at the lowest level wherever possible.

Complaints can be made anonymously. If the school receives an anonymous complaint the issues that are raised will be dealt with – to the extent possible. It is not appropriate to try to establish who made the complaint or approach anyone to ask them if it came from them. Sometimes anonymous complaints raise the most serious issues.

Complaints will be assessed which may involve going back to the complainant to clarify their concerns. For verbal complaints, it is useful to document the complaint issues, provide these to the complainant and ask them to confirm that the complaint has been characterised accurately.

If the process of clarifying/defining the complaint starts to indicate that the complaint issue is different from what was first raised, that should be documented and confirmed with the complainant. That way, there is agreement about the nature of the complaint.

The complainant's expected outcome will be established.

Information will be gathered to allow a proper assessment of the concerns as quickly as possible. Information to be gathered could include:

- policies and procedures
- copies of other documents such as forms, reports, student records etc
- copies of previous correspondence
- information and/or accounts from students, staff or other areas of the school
- further information from complainants.

The Principal will assess each complaint issue on its merits.

The complaint outcome will be finalised as soon as possible and no later than 20 working days. The Principal will keep people updated on the progress of their complaint. If a delay is anticipated, the complainant and other parties will be informed and provided reasons for the delay.

Outcomes will depend on the circumstances of each complaint and take into account any statutory requirements.

The Principal will provide information about the outcome to the complainant. This may be in a meeting or by telephone or email.

When giving the outcome information, the following will be explained:

- the outcome of the complaint and any action that is going to be taken, by whom and when
- the reason/s for the decision
- any internal or external options for review.

In any case, the complaint outcome should always be confirmed in writing. Email is acceptable. Complex complaints may require additional record keeping (for example, file notes of contentious meetings).

While it's good practice to provide as much information as you can about outcomes, it is important to keep confidential specific personal details about the management of staff.

If a person is the subject of a complaint, they should also be provided with information about the outcome. All reasonable steps to implement and monitor the outcomes of the complaint will be taken. Where the outcomes relate to whole of school or work area processes, the principal or other manager will oversee progress and / or delegate responsibility to a specific member of staff with relevant responsibilities.

The Principal will document:

- their contacts with the complainant
- how they managed the complaint
- the outcome of the complaint, including how and whether any concerns were substantiated and the actions taken in response
- the steps taken to follow up any outcome actions.

This will be recorded in the Grievance Register.

Related Policies & Procedures	Person Responsible