# Berakah Christian Education Policies

## Berakah Christian Education's Complaints Handling Policy

Berakah Christian Education welcomes feedback from all members of the School community and takes all complaints or concerns that may be raised seriously. This Complaints Handling Policy is designed to assist you to understand how to make a complaint.

In this Policy, we use the terms "staff" and "staff member" to include all teaching and non-teaching staff, Board members, volunteers, contractors and external providers.

**What Is a Complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to Berakah Christian Education, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Complaints about child abuse or other harm, or other breaches of our Child Safe Codes of Conduct, relating to conduct by:

- current or former staff members
- current or former students
- other people on School premises or at School events

are managed differently from other complaints.

Refer to the section at the end of this Policy - Complaints About Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff Members — for more information.

**Berakah Christian Education's Commitment**

Berakah Christian Education is committed to handling complaints effectively and efficiently. To manage complaints effectively, we have established a Complaints Handling Program in line with:

- Principle 6 of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, using the Office of Child Safety's "Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people"
- the international complaints handling standard (ISO 10002:2018 Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations)
- the Australian/New Zealand complaints handling standard (AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organisations)
- the Australian Privacy Principles (APP).

There is no fee associated with making a complaint.

Our Complaints Handling Program includes the establishment of an online complaints management system which allows us to effectively capture, manage and report on complaints.

Regular analysis of complaints received and the implementation of rectification action, where deficiencies are identified, are key to the School's commitment.

Complaints may be made anonymously or using a pseudonym. If you make an anonymous complaint, we will be unable to provide you with feedback on the progress and outcome of your complaint. It may also limit our ability to

fully investigate the complaint if we are unable to contact you to obtain further details.

**Informal Complaints Resolution**

The vast majority of issues causing concern in schools can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. We therefore ask that, where appropriate, you first raise your concern directly with the relevant staff member. Even if the issue is resolved informally, all staff are required to log issues through our complaints management system so that we are able to identify any systemic issues arising, and take appropriate rectification action.

**How Do I Make a Formal Complaint?**

If you have been unable to resolve a matter informally, or simply wish to make a formal complaint, you can do so by any of the following means:

1. Sending an email to andrew.manning@dubbocs.edu.au (DCS) or kaylie.thompson@wellingtoncs.com.au (WCS)

2. Writing a letter to the School addressed to the Principal

3. Telephoning the School and asking to speak to the Head of Primary or Head of Secondary (DCS).

The Principal will immediately escalate to the Board Chair if the complaint is serious or if there are risks to the School.

**Our Internal Complaints Handling Process**

**Step 1** – All formal complaints are recorded by the Principal or in the case of complaints against the Principal, by the Chair of the Board. A complaint about the Chair of the Board is directed to the Principal.

**Step 2** – All valid complaints, except those made anonymously, will be acknowledged in writing, as soon as practicable, and allocated a status, priority and target resolution date. It is our policy, where possible, to resolve all disputes within 14 days.

**Step 3** – The Principal (or, if the complaint is about the Principal, the Chair of the Board), will conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination.

**Step 4** – Following the determination, if appropriate, the Principal (or, if the complaint is about the Principal, the Chair of the Board) will formulate a resolution and, except where the complaint was anonymous, provide a written response to the complainant. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

**Step 5** – If the response is not accepted, the matter will be reviewed internally by the Principal or the Principal's delegate, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Principal or their delegate seeks to resolve all disputes within 14 days from the date that the review process is initiated. The matter will be closed if the response of the Principal, or their delegate, is accepted.

**Step 6** - All complaints received will be entered into our Complaints Register and, where appropriate, a corrective action request will be made to address any underlying processes which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.

**Step 7** - If the matter remains unresolved, and/or the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome or the way that the complaint has been managed, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives.

**Overseas Students**

If an overseas student is not satisfied with the outcome of School's internal complaints handling process, they may lodge an external appeal through the Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO) which investigates complaints about problems that overseas students or intending overseas students may have with private education and training in Australia. The services of the OSO are free. The contact details for the OSO are as follows:

**Email**: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

**Call:** 1300 362 072 within Australia. Outside Australia call +61 2 6276 0111.

**Enquiries:** 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday, Australian Eastern Standard Time (Australian Eastern Daylight Time when daylight savings is in effect)

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

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

Berakah Christian Education agrees to be bound by the OSO's recommendations, and will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within 30 days of receipts of the report.

**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.

**Complaints About Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff Members**

Complaints and allegations of:

- breaches of the Child Safe Codes of Conduct
- child abuse or other harm of a current or former student by:
  - current or former staff members
  - current or former students
  - other people on School premises or at School events
- "reportable conduct" as defined in the Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)
- other child protection related staff misconduct

are managed by the School in a different manner from other complaints.

This is because of the additional confidentiality and privacy requirements surrounding these kinds of matters. We refer to these as child protection/child safety/child safeguarding related complaints.

If your complaint is a child protection related complaint, please make your complaint to the Principal or if this person is the subject of your complaint please notify Chair of the Board.

For more information about how the School manages child protection related complaints, as well as any child safety incidents or concerns at or involving the School or its staff members, please refer to our Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff, Volunteers or Contractors, and Procedures for Handling Allegations of Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct, available on our public website.