



Parklands School
Learning for Life

Complaints Handling Policy & Procedures

Introduction

Our ability to identify, manage and promptly resolve complaints is an important aspect of our School's management practices.

We have adopted the definition of "complaint" from the Australian complaints handling standard (AS 10002:2022) which defines a complaint as an:

"expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required."

The term "complaint" is used to refer collectively to any enquiry, comment, complaint or dispute raised by a person expressing dissatisfaction as to a particular circumstance, or situation, related to our services or operations.

This could include complaints about the conduct of our staff, volunteers or other people associated with the School, such as a student or a parent.

We are committed to complying with our Complaints Handling requirements. 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 "Complaints 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), and
- 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.

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 choose to do so 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.

Purpose and Objectives

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

Scope

This Policy and its procedures apply to all staff, volunteers and contractors at the school.

Culturally Safe Complaints Management

Parklands School values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this, we support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families. Our School's complaint handling system is one that is culturally safe and overcomes cultural barriers and taboos to disclosure – our complaints handling process is managed by people who are aware of and sensitive to potential complainant's culture and cultural attitudes.

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 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 and wish to make a formal complaint you can do so by any of the following means, clearly indicating that you are lodging a formal complaint:

1. Sending an email to complaints@parklands.wa.edu.au Complaints regarding the Principal should be sent to chair@parklands.wa.edu.au Complaints regarding the Board Chair should be sent to treasurer@parklands.wa.edu.au
2. Writing a letter to the School addressed to "The Principal" PO Box 377 Albany WA 6331
3. Telephoning the School on (08) 9841-8179 and asking to speak to the Principal
4. Completing our online Complaints Form
5. In-person by visiting the school

All formal complaints will be logged into our online complaints management system and managed in accordance with the below procedure.

Responsibilities

The **Principal** has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy and maintaining confidentiality.

The **Administration Team** has responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy and maintaining confidentiality.



All **Staff** have responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy and maintaining confidentiality.

The **Board Chair** has responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy, maintaining confidentiality and resolving any dispute. The Chair may appoint a nominee to fill the role of the Chair.

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.

Policy

- child abuse, grooming 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 Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971 (WA)
- other child safety-related staff misconduct

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

This is because of the additional confidentiality and privacy requirements surrounding these kinds of matters.

We refer to these as child safety-related complaints.

If your complaint is a child safety related complaint, please make your complaint to the Deputy Principal or the Principal, via childprotection@parklands.wa.edu.au or 08 9841 8179. If this person is the subject of your complaint, please notify the Board via chair@parklands.wa.edu.au.

For information about how the School manages child safety-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, available on the school's website.

Implementation

The School Board and Principal share responsibility for the effective implementation of this Policy.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Complaint	<p>A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to Parklands School, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.</p> <p>A complaint may be made by a student, parent/carer, former student, parent/carer of a former student, member of the wider School community, strategic partner, regulator or a member of the public generally. A complaint can also be made anonymously.</p>
Complainant	<p>We refer to anyone who makes a complaint as a "complainant". They could be a natural person, an organisation, or a representative of an organisation.</p>
School Day	<p>Any day in which a student of Parklands School is required to attend the School. School Days do not include, for example, school holidays, public holidays, pupil-free days or other days when the school is required to close for unforeseen circumstances. School Days at Parklands School may not necessarily match those of other schools.</p>
Staff, staff member	<p>All teaching and non-teaching staff, School Board members, volunteers, contractors and external providers.</p>



Source of Obligation

'Standard 9: Complaints' of the Guide to the Registration Standards and Other Requirements for Non-government Schools.

The Role of the Director-General

The Director-General of the Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that the School observes the registration standards for non-government schools, including the standard about its complaints handling system. Any student, parent/carer or other School community member is entitled to contact the Director-General with concerns about how the school has dealt with a complaint, including child safety related complaints. More information is available on the Department of Education website. While the Director-General may consider whether the School has breached the registration standards, they do not have the power to intervene in a complaint or override the School's decision.

Our Complaints Handling Process

Step 1: Logging and Screening

All formal complaints are logged through our online complaints management system. The Principal screens complaints. Complaints regarding the Principal should be sent to chair@parklands.wa.edu.au , while complaints regarding the Board Chair should be sent to treasurer@parklands.wa.edu.au .

Step 2: Acknowledgement and Prioritisation

All complaints, except those made anonymously, will be acknowledged in writing, as soon as practicable. We will assign a status, priority, and target resolution date to the complaint. Our policy is to resolve all disputes within 10 school days, whenever possible.

Step 3: Investigation and Determination

The Principal, or the appropriate person depending on the complaint, will conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, to arrive at a determination.



Step 4: Initial Response and Closure

Following the determination, if appropriate, the Principal or the appropriate person will formulate a resolution and provide a written response to the complainant, except for anonymous complaints. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted, or no further communication is received within 10 school days.

Step 5: Internal review

If the initial response is not satisfactory, the complainant may request an internal review by the Principal or the Board. The reviewer may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties before providing a final decision. The reviewer seeks to resolve all disputes within 10 school days from the date the review process is initiated. The matter will be closed if the response of the Principal, or the Board, is accepted.

Step 6: Independent Mediation

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the internal review, they may pursue independent mediation. The Complainant must notify the School in writing of their intent to pursue mediation within 10 school days of receiving the review decision. It is the Complainant's responsibility to source a mediator. The School will pay for up to three sessions of mediation.

Step 7: Record Keeping and Improvement

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

Version Control

Version Number	Modifications Made	Modified by	Date Modified	Status
1	Policy created	Principal	July 2020	Final
1.1	Policy endorsed	Board	Aug 2020	Endorsed
1.2	Updated to reflect compliance changes	Principal	Apr 2021	Final



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Version Number	Modifications Made	Modified by	Date Modified	Status
1.3	Title changed to include "and Procedures" Updated to AS 10002:2022. - complaint definition updated Resolution time frame changed from 14 days to 10 school days. Removed fax as a way of submitting complaints Formatting changes	Principal	Mar 2024	Draft
1.4	Staff consultation	Staff	Mar 2024	Revised
1.5	Clearer explanation of complaints steps, including the addition of time limits and alternative contact methods when a complaint concerns the Principal.	Board	Jun 2024	Revised
1.6	Policy endorsed	Board	Aug 2024	Endorsed