



Learning For Life

Parent & Student Concerns and Complaints Policy

Definitions

A **concern** is the expression of a worry, something that has made a person troubled or anxious about an issue and is expressed at a 'first level' ie to a class teacher at the classroom door. The teacher or staff member will make and file a brief note about the issue and interaction and inform the Principal.

A **complaint** is an expression of genuine dissatisfaction made to an organisation related to its products or the complaints handling process itself that requires following a formal process outlined below.

A **dispute** is an argument or disagreement and may be the result of a pursued unresolved complaint.

Policy

Parklands School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes seriously concerns that may be raised. It is important parents understand that a complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine concern and that it warrants a response from the appropriate school representative determined by the procedures.

The school uses evidenced-based processes to resolve complaints on the basis of identifying *own* and *others* needs and looking for solutions. The Schools objectives are to ensure that:

- Parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so;
- All complaints are addressed within the specified time set out in the procedures and in a courteous and efficient way;
- Parents realise that the School is committed to listening, understanding and managing Complaints;
- Staff are appropriately and adequately trained in dealing with concerns and complaints;
- The Parklands School Board monitors and reviews complaints management through a Complaints Register maintained by the Principal.

Guiding Principles

When managing a concern a complaint or a dispute, Parklands will adhere to the following principles:

Confidentiality

Parklands School is committed to providing a confidential complaint procedure. This means, so far as possible, the complaint, and the complaint resolution process including any investigation and any resolution will be confidential. Wherever possible, only the people involved in the complaint and the complaint resolution process will have access to information about it. However, in some circumstances information may

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Learning For Life

not be able to be kept confidential, such as where physical threats are involved or the law otherwise requires disclosure.

Training

The School will provide training to assist staff to deal not only with complaints that are made to them, but also to complaints that may be made about them. The School is also aware there is a need to provide support for staff about whom a complaint is made.

The School will provide training so staff know how to carry out their responsibilities. Training will cover the complaints procedure, communication skills, handling complaints, negotiation and mediation skills, skills in observing, recording and reporting, and the benefits of handling complaints well and the consequences of mishandling complaints.

Respect

All persons involved in a complaint will be treated with dignity and respect throughout the complaint resolution process. Similarly, all persons involved in a complaint resolution are required to treat all other parties with dignity and respect even if they feel aggrieved by a situation.

Fairness

All parties to a complaint will have the opportunity to express their point of view. No assumptions will be made and, so far as reasonable, no action will be taken until all relevant information has been collected and considered.

Vexatious Complaints

It is a serious matter for any party to make a malicious, frivolous or vexatious complaint and further action may be taken by Parklands School should this be found to have occurred.

Related Legislation

School Education Act 1999 Standard
Incorporated Associations Act (1987)
Corporations Act 2001



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Procedures

How should I raise a concern or lodge a complaint?

When raising a concern we suggest wherever possible that you discuss it with the class teacher or the person most closely concerned with the issue. In many cases they are able to sort things out quickly, with the minimum of fuss.

The class teacher or person most closely concerned with the issue, will make a written record of the concern and provide a copy of the written record of the concern and the outcomes implemented or taken to the Principal detailing:

- Date when the issue was raised;
- Name of the parent;
- Name of the student;
- Brief statement of the concern;
- Simple, clear notes of all conversations with parents about any source of dissatisfaction
- Member of staff handling the issue;
- Brief statement of outcome.

If you feel your concern has not been dealt with to your satisfaction you may wish to lodge a complaint. A complaint should be made in writing or via email in the form described below and lodged at the School Office for the attention of the Principal.

Where a written complaint is inappropriate a verbal complaint may be made in person. In this case, a second staff member should be in attendance.

Where a complaint is made in person, it will still be necessary to lodge a formal written signed statement.

A complaint should include information about:

- who the complaint is against;
- the relevant school policy and/or procedures that have been breached;
- what happened – details of the incident or behaviour;
- when did it happen (e.g. dates, times, was it repeated);
- where did the incident or behaviour happen (e.g. at school/work, at home, online);
- why and how the behaviour affects the Complainant, or other students;
- any steps taken to informally resolve issue;
- any evidence the complainant has in relation to the complaint (e.g. Witnesses, messages)



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I'm not sure whether to complain or not?

Any person with a concern or a complaint is encouraged to seek assistance to resolve the matter as soon as possible.

How long will it take to receive a response from the school?

All reasonable efforts will be made to address and deal with complaints as quickly as possible. If you lodge a complaint in writing we will make a written response within two working days to acknowledge it. Unless further exploration is needed we will detail what action if any will be taken and the timeline of the action.

What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?

We commit to doing all we can to ensure that you are satisfied with the outcome and that your concerns have been fully heard and considered.

If you are not satisfied with the investigation and subsequent action from a complaint then the Principal will offer to refer the matter to the Chairperson of the Parklands School Board or you can contact the Chairperson yourself by email at officemanager@parklands.wa.edu.au, or by letter, through the School Office addressed to:

The Chairperson
Parklands School Board
PO Box 377
ALBANY WA 6333

The Parklands Board Chairperson may use mediation procedures as suggested by the Department of Commerce outlined in [Incorporated Association Model Rules](#). The Chairperson will call for a report from the Principal and examine the issue. If necessary the Chairperson may invite you to a meeting together with the Principal. In this case, you may wish to bring a support person who is not involved in any way in the issue, but legal representation is not appropriate at this stage. If the meeting does not bring about a resolution, following mutual agreement, and if appropriate, the parties may appoint an independent arbitrator to investigate the issue. The arbiter would have to be:

- agreed by both parties
- remunerated by both parties (if appropriate)
- assured both parties will accept the arbiter's decision.

A finding on behalf of the Parklands School Board will represent the final decision by Parklands School in any dispute resolution process. However you may seek further action through the other legislated or legal avenues available.

Can students express a concern or make a complaint?

Yes, if students wish to express a concern or lodge a complaint they may do so, following the same process of discussing it in the first place with their class teacher or an adult they feel comfortable with. The class



teacher or person most closely concerned with the issue, will make a written record of the concern and the outcomes implemented and/or taken to the Principal detailing:

- Date when the issue was raised;
- Name of the parent;
- Name of the student;
- Brief statement of the concern;
- Simple, clear notes of all conversations with student about any source of dissatisfaction
- Member of staff handling the issue;
- Brief statement of outcome.

If meeting with the Principal, a student must always have a Parent or Legal Guardian present for any complaint process.

Will my concern or complaint be kept confidential?

Parklands School is committed to providing a confidential complaint procedure. This means, so far as possible, the complaint, and the complaint resolution process including any investigation and any resolution will be confidential. Only the people involved in the complaint and the complaint resolution process will have access to information about it.

Parklands School considers confidentiality one of the most important aspects of dealing with complaints. However, in some circumstances information may not be able to be kept confidential, such as where physical threats are involved or the law otherwise requires disclosure. Unauthorised disclosure of information will be considered to be serious breach of school policy.

The resolution to a complaint will be made known to all affected parties however specific actions, including any disciplinary action taken as a result by the School with a staff member, may not be disclosed to the person making the complaint, or publicly.

How will records be kept?

All documentation received and notes taken by staff members at Parklands will be treated as confidential. All formal meetings will be minuted or confirmed in writing. All record keeping will reflect the need for confidentiality.

All complaints received by staff members and their resolution will be recorded by the Principal in the Complaints Register. This register will be provided to the Parklands School Board twice a year as part of the monitoring of complaints and their resolution.

Register of Complaints

The Complaint should contain the following information:



- date when the issue was raised and to whom it was raised;
- name of complainant and relevant parties involved;
- brief statement of issue;
- member of staff handling the issue;
- name of the person/member of staff responsible for reviewing any decision made;
- brief statement of outcome including date of resolution/outcome; and
- location of detailed file (if applicable).

Conclusion and Findings

All complaints made will receive a written response from the school upon completion explaining the findings and recommendations made.



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APPENDIX A – COMPLAINT FORM

To ensure confidentiality – if posting the completed form please place in an envelope marked PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

1. Details

Your Name: _____

Your role in the school: _____

Date(s) & time(s) of incident: _____

Location of incident: _____

The relevant School Policies or procedures that have been breached: _____

Name of person against whom the allegation is made: _____

Their role in the school: _____

Description of complaint – what happened: _____

Additional information may be attached.



2. Witnesses (if any)

Witness 1 Name and Contact Details:

Witness 2 Name and Contact Details:

NB. Please do not contact any witnesses before contacting the Principal.

3. Outcome Sought

Please detail what outcome(s) you are seeking in order to resolve this complaint.

4. Resolution Process

Have you attempted to resolve the complaint with the individual?

YES / NO

If 'Yes', what attempts have been made and have they been successful?



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I confirm that this is an accurate recollection of an event that I wish to be made known as a formal complaint

Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you require further information please refer to the Concerns and Complaints Policy or contact the Principal.



COMPLAINT FLOW CHART

