



COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

1. PURPOSE

St Hilda's welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes seriously complaints and concerns that may be raised.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Provide parent(s) or guardian(s) with the opportunity to access procedures to facilitate the making of and resolution of a dispute or complaint, including the process and circumstances for escalating through the school's complaints resolution process.
- Make provision for an adequate records system to maintain all complaints and ensure that due process is followed.
- Provide and promote an approach responding to and investigating complaints that is:
 1. transparent;
 2. consistent;
 3. timely;
 4. responsible; and
 5. private and confidential.
- Ensure complaints are dealt with in a fair and confidential manner that:
 1. is absent of victimisation, discrimination or retribution;
 2. includes Natural Justice principles.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all parents/guardians.

3. BACKGROUND

A complaint or grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived situation or outcome.

The dissatisfaction may be based on a perception that the School has:

- done something wrong, or
- failed to do something it should have, or
- acted unfairly or inappropriately.

4. DEFINITIONS

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction that needs a response. We wish to ensure that:

- parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so
- we respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way
- parents realise that we listen and take complaints seriously
- we take action where appropriate

5. LEGISLATION

Nil

6. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

School Community Code of Conduct
Privacy Policy

7. GUIDELINES

7.1 “How should I complain?”

- A complaint can be made by contacting the relevant member of staff by telephone or in writing.
- If the complaint concerns another student or students, the complaint should be directed to the relevant member of staff such as, for example, the relevant Head of Year.
- If the complaint concerns a member of the teaching staff, the complaint in the first instance should be directed to that person.
- If the complainant does not feel comfortable raising the complaint with the staff member concerned, the complaint should be directed to a more senior member of staff: Head of Department *or* Head of Year, *or* Head of Residential Life, *or* Head of Sport
- If the complainant does not feel comfortable raising the complaint with the staff member concerned, the complaint should be directed to a member of the Executive Leadership Team.
- If the complaint relates directly to a member of the Executive Leadership Team, the complaint should be directed to the Principal.
- If the complaint relates to the Principal, the complaint should be addressed:

‘Private and Confidential’

Chair of Council
PO Box 34
Mosman Park WA 6912

- If the complaint relates to the School Council or any member of School Council, including its Chair, the complaint should be addressed:

‘Private and Confidential’

The Visitor
Anglican Church
Diocese of Perth
PO Box W2067

7.2 “I don’t want to complain as such, but there is something bothering me”

The School is here for you and your child, and we want to hear your views and your ideas. It is better to raise issues early, before they become bigger. Contact a member of staff as described above.

7.3 “I am not sure whether to complain or not”

If as a parent you have concerns, you are entitled to raise them. If in doubt, you should contact the School, as we are here to help.

7.4 “What will happen next?”

If you raise something face-to-face or by telephone, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately. If you have made a complaint or suggestion in writing, we will contact you as soon as possible to respond to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed.

In many circumstances, the person you contact will need to discuss the matter with a colleague and consider it further before responding. You will be given a date by which time you will receive a response. If a detailed exploration of the issue is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible. This will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome then a mediation process may be followed, where the parties, assisted by a third person, listen to each other, define the dispute, find points of agreement and investigate what is important to each party with the goal of reaching a workable agreement through the development of options for resolution satisfactory for each party.

If the mediation process does not bring about a resolution, the matter could be referred to an independent arbiter. If this is agreed to by both parties. Both parties would also need to agree to share any costs involved and to recognise that the arbiter's decision will be final.

It is the arbiter's task to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. You will be asked if there are any papers you would like to have circulated beforehand. You will be invited to bring a friend with you.

7.5 "What happens about confidentiality?"

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Principal and those directly involved. The Chair of the School Council may also need to be informed. It is the School's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

In some circumstances it may be necessary to make third parties outside the School aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it becomes necessary to refer matters to the police.

7.6 Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints are where there is no name or address supplied, or where the complainant says they do not wish to be identified.

You are encouraged to give your name. If you choose to remain anonymous, it will be at the Principal's discretion as to what action, if any, will be taken to reconcile your complaint.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints might not be pursued.

COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION PROCEDURE FLOW CHART

STAGE 1

Complaint is resolved with the Class Teacher or staff member involved with the concern.

STAGE 2

If complaint is unresolved discuss with a more senior member of staff:

- Head of Department, *or*
- Head of Year, *or*
- Head of Residential Life, *or*
- Head of Sport

STAGE 3

If no resolution, meeting arranged between initial contact person and a member of the Executive Leadership Team:

- Dean of Student Wellbeing, *or*
- Dean of Teaching & Learning, *or*
- Head of Junior School, *or*
- Dean of Staff, *or*
- Director of Finance & Business Operations

STAGE 4

If complaint is not resolved after stages 1, 2, 3, contact the Principal to arrange a meeting

STAGE 5

If the complaint cannot be resolved, the Principal will offer to refer the matter to the Chair of Council. Alternatively, you may wish to write directly to the Chair via the School. This correspondence should be addressed: **'Private and Confidential'**, Chair of Council, PO Box 34, Mosman Park 6912

STAGE 6 - Mediation

If the matter has not been resolved, by this stage of the resolution process, then, with mutual agreement, mediation may be entered into by involving a third party to review the dispute in a fair manner with the aim of bringing about reconciliation

STAGE 7 – Arbitration

If a parent has followed the appropriate stages of the complaint resolution procedure as outlined in this document, and remains not satisfied with the outcome, then an independent arbiter by mutual agreement may be engaged.

8. BREACH

Nil

Responsibility: Principal
Review Date: August 2018
Next Review Date: August 2019