

P013 COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

PURPOSE

The Complaints Handling Policy provides directives and guidance for the following types of complaints:

- Complaints from school community i.e., students, parents, governing body members, volunteers and service providers to ISWA (direct/indirect)
- Internal Complaints i.e., from staff about another staff member
- Complaints in respect to the School Education Act 1999 (WA) regarding provision of education

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.

OBJECTIVES

To provide clarity, transparency, consistency and timely resolution (e.g., structured processes) regarding the School's Complaint Handling procedures to enable any person(s) to make a complaint based on the nature of their complaint.



PRINCIPLES OF POLICY

Key principles are:

- The School recommends complaints between the respective parties to be resolved through conciliatory means before instigation of formal arbitration.
- All complaints will be investigated on timely basis and outcomes will be provided to the respective parties.
- Natural justice must be exercised in resolving any dispute or complaint; this requires all parties concerned to receive a fair process and final decision to be made without bias.
- All matters raised will be kept private and confidential unless permission is explicitly received from the parties involved.
- Complaints made in good faith are protected from retribution and detrimental treatment such as dismissal, harassment, discrimination, disciplinary action, bias or unfavorable treatment.
- Resolution must appropriately balance the principles of justice with compassion.
- All complaints will be captured in the relevant recordkeeping system.

KEY POLICY REQUIREMENTS

The Director General of the Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that the school observes the registration standards, including the standard about its complaints handling system. Any student, parent or community member is entitled to contact the Director General with concerns about how the school has dealt with a complaint. Information is available on the Department of Education website. While the Director General may consider whether the school has breached the registration standards, she does not have power to intervene in a complaint or override the school's decision."

For each type of complaint, depending on the nature and circumstances of the complaint, a designated Officer will be assigned to investigate the complaint and report back to the designated Resolution Officer. This person may be the Principal, HR Manager, Head of Secondary School, Head of Primary School and/or third party.

All complaints captured under this Policy will be formally documented and safeguarded in the prescribed manner outlined in the Procedures to:

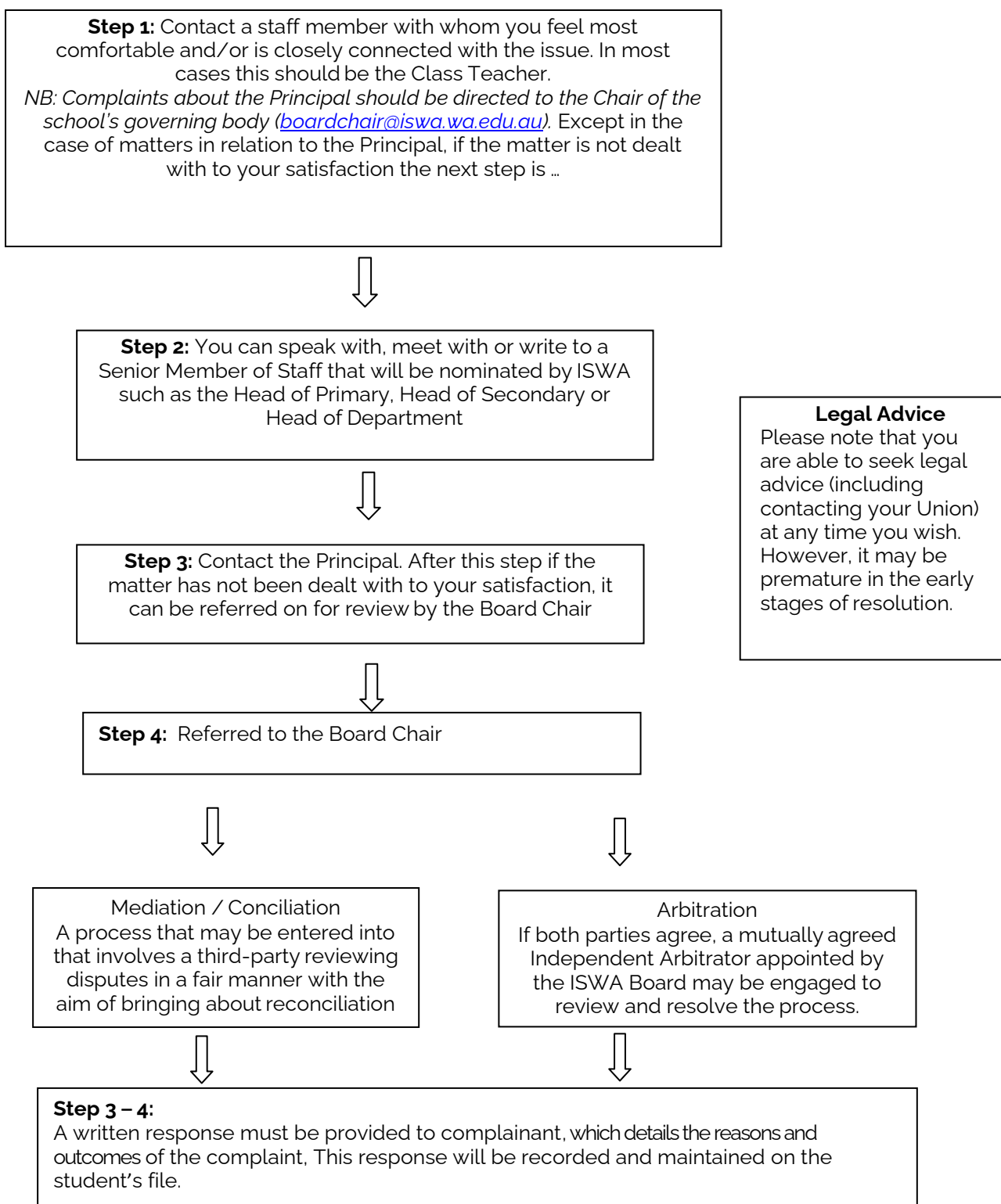
- ensure historical record of the complaint,
- ensure resolution thereof; and
- acknowledgement from the Resolution Officer and complainant that the matter is closed.

The school's written records of complaints, allegations and findings, including the reasons for the findings, related to grooming and child abuse, whether involving former or current staff or students:

- (a) will contain as much detail as possible;
- (b) are stored securely; and
- (c) are not destroyed without the approval of the Director General or, where their retention becomes impracticable or unduly onerous, are forwarded to the Director General with her permission for retention in accordance with the State Records Act 2000.



GENERAL PROCEDURE FOR SCHOOL COMMUNITY COMPLAINTS



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following are the prescribed roles and responsibilities in the implementation of this Policy:

Designated role	Responsibilities of role	Other information
Parent/Student Complaints		
Recipient Teacher of complaint	Resolve directly with complainant within 5 days.	This should be face to face and confirmed in writing (email).
Head of Primary/Head of Secondary	Understand facts from parties involved; escalate to Principal if complaint remains unresolved.	Response must be provided to complainant, which details the reasons and outcomes of the complaints process.
Principal	Aims to resolve issues to the satisfaction of the complainant. If this is not achieved, the complainant can raise the matter with the Board Chair.	
Board Chair	Respond to complaints involving the Principal and/or issues which have not been satisfactorily resolved. Board Chair refers the matter for mediation/conciliation or arbitration.	
Staff Complaints		
Executive, Middle Leadership Team	Listen and support staff; direct staff member(s) to relevant Policies and Procedures (where applicable). Acknowledge complaint within 5 days and keep informed all relevant parties informed.	Refer Employee Grievance Resolution Procedure; if unresolved, staff can go direct to Board Chair. Complaints about Board Members should be directed to the Principal in the first instance.
OS&H Committee	Conduct investigations involving workplace safety and psychosocial hazards.	Refer OS&H Policy
Fraud	If staff suspect or witness behaviour that is not appropriate, they should report to the Business Manager or any member of the Executive team.	Refer Code of Conduct Code of Business Practice

Other External Complaints		
Designated role	Responsibilities of role	Other information
Recipient of complaint from parent/community member/contractor etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ascertain who should respond • Respond to complainant within 5 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm in writing with appropriate reasons and outcome • Refer upwards if necessary • All serious complaints must be entered into the Complaints Register on One Note

Procedures associated with the below types of complaints are found in the following documents:

Type of Complaint	Name of Procedure	Other information
Formal complaint from student	Child Friendly Complaints Procedure	SEQTA
Internal Staff Complaint	Employee Grievance Resolution Procedure	Employee Formal Grievance Form on SEQTA

CRICOS INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS – the following is also applicable

The student has an opportunity to present their complaint at minimal or no cost, and can be accompanied and assisted by a support person if necessary.

If the student complaint relates to a decision to cancel the student’s enrolment, ISWA must wait for the internal complaints process to be completed before proceeding with the cancellation.

If the overseas student is not satisfied with the outcome of the internal complaints process, ISWA must advise the student within 10 working days of their right to access an external complaint process and at minimal or no cost. ISWA must provide contact details of the external complaint process.

CRICOS INTERNATIONAL STUDENT – external complaints and appeals process

The appropriate external complaints body for CRICOS International Students will be the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#), for private providers (except for issues of broader educational quality)

In most cases, the purpose of the external appeals process is to consider whether the registered provider (ISWA) has followed its policies and procedures, rather than make a decision in place of the institution.

ISWA must only report an overseas student for unsatisfactory course progress or attendance in PRISMS after:

- the internal and external complaints processes have been completed and the breach has been upheld;
- the overseas student has chosen not to access the internal complaints and appeals process within the 20-working day period;
- the overseas student has chosen not to access the external complaints and appeals process; or

- the overseas student withdraws from the internal or external appeals process, by notifying the registered provider in writing.

When an external appeals process has been completed, ISWA must immediately implement the decision or recommendations. ISWA must notify the overseas student of the outcome, in writing.

If an overseas student is not satisfied with the outcome of either the internal or the external complaint process, they can access multiple external appeals. ISWA is not required to assist the overseas student with finding further appropriate appeals processes.

POLICY BREACHES

There are no formal penalties or consequences for breaching this Policy. All parties are reminded that vexatious and/or malicious complaints are not within the ethos of ISWA.



RECORDKEEPING

Name of document	File Location	Security Level
Complaints Register	One Note / Complaints Register	Restricted Access on a 'need to know basis'
Employee formal Grievance Form	Human Resources / Staff Complaints Register	Restricted Access on a 'need to know basis'

Policy Category	ISWA Governance
Date Approved	August 2020
Frequency of review	As required
Policy Owner	Board
Amendment History	
Date	Amendment
February 2020	New
August 2020	Minor amendments to provide further clarification
September 2020	Amendments as suggested by DES
January 2021	Additions as obtained from National Code 2017 for CRICOS International students.
July 2021	Added Other External Complaints