



The Small School

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Complaint Handling Policy

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Section 1

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to outline the way The Small School responds to complaints about services provided by the school or against staff members, including employees, contractors and volunteers.

This policy is for parents/carers of children at The Small School and members of the wider community. It does not extend to personal grievances between parents, guardians or other members of the school community.

Section 2

Overview

A complaint or grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the school about an educational and/or operational matter relating to services provided by the school or the behaviour or decisions of a staff member, contractor or volunteer, including misconduct.

If a complaint that concerns the behaviour of a staff member may constitute reportable conduct, the matter will be addressed in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy (available on the school's website thesmallschool.org.au).

Complainants are not required to assess whether their concern meets the threshold of reportable conduct before making a complaint. Any concern about a child's wellbeing may be reported under this policy.

Certain types of external complaints are also dealt with according to this policy. These relate to complaints by community members about car parking or noise.

As a school operating within a mixed-use zone (commercial and residential), the school takes all reasonable steps to ensure its operations do not unreasonably affect the operations of nearby businesses or the amenity of nearby residents.

The Small School has a responsibility to ensure that complaints are managed and resolved fairly, efficiently and according to principles of procedural fairness.

Section 3

Raising a Complaint

3.1 The Complainant

Informal complaints may be raised by a complainant directly with the person involved. However, if the complainant does not feel comfortable doing so or the matter is one where it may not be appropriate to do so a complaint can be made to the Principal. Any complaint about the conduct of a staff member should be raised directly with the Principal in the first instance.

Should the matter not be resolved through informal processes, the complainant may raise the matter formally with the school. A formal complaint can be made in writing to the Principal, via email at admin@thesmallschool.org.au.

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint concerning the Principal the complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of the School Board, via email TSSChair@gmail.com. In this situation, the references in this policy relating to the role of the Principal should be read as references to the Chair.

If a matter is urgent, complainants should contact the school on (02) 6672 1018 and ask to speak with the Principal.

3.2 The School

The Principal is responsible for responding to complaints in a manner consistent with the process outlined in this policy. The Principal will generally acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing as soon as practicable.

Section 4

Process for Responding to Complaints

4.1 Assessing a complaint

The Principal generally will assess the complaint and determine:

- whether the complaint is one to be addressed under this policy or is a staff grievance or reportable conduct matter which are dealt with by the relevant policies; and
- the priority of the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised; and
- whether the school may be required to report the matter to the Office of the Children’s Guardian, Police, Department of Communities and Justice or other relevant authorities should the complaint relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

4.2 Managing a formal complaint

The Principal generally will manage a formal complaint by:

- a) advising the complainant of the likely steps that will be undertaken by the School in relation to the complaint;
- b) if appropriate, advising the relevant parties of the complaint at the relevant time and providing them with an opportunity to respond;
- c) collecting any additional information the School considers necessary to assess the complaint;
- d) making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved (“resolution decision”); and
- e) advising the complainant in writing, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution decision of the Principal and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

There may be circumstances where some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the school will determine, on a case-by-case basis the most appropriate method of handling the complaint.

A complainant and the relevant parties that the complaint is about may choose to have an appropriate support person present at any meeting with representatives of the School about the complaint. However, the School maintains the right to determine whether the person’s preferred

support person is appropriate and may not approve the attendance of a support person where they are determined by the School to be inappropriate.

4.3 Responding to certain types of complaints

4.3.1 Car Parking

Where the complaint relates to car parking, the Principal will ensure that the school's Transport Policy is being enforced (see TSS Transport Policy) and where appropriate will act immediately to bring car parking into line with this policy.

4.3.2 Noise Management

The Small School's responsibilities in relation to the acoustic management of the school are outlined in the *Operational Plan 2023*.

If the school receives a complaint about noise, it is the responsibility of the Principal and teachers to act immediately to remedy noise levels.

Section 5

Contact

If you have any queries about the procedures in this policy, you should contact the Principal on (02) 6672 1018 or via email on admin@thesmallschool.org.au.