

Complaints Handling Policy

INTRODUCTION

Stuartholme School is a Year 7 – 12 Catholic day and boarding school for girls enriched by the philosophy and traditions of Sacred Heart Education, which give expression to its five goals – to educate to:

1. A personal and active faith in God.
2. A deep respect for intellectual values.
3. The building of community as a Christian value.
4. Social awareness which impels to action.
5. Personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that student, parent, employee or other stakeholder complaints are dealt with in a responsible, efficient, effective, transparent and fair way.

SCOPE

The policy applies to all complaints made by students, parents, employees, contractor, volunteer or member of the community. Where there is any inconsistency with the Student Protection Processes and Guidelines, the Student Protection Processes and Guidelines will apply.

Exclusions:

- Complaints relating to Student Protection should be addressed to the Principal. If the concern relates to the Principal, the Chair of the Stuartholme School Board in line with our Student Protection Processes & Guidelines.
- Student bullying complaints - Stand Up to Bullying Guidelines.
- Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, - Student Positive Expectations and Behaviour Guideline.

Employee complaints related to their employment should be directed to their Line Manager in the first instance, all reasonable attempts should be made to resolve these matters locally.

Where there is inconsistency between this policy and the EB and other industrial instruments, the industrial instrument will take precedence.

DEFINITIONS

Complainant	the person making the complaint.
Complaint	an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the School, our service and/or our staff or the handling of a complaint where the response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.
Dispute	an unresolved complaint which is escalated for external resolution.
Natural Justice	Applies to any decision that can affect the rights, interests or expectations of individuals in a direct or immediate way and works to ensure that decision making is fair and reasonable.
Respondent	the person that the complaint is about.

POLICY STATEMENT

Stuartholme School (“the School”) is committed to ensuring that student, parent and employee complaints are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective and fair way. The School will seek to resolve issues quickly and use principles of conflict resolution to ensure that complaints are resolved with the least amount of stress for those involved.

Complaints Handling Policy

The School views complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process. Stuartholme School acknowledges the right of students, parents and employees to complain when dissatisfied with an action, inaction or decision of the School and the School encourages such feedback. The School recognises that time spent on handling complaints can be an investment in better service to students, parents and employees.

Complaints made and the response to them must reflect the ethos enshrined in the Goals of Sacred Heart Education. Complaints will be addressed in accordance with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness. Procedural fairness will be ensured wherever practicable, including the right of the interested parties to the complaint to be heard.

PROCEDURE

The School encourages informal resolution of concerns and complaints through discussion and negotiation. This does not prevent a complainant from deciding, at any time to make a formal written complaint to the Principal. Refer to the Complaints Handling Guidelines for further information.

RESPONSIBILITIES

School

- develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the School's Complaints Handling Policy and Guidelines
- appropriately communicate the School's Complaints Handling Policy and Guidelines to students, parents and employees
- ensure that the Complaints Handling Guidelines are readily accessible by staff, students and parents
- upon receipt of a complaint, manage the complaint in accordance with the Complaints Handling Guidelines
- ensure that appropriate support is provided to all parties to a complaint
- take appropriate action to prevent victimisation or actions in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with parties to the complaint
- appropriately implement remedies
- ensure all relevant staff undertake professional development in support of this Policy
- maintain records via the Complaints Register in Assurance
- conduct a review/audit of the Complaints Register at least annually
- regularly report to the School Board in relation to complaint trends and emerging issues
- report to the School's insurer when that is relevant

All Parties to a Complaint

- comply with the School's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures
- raise concerns as soon as possible after an issue arises
- expect the complaint to be dealt with fairly and objectively; in a timely manner; with procedural fairness wherever practicable; that confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner
- not provide deliberately false or misleading information
- not make frivolous or vexatious complaints
- act in good faith, and in a calm, courteous and non-threatening manner
- will be appropriately supported
- acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced

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- maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- will not victimise or act in reprisal against any party to the complaint or any person associated with parties to the complaint.

Employees Receiving Complaints

- act in accordance with the School's Complaints Handling Policy and Guidelines
- inform the party raising the concern or complaint how complaints can be lodged, when they should be lodged and what information is required
- provide the complainant with information about any support or assistance available to assist them in raising their concern/complaint
- provide the complainant with a copy of the School's Complaints Handling Policy and Guidelines
- maintain confidentiality
- forward concerns/complaints to more senior employees, including the Principal, as appropriate
- not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with the matter of concern.

Principal

- ensure the compliant handling system is operating in accordance with this Policy and associated procedures/guidelines
- inform the School Board of any serious complaints and reporting at least annually on all complaints.

School Board

- delegate to the Principal the responsibility for the development, adoption and compliance of this Policy
- at least annually, review a report on all concerns/complaints dealt with by the School in order to ensure appropriate systems are in place for avoiding issues, remedying areas of concern and ensuring the complaint handling system is operating effectively.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Code of Conduct
- Code of Conduct – Stuartholme Board
- Communication Protocols
- Complaints Handling Guidelines
- Complaints Register
- Enterprise Bargaining Agreement
- ICTL Policy and Staff Guidelines
- International Student Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Student Positive Expectations and Behaviour Guideline
- Student Protection Processes & Guidelines
- Whistleblower Policy
- Work Health and Safety Policy
- Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Policy

REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed every three years, or as necessitated by legislation.