



GRIEVANCES and COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION

Policy and Guidelines

Complaints Resolution Policy

PURPOSE

This policy aims to articulate guidelines for the provision of an efficient, fair and accessible mechanism for resolving complaints in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

POLICY STATEMENT

Canberra Christian School aims to provide appropriate processes for parents, staff and students to raise concerns and to have these concerns addressed. These processes uphold principles of honesty, fairness and justice.

The complainant has a right to:

- be heard;
- have their complaint treated seriously;
- be informed of the processes of complaints handling;
- be informed of the outcome of the process.

Canberra Christian School aims to resolve all complaints in a transparent, comprehensive and timely manner.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Complaints Resolution Guidelines
- Child Protection Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy

SIGNATURE(s):  _____ Date: 02 / 06 / 2014
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Guidelines

RESPONSIVENESS

Complaints need to be resolved openly and responsively. It is expected that all written complaints will be acknowledged in writing and resolved in a timely manner. The process and timeframes for resolution will vary depending on the nature, complexity and timing of the issue.

FAIRNESS

The process needs to be fair to both the complainant and the person/s against whom the complaint is being made. All parties must be protected from victimisation, discrimination or retribution.

The process shall be based on the principles of natural justice, including the complainant's right to:

- be heard
- have their complaint treated seriously
- be informed of the processes of complaints handling
- be informed of the school's decision and reasons for that decision.

The person or section of the school about whom the complaint is made shall have the right to:

- be advised of the identity of the complainant and the complaint
- collect sufficient detail to enable them to gather information and prepare a response to the complaint
- have the opportunity to respond to the person investigating the complaint and have their response taken seriously
- be informed of the processes of complaints handling
- be informed of the decision and reason for the decision.

It is important that those handling complaints should be independent of the issue of the complaint. If a conflict of interest arises for the staff member involved in the receipt or management of a complaint, the Principal will arrange for an independent person to hear the complaint. If the complaint involves the Principal, the Principal shall inform the Chair of the Board or the Bishop of the Diocese of the complaint.

CONFIDENTIALITY

To protect confidentiality and privacy, staff involved in handling complaints resolution must ensure that information is restricted only to those who genuinely need to know in order to deal with the complaint. Some information about the specific complaint may need to be disclosed to others during its resolution. The complainant needs to be informed of this.

PROCESSES

It is important that the initial process of handling complaints is supportive and utilises positive conflict resolution skills. Each complaint should be treated on the information available and actions that are appropriate to the individual complaint.

The following is not covered by these guidelines

- Anonymous complaints.
In general, no action will be taken on anonymous complaints.

RAISING A CONCERN

Canberra Christian School acknowledges that concerns and issues exist that may be resolved informally without the need to follow a formal complaints process. In such cases parents are encouraged to initially raise issues or concerns informally with the relevant member of staff.

Discussing the issue or concern face-to-face may clarify the situation and resolve any misunderstandings satisfactorily. In the event that this does not work the parents or the person making the complaint should bring it to the attention of the Principal.

Should a complaint be made against the Principal, this complaint should be put in writing and addressed to the Chair of the School Board and posted to the school. The Chair or his/her representative will respond to the complaint with 21 days.

Positive resolution of a complaint should aim to:

- seek resolution at the level at which the complaint is made;
- gain agreement of the parties;
- consider all relevant information and views of all parties;
- consider the school's policies.

Management of complaints resolution needs to reflect the following:

- Complainants should be told the process for complaint resolution and how long it will take to deal with a complaint.
- Complainants should be kept informed of progress on resolving the complaint.
- It is expected that written complaints be acknowledged within 21 days. The proposed timeframe required to resolve the complaint should be indicated to the complainant as early as possible in the process and may vary according to the nature, complexity or timing of the complaint.
- Information on how, when, where and to whom complaints can be made should be readily accessible to all parents.
- In some instances, further assistance may be available to people in resolving a concern or complaint. Further agencies that may be able to assist include:
 - ACT Human Rights Office - in instances of discrimination.
 - Privacy Commissioner - for complaints about interferences with privacy under the Privacy Act and related legislation.

All complaints that cannot be resolved informally should be recorded and kept on the relevant file. Details should include:

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- the nature of the complaint
- response time
- staff members involved in handling the complaint
- action taken and outcomes