

# COMPLAINT HANDLING POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

Oran Park Anglican College is committed to providing a safe, fair and honest environment where complaints are dealt with promptly and sensitively.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to outline the policy and procedure of Oran Park Anglican College with regard to the handling of complaints.

## DEFINITIONS

*ISO 10002-2014 Complaints Handling Standard* (the Standard) defines a **"complaint"** as an "expression of dissatisfaction made to an organization, related to its products, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected".

The person making a complaint is referred to as the **'complainant'**.

The person about whom the complaint is made is the **'respondent'**.

The **'parties'** refer to both complainant and respondent.

The person handling the complaint is the **'complaint manager'**, usually a Principal, Director or Manager.

Persons who directly witness an alleged incident are referred to as **'witnesses'**.

The program used to record and manage complaints is called **'Complispace'**.

## POLICY

The policy outlines a framework for staff of the Corporation (and, as applicable, members of committees of the Corporations) to respond where students, parents, customers, contractors, local residents, visitors and others who have a complaint (excluding issues raised by staff within schools).

Exceptions include specific issues that are dealt with in accordance with:

- Student Suspension, Transfer, Expulsion, Exclusion Procedures
- Child Protection – Risk of Harm and Significant Harm and/or Allegations (notify the Principal immediately)
- Student Bullying
- Criminal Jurisdictions

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to establish an effective complaint handling program to:

- ensure compliance with legal obligations
- facilitate identification of real problems that must be resolved
- empower staff by giving them a clear path to resolve issues in a consistent, systematic and responsive way
- facilitate continual improvement of internal systems and controls
- provide information with respect to potential risks

## PRINCIPALS

The Complaints handling policy and procedures are available to all stakeholders either in the College newsletter, on the College website and on Complispace (for staff).

To record a complaint an email is to be sent to [principal@opac.nsw.edu.au](mailto:principal@opac.nsw.edu.au).

## TRAINING

All staff are required to attend training regarding how to identify a complaint, when a complaint can be managed informally and when it requires escalation of a nominated "complaint manager". Additional training is provided to those staff who are responsible for managing escalated complaints.

## MANAGING A COMPLAINT

The following procedures are a guide explaining how the College will address/capture a complaint. There may be cases where the procedure is not appropriate and other actions will be taken. The College will determine on a case by case basis on the most appropriate method of handling the complaint.

### 1. Capturing a Complaint

The complainant is to make a verbal or written complaint to the College. Any staff members receiving a complaint verbally are to encourage the Complainant to present them to the College using Complispace. The staff member will also notify the Principal about the discussion so that the matter can be received appropriately when it does arrive.

# COMPLAINT HANDLING POLICY

## 2. Acknowledging the Complaint

The College will allocate a Complaint Manager. The Complaint Manager will deem if the complaint requires formal investigation and responses. The Respondent will acknowledge the complaint either verbally or in writing and advise an approximate time frame if an investigation is required.

## 3. Tracking a Complaint

The Complaint Manager will record and track the investigation using Complispace.

Please note: If the complainant does not use Complispace to register the complaint, the Complaint Manager will complete a new complaint form using the Complispace.

## 4. Investigating the Complaint (if required)

The Complaint Manager will investigate each complaint in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner, ensuring procedural fairness or natural justice during the complaints handling process.

## 5. Outcome of the Complaint

The outcome of the complaint will vary on a case by case basis depending on the circumstances surrounding the complaint.

The complainant should:

- understand the situation and no longer feel aggravated or upset
- receive a written response including an apology if appropriate
- if appropriate, the respondent receiving disciplinary action where a School Policy or Code of Conduct has been breached
- where the complaint is regarding the actions of another parent, if appropriate a mediation process may be initiated by the College in an attempt to address the concerns, acknowledging that the College cannot enforce an outcome
- where the complaint is regarding the actions of students, the involvement of the College Counsellors may be recommended

## 6. Confidentiality

Any personally identifiable information concerning the complainant will only be used for the purpose of addressing the complaint. Information with respect to the complaint will remain confidential and only be disclosed to staff on a need to know basis.

## RECORD KEEPING

Records will be kept of every complaint including records of the description of the complaint, supporting documents (if any), immediate action taken, records relating to the investigation, including witness statements (if any).

## COMPLAINTS REGISTER

All complaints will be recorded on the College complaints register, classified and analysed to identify systemic, recurring and single incident problems and trends in order to identify key risk areas and help eliminate the underlying causes of complaints through corrective actions.

## MANAGEMENT REPORTING

The College Executive team will receive regular reports with respect to the status of existing complaints, any underlying statistical trends, as well as information with respect to corrective actions that have been put in place.

## RELATED LEGISLATION, DOCUMENTS AND WEBSITE REFERENCES

- Australian Privacy Principles 2014
- BOSTES Registration and Accreditation Manual for Non-Government Schools
- ISO 10002-2014 Complaints Handling Standard
- Ombudsman Act 1974 (as amended from time to time)
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 (as amended from time to time)
- Child and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000
- NSW Commission for Children and Young People – Website: [www.kids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au)
- Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 and Regulations 2013

## POLICY REVIEW

Regular review requires continual improvement of a school's complaints handling process. The policy shall be reviewed every three years or in the event of any information, incident legislative changes or organisational practice that would demonstrate the need for a review.

Approval date:

Approved by: The Executive Team

Last reviewed date: 22 July 2020

Reviewed by: Mrs Corina Lynch