



Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope

This procedure applies to *Tunttable Falls Community School* in handling complaints made in respect of services provided by the school or against staff members, which includes employees, contractors and volunteers.

This procedure does not extend to personal grievances between parents, guardians or other members of the school community.

1.2 Related policies and documents

- Child Protection Policy
- Parent Induction Pack
- Enrolment Pack
- Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Statement
- Parent Communication Register

Complaints about reportable conduct will be addressed in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy.

Complaints regarding a grievance between staff members about work matters, including work relationships and decision made by other staff members which impact on their work, are addressed in accordance with the school's Staff Grievance Policy.

Complaints regarding unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying between staff are generally addressed in accordance with the school's Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Statement.

1.3 Confidentiality

All parties involved in complaints handling are required to maintain appropriate confidentiality, including in relation to handling and storing records.

2. Complaints

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 parent/carer or student has a concern about the conduct of a staff member, they should raise their concern with the school in accordance with section 3. 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** in accordance with section 1.2. Please refer to the school's **Child Protection Policy** for information about **reportable conduct**. 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.

Complaints may be made by a student or parent/carer.

The school will seek to resolve complaints informally where possible but acknowledges that in some cases a person may wish to make a formal complaint.

3. Raising a complaint - Procedure

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 *following ways, although* any complaint about the conduct of a staff member should be raised directly with the *Coordinator* in the first instance.

- Copies of our Complaint Form are easily accessible in public areas of our facilities to provide clear and accessible ways of providing feedback on the services and care provided. The forms are available on request from the office and a suggestion box has been provided for the lodging of forms.
- Complaints can be made:

- in writing by dropping a completed Complaints Form in the suggestion box located at the front office
 - in person, verbally to the office administration staff or by approaching the class teacher for assistance
 - In writing by email to tuntableschool@gmail.com or joelanders@yahoo.com by telephone on (02)66891423
 - in writing by mail to; Tuntable Falls Community School 117 Upper Tuntable Falls Rd, Nimbin NSW 2480.
- Complainants are encouraged to lodge their complaint in writing. This will assist with understanding the nature of the complaint and with ensuring that the facts provided are correct.
 - The complaint is to be recorded in the Parent Communication Register
 - Complainants have the right to ask us for an internal reconsideration of decisions we have made in relation to their complaint.
 - Complainants have the right to lodge their complaint with an external agency including the Association of Independent Schools (AIS).
 - Options for internal reconsideration of decisions and external complaint resolution are offered to any complainant who is not satisfied with the resolution of their complaint within the service.
 - If someone gives a verbal complaint, they should be encouraged to complete a Complaints Form to facilitate the tracking of feedback by the service. Alternately, staff will use the form to record verbal feedback to facilitate tracking by the service and inform ongoing improvement activities.
 - If a concern or complaint is minor and was addressed at the point of service, staff should record the issue and any actions taken in the Parent Communication Register.

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 *Coordinator*, via email (joelanders@yahoo.com)

Where a person wishes to make a **formal complaint** concerning the *Coordinator*, the complaint should be made in writing to the *Committee President*, via email (tuntableschool@gmail.com). In this situation, the references in this policy relating to the role of the *Coordinator* should be read as references to the *Committee President*.

3.2 The school

The *Coordinator* will generally acknowledge receipt of a **formal complaint** in writing as soon as practicable.

4. Handling complaints

4.1 Assessing a complaint

The *Coordinator* 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, see section 1.2; 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 Ombudsman, Police, Family and Community Services or other relevant authorities should the complaint relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

4.2 Managing a formal complaint

The *Coordinator* 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 *Coordinator* 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.

5. Contact

If you have any queries about this procedure, you should contact *Joe Landers* or a **Committee Member** for advice.