



Grievance & Resolution Policy



To be revised	April 2015
This Version	April 2013
Previous Versions	Ratified by Council 2006
Find this	
Related Documents	1.6 Teachers' Professional Code of Conduct Policy 4.1.5 Anti-Bullying Policy 11.1.2 Staff Disputes Guidelines and Policy
Links with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AISWA • SEA
Related Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913</i> • <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> • <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984</i> • <i>Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 and Regulations 1996</i> • <i>Parental Support and Responsibility Act 2008</i> • <i>Age Discrimination Act 2004</i> • <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975</i> • <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984</i> • <i>Fair Work Act 2009</i> • <i>Family Law Act 1975</i> • <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> • <i>Disability Standards for Education 2005</i>
Appendices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APPENDIX I GRIEVANCE OR CONCERN REPORT FORM • APPENDIX II Ombudsman Western Australia

Overview

At West Coast Steiner School, we acknowledge that differences in opinion, understanding and feelings inevitably arise in human relationships, including in schools. We strive to deal with these in a way which is helpful for all those who are involved. This applies equally to staff members, parents and students. We understand that each situation is different and these are guidelines to assist with resolution.

Policy

West Coast Steiner School is committed to providing a supportive working and community environment. The school values direct communication between individuals and expects that individuals will bring concerns directly to the parties involved. All reasonable efforts will be made by all parties to resolve the issue using the appropriate internal school process and in a sensitive and timely manner.

Definition:

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction and may be made when it is felt that someone has

- Done something wrong;
- Failed to do something s/he should have done; or
- Acted unfairly or impolitely.

The Complaints Officer is either, according to the circumstances, the Education Coordinator, the Business Manager or the College Chair. (See Point 2 of the Procedures below.)

Process

Communication Difficulties, Conflicts and Grievances

We urge everyone to try to address any misunderstandings, poor communication or other incidents directly with the person involved, whether teacher, another staff member or someone else in the school community.

It is the school's responsibility to make the policy available to all parents and staff members by:

1. Including it on the school website;
2. Including it in both the Staff and Parent Handbooks.

Procedures

1. A grievance should always be taken initially to the person involved directly. Parents, always take any concern related to your child or children initially to the teacher.
2. If a conflict or grievance cannot be resolved directly with the person concerned, then contact the Education Coordinator or the Business Manager, according to the nature of the complaint. In the event that the Education Coordinator is the subject of the complaint, then the College Chair should be contacted; if the Business Manager, then the Education Coordinator should be contacted. This contact person is also referred to as the 'Complaints Officer' herein.
3. When a complaint is put in writing the complaint should be based on an identifiable instance or instances and record factual information. The Complaints Officer will contact the complainant as a matter of priority within two days to respond to the concerns and explain how it might proceed.
4. If appropriate, the person who is the subject of the complaint is advised of the complaint and invited to submit their own account of the incident/s to the Complaints Officer.
5. A meeting is held to explore the incident/s with both parties facilitated by the Complaints Officer.
6. In the same meeting or in a further meeting, options for action are explored and agreement is reached upon those actions which need to be implemented.
7. This process may extend beyond one meeting and may be more or less formal depending on the situation and events under discussion.
8. If any action requires sanctioning from the College of Teachers then ratification is sought from the appropriate body.
9. Action/s are implemented and followed up as agreed by parties involved in the mediated meeting.
10. Where an aspect of a grievance includes an issue about a staff member's professional performance or conduct, the issue will be referred to the College of Teachers. If required, support will be offered to the staff member to explore these issues and to address any concerns through professional development, mentorship or by agreement.
11. If problems still remain, you can ask for the matter to be referred to the School Council. In this situation further professional assistance may be sought.

Exceptions

When the nature of the complaint concerns issues of safety for themselves or a child or if the same issue has been the subject of an earlier complaint and one party has failed to keep their commitment/s then the complainant should bring the matter to the attention of the Education Coordinator as a matter of urgency.

Once a complaint has been resolved

- All relevant documents are deleted from the computer
- All relevant information is sealed in an envelope which is kept in the Complaints Folder in a locked cabinet for ? years.
- A brief unbiased reference is to be added to the personnel file to the effect that
 - a) complaint was made
 - b) complaint was addressed/resolved
 - c) any further details are stored in a sealed envelope in Complaints Folder.

Confidentiality

The School appreciates that personal issues must be kept confidential. Confidentiality will be maintained by the relevant staff member/s at all levels of the process.

Process for the Complaints Officer

Upon receiving a complaint or grievance, the Complaints Officer asks the complainant whether they have spoken to the person concerned. They take a statement from the complainant and advise them that they will also go to the person about whom they are making a complaint. They will then organise a meeting with the complainant and the party involved.

Recommended process

Stage One

At the first meeting (or part of the meeting), the parties will be asked to share their experiences of the incident/s which led to the complaint. Each party will be encouraged to listen to the other and to reflect back on the experiences of the other person.

The role of the Complaints Officer will be to act as a facilitator for this conversation, to ensure that each party has the opportunity to tell their story and to be heard. This meeting is to explore the nature of the complaint from the perspective of all those involved and develop the possibility of mutual understanding. At the end of this meeting, or part of the meeting, the two parties will organise to meet again, if needed, to determine any actions which are required.

When doing so, it is helpful for both parties to express the specific nature of the incident which led to the grievance, their feelings about it and what it led them to do or not do. It is helpful for both parties to listen respectfully, and to reflect back the perspective of the other person involved.

This will include:

- agreement on the process of the meeting(s),
- respectful listening with attention to gesture, body language, tone of voice,
- respectful speaking, avoidance of loaded comments, name-calling, labelling,
- discussion of incident/s and the feelings, thoughts and experiences they aroused, with each participant taking turns to speak about their own experience,
- reflection back where each participant reflects back on the other participant's experience of the event,
- summary and review

Stage 2

A second meeting (or a second part of the same meeting) will usually be held to determine any changes or actions which may need to occur. The Complaints Officer will act as a mediator. At this meeting, options will be explored to resolve the issues under discussion. Each party must be able to ensure that any options can be acted upon. This meeting is focused on the future. Participants will be encouraged to explore options and reach agreement on what may be acted upon and what may not.

- Exploring the issues involved
- Developing/Generating options
- Negotiation and testing of options
- Decision making
- Agreement and review

At the end of the second meeting, all participants should be clear about what has been agreed upon for the future. This agreement may include changes in behaviour from either or both party/ies, regular spoken or written communication, shared activities, and for whatever options have been agreed upon as necessary.

The Complaints Officer or another person may be asked to provide support to either or both parties to assist the agreement.

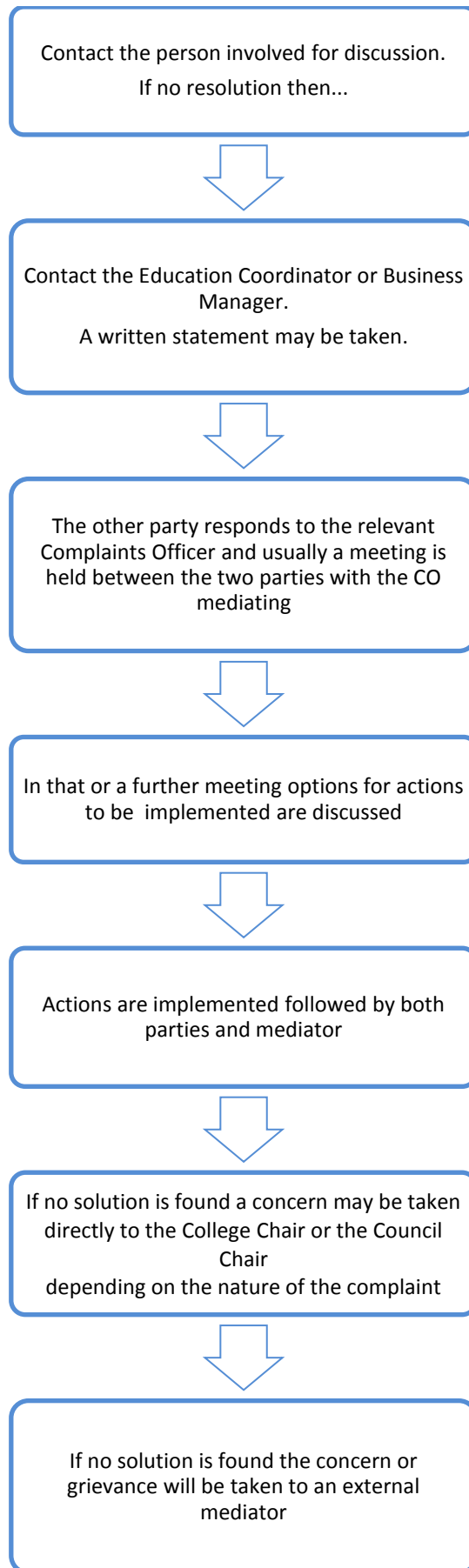
Stage 3

In the event that the parties involved require or request further assistance to resolve an issue, we recommend the mediation services provided by the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) or a similar independent body.

Stage 4

Any documentation generated during this process will be kept **for ? months** in a folder labelled "Complaints" and stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office.

Flow Chart, Grievance and Resolution Policy





Appendix One

Grievance or Concern Report Form

All concerns, large or small, are important pieces of information for the school and we welcome knowing about them and using them to help in improving the running of the school. All members of the school community are obliged to follow these procedures. Once completed place in the Education Coordinator or Business Manager's tray in the office or return the form by mail, marked PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL. Please do not email this form.

Concerns will be processed in accordance with the Grievance Resolution Policy.

PLEASE INDICATE THE LEVEL OF CONCERN TO YOU (circle): MINOR MIDDLE MAJOR

Date of incident _____

Name of person filling in this form _____

Contact phone number _____

Person filling in this form is a (please circle) :

Staff member

Parent/ Legal Guardian

School visitor

Other (please specify): _____

Brief description of concern:

Any evidence to support the concern:

What you would like to see happen:

Thank you for filling out this form. You will be contacted by the Complaints Officer who will let you know how your concern is being addressed.

West Coast Steiner School, 15 Mayfair Street Nollamara 6061.

Appendix Two

Ombudsman Western Australia

The principles of effective complaint handling

Step 1 – Enabling complaints

Customer focus
Visibility
Accessibility

Step 2 - Responding to complaints

Confidentiality
Responsiveness
Objectivity & fairness
Remedy
Review

Step 3 - Accountability and Learning

Accountability
Continuous Improvement.

The key features of an effective complaint handling system can be organised according to ten principles. These principles form the three steps of complaint handling:

- Enabling complaints - arrangements that enable people to make complaints to organisations;
- Responding to complaints - ensuring that complaints are dealt with in a prompt, objective and confidential manner; and
- Accountability and Learning - using complaints to demonstrate accountability and stimulate organisational improvement.

The principles of effective complaint handling

- 1. Customer focus** – the organisation is committed to effective complaint handling and values feedback through complaints.
- 2. Visibility** – information about how and where to complain is well publicised to customers, staff and other interested parties.
- 3. Accessibility** – the process for making a complaint and investigating it is easy for complainants to access and understand.
- 4. Responsiveness** – complaints are acknowledged promptly, addressed according to urgency, and the complainant is kept informed throughout the process.

5. Objectivity and fairness – complaints are dealt with in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner. This will help ensure that the complaint handling process is fair and reasonable. Unreasonable complainants are not allowed to become a burden.

6. Confidentiality – personal information related to complaints is kept confidential.

7. Remedy – if a complaint is upheld, the organisation provides a remedy.

8. Review – there are opportunities for internal and external review and/or appeal about the organisation's response to the complaint, and complainants are informed about these avenues.

9. Accountability – accountabilities for complaint handling are clearly established, and complaints and responses to them are monitored and reported to management and other stakeholders.

10. Continuous Improvement – complaints are a source of improvement for organisations.

Level 2, Albert Facey House, 469 Wellington Street Perth WA 6000 • PO Box Z5386 St Georges Terrace Perth WA 6831 Tel 08 9220 7555 • Freecall (outside metropolitan area) 1800 117 000 • Fax 08 9220 7500
Email mail@ombudsman.wa.gov.au • Website www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au