

Complaints Handling Procedure (College Community)

Kennedy Baptist College welcomes feedback from all members of the College community and takes all complaints or concerns that may be raised seriously. This Complaints Handling Procedure is designed to assist you to understand how to make a complaint.

We acknowledge that students and parents/guardians may sometimes have a complaint about a decision, behaviour, act, or omission that they feel is unacceptable. Whilst most issues can be resolved through direct discussion, there may be instances in which this is not possible.

1. What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to Kennedy Baptist College, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Complaints or allegations of child abuse are assessed and managed in accordance with relevant legislation. There are different laws depending on who was involved and when the alleged abuse occurred.

These types of complaints or allegations are managed in accordance with the College's *Child Protection Policy* and *Reportable Conduct Policy* and procedures.

2. Informal Resolution

Most issues of concern in the College can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. Where appropriate, we ask that you raise directly with the staff member most closely concerned with the issue.

The staff member may be able to resolve the issue quickly. You may contact the staff member in person, by telephone or by email. Please ask if you require some assistance in expressing your concern.

Even if issues are resolved informally, staff are required to log the details of the concern and resolution in SEQTA. This enables organisational review and analysis to identify any required improvements, to take appropriate remedial action, and continuously improve our systems and processes.

3. How do I make a Formal Complaint?

If you have been unable to resolve your concern informally, or simply wish to make a formal complaint you can do so by any of the following means:

- 3.1. Contacting the College and asking to speak to the relevant staff member in accordance with the Complaints Flowchart below.
- 3.2. Accessing the online Complaints Forms available on the College website using the *Lodging Your Complaint* function.

3.3. Sending an email to the Principal at mashby@kennedy.wa.edu.au

3.4. Writing a letter to the College addressed to:

Private and Confidential
The Principal
Kennedy Baptist College
PO Box 26
Bull Creek WA 6149

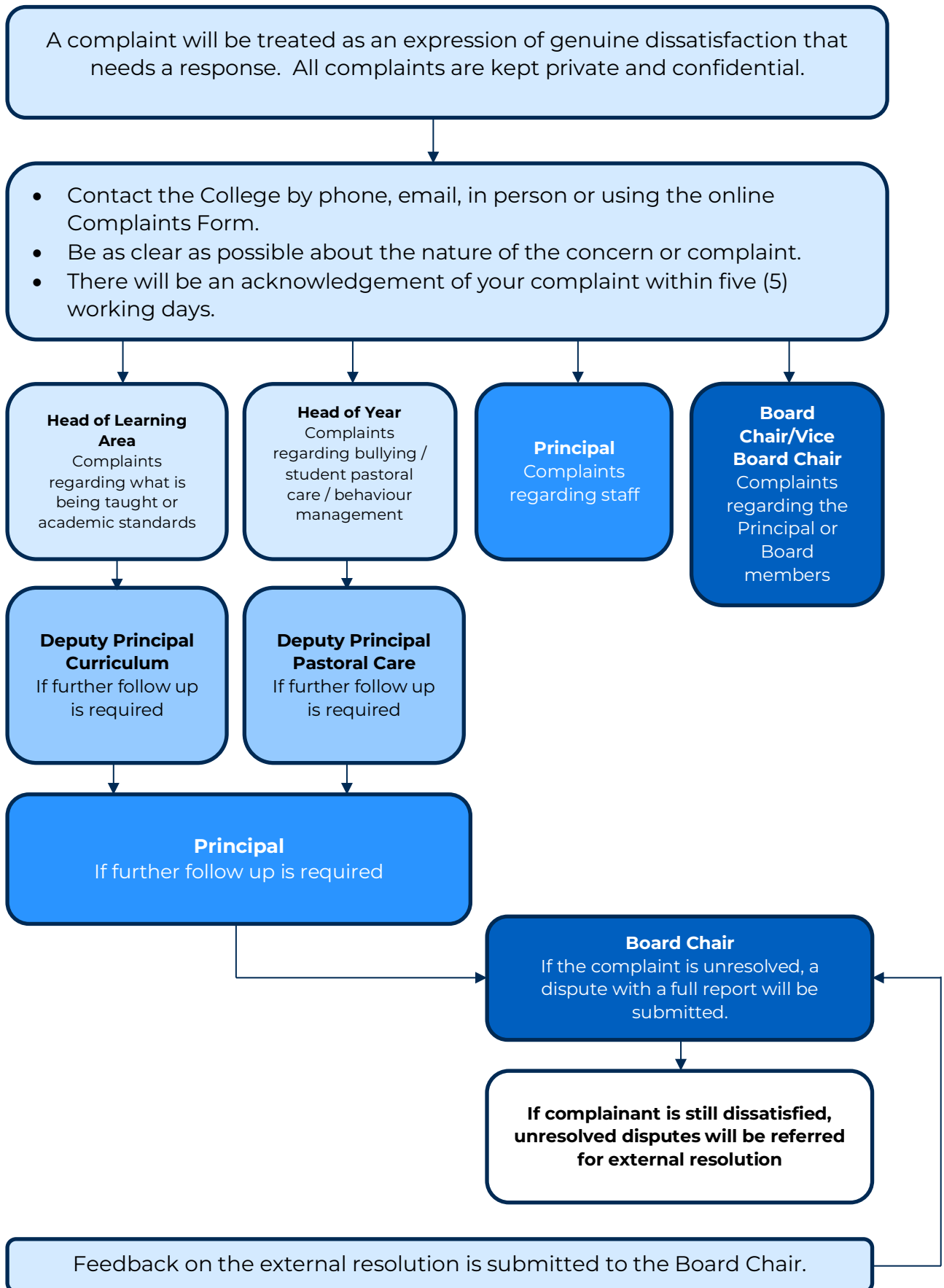
3.5. If the complaint is about a matter regarding the Principal, or a Board member, the complaint can be made in writing, addressed to:

Private and Confidential
The Board Chair
Kennedy Baptist College
PO Box 26
Bull Creek WA 6149

If the complaint is regarding the Board Chair, the complaint can be addressed to the Board Vice Chair at the above-mentioned address.

All formal complaints addressed to the Principal will be logged through our online complaints management system and managed in accordance with the following process and procedure.

Complaints Flowchart



4. Internal Complaints Handling Procedure

Step 1

Contact the College and ask to speak to the relevant staff member.

- If the complaint is regarding teaching/academic standards, you will be referred to the Head of Learning Area.
- If the complaint is regarding student safety and wellbeing or behaviour management, you will be referred to the Head of Year.
- If the complaint is regarding a particular Teacher, you will be referred to the Principal.
- If the complaint is regarding the Principal or a Board member, you will be referred to the Board Chair.
- If the complaint is regarding the Board Chair, they will be referred to the Board Vice Chair.

Step 2

You can expect to receive a response within five (5) working days, explaining how the matter will proceed. The relevant staff member will investigate the issue raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination. The complainant will be informed of the outcome of the complaint, including action taken or proposed.

Step 3

If you are not satisfied with the process or the outcome, you can request your complaint be referred to the Deputy Principal Pastoral Care or the Deputy Principal Curriculum. The Deputy Principal will refer the matter to the Principal if further follow-up is required.

Step 4

If the Deputy Principal refers the matter to the Principal, the dispute will be reviewed internally by the Principal, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Principal or their delegate seeks to resolve all disputes within 14 working days from the date that the review process is initiated. The matter will be closed if the response of the Principal, or their delegate, is accepted.

Step 5

All complaints received by or referred to the Principal will be entered into our Complaints Register and, where appropriate, remedial action taken to address underlying processes which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.

Step 6

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you have the right to request a review of the process by submitting a dispute with the Principal. The Principal will refer the dispute to the Board Chair. It is our policy, where possible to resolve disputes within 14 working days.

The Board Chair will call for a full report from the Principal and will examine matters thoroughly before responding. The decision of the Board will be conveyed to the parties directly. This completes the internal complaints handling process.

Step 7

If the matter remains unresolved, complainants are welcome to pursue external resolution options.

8. Principles of Procedural Fairness

Procedural fairness is concerned with the procedures used by a decision maker rather than the actual outcome reached. It requires a fair and proper procedure to be used when making a decision. Procedural fairness is an essential part of a professional investigation and benefits all parties.

Conflicts of interest are identified and managed to ensure a fair process and outcome for the complainant and the subject of the complaint.

The College will exercise procedural fairness during the investigation and in its decision making. This means that:

- 8.1. An investigation will be conducted without unnecessary delay.
- 8.2. All relevant parties will be provided the opportunity to be heard, whether in person or in writing as appropriate and to respond to the allegations and/or evidence offered by the other.
- 8.3. The College will make reasonable enquiries or investigations before making a decision. There must be facts or information to support all negative findings – only relevant factors will be considered.
- 8.4. The investigator will act fairly and without bias, or the perception of bias.
- 8.5. Any complaint outcome is supported by the evidence, necessitating a finding on the balance of probabilities in the event of a dispute of fact.
- 8.6. The complaint outcome is finalised and documented by an adjudicator, who may also be the investigator.
- 8.7. The outcome is consistent with College policies.

Investigations conducted following the principles of procedural fairness should be able to withstand external scrutiny.

9. Resolution

Following an appropriate investigation, the College will offer a response. The College will:

- 9.1. Advise complainants of outcomes as soon as possible after a decision is made.
- 9.2. Inform complainants of the reason for the decision in accordance with legislative requirements and College policies.
- 9.3. Advise complainants of their right to request a review of the process by submitting a dispute with the Principal.

10. Disputes

The College aims to resolve disputes within 14 working days.

The Principal refers any disputes to the Board Chair or Board Vice Chair. The Board Chair (or Board Vice Chair) will call for a full report from the Principal and will examine matters thoroughly before responding.

The decision of the Board will be conveyed to the complainant directly.

If the complainant wishes to take the matter further, the Board Chair may offer a meeting between the complainant, the Principal, and the Board Chair. The complainant has a right to bring with them a support person not involved with the complaint.

If the matter remains unresolved, complainants are welcome to pursue external resolution alternatives:

- 10.1. Complainants may be offered mediation, conciliation, or arbitration to resolve the dispute. The Board Chair has no further involvement until the person facilitating the dispute resolution reports back.
- 10.2. International students can refer matters to the Overseas Students Ombudsman.
- 10.3. Any student, parent or community member is entitled to contact the Director General with concerns about how the College has dealt with a complaint.

11. Confidentiality and Privacy

The complaints handling process is confidential, and any concerns, complaints or disputes is a matter between the parties concerned and those directly involved in the complaints handling process.

Confidentiality applies to both information relating to the person making the complaint, and if relevant, the subject of the complaint. The College is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process.

Personally identifiable information about a complainant will only be made available for the purpose of addressing the complaint and (unless the complainant consents) will be actively protected from disclosure.

5. International Students

In accordance with the *International Students Complaints and Appeals Policy*, if a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the College's internal complaints handling process, they may lodge an external appeal through the Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO) which investigates complaints about problems that overseas students or intending overseas students may have with private education and training in Australia.

6. Child Protection Complaints or Reportable Conduct Allegations

Complaints or allegations of child abuse are assessed and managed in accordance with relevant legislation. There are different laws depending on who was involved and when the alleged abuse occurred.

If your complaint is a child protection related complaint, please make your complaint to:

The Principal, on 08 9314 7722 or at mashby@kennedy.wa.edu.au

If the complaint is regarding the Principal, the complaint can be made in writing, addressed to:

Private and Confidential
The Board Chair
Kennedy Baptist College
PO Box 26,
Bull Creek WA 6149

12. Roles and Responsibilities

12.1. Staff

Staff involved in the complaints handling process, including Heads of Learning Areas, Heads of Years, Deputy Principals are responsible for:

- Ensuring their actions are in the best interest of students, reflecting the College values and restoring relationships in the College community.
- Dealing effectively and efficiently with complaints in accordance with the *Complaints Handling Policy* and this procedure.
- Ensuring complaints are properly recorded.
- Ensuring continuous improvement occurs because of feedback from complaints.

12.2. Principal

The principal is responsible for:

- Implementing the *Complaints Handling Policy* and procedures.
- Using complaint information to identify issues and drive improvement.
- Referring complainants to the Board Chair or external agencies if their complaint remains unresolved.

12.3. Board

The Board is responsible for:

- Supporting the Principal in the implementation of the *Complaints Handling Policy*.
- Dealing with complaints (those referred to the Board Chair or Board Vice Chair by the Principal) in accordance with the *Complaints Handling Policy* and procedures.
- Reporting comments directly received to the Principal to deal with in accordance with the *Complaints Handling Policy*.

12.4. Director General

The Director General of the Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that the College observes the *Registration Standards for Non-Government Schools*. Any student, parent or community member is entitled to contact the Director General with concerns about how the College has dealt with a complaint.

While the Director General may consider whether the College has breached the *Registration Standards for Non-Government Schools*, they do-not have power to intervene in a complaint or override the College's decision.