



Trustees of the Anglican Diocese of Armidale

Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures

Document Author: Principal	
Update Cycle: As required	Review Cycle: 3 Yearly
Reviewed by: Principal	Date: May 2021
Approved By: Governance Cmttee Sept 2020	Date: CAS Board Sept 2020

Version	Date	Author/Reviewer	Reason	Further Information
1	June 2019	Principal	New Policy	
2	August 2020	Principal	Review	
3	May 2021	Principal	Update	

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope

This procedure applies to Calrossy Anglican School ("School") in handling complaints made about educational and/or operational matters in respect of services provided by the School or against the behaviour and/or decisions of staff members, which includes employees, contractors and volunteers. The School encourages members of the community to share concerns, where they relate to the wellbeing of children, with appropriate personnel and staff members of the School.

This procedure does not extend to personal grievances between parents, guardians or other members of the school community. Calrossy is committed to responding to complaints effectively and efficiently.

1.2 Whistleblowing complaints

This procedure does not extend to complaints which are whistleblowing disclosures. The procedure for processing whistleblowing complaints are dealt with in the School's Whistleblowing Policy.

In summary a whistleblowing disclosure is a disclosure which:

- is made by a board member, staff member, a person who supplies goods or services to the School, including a parent, a volunteer, an employer of a supplier or a relative of any of these people,
- involves alleged misconduct, an improper state of affairs or circumstances, or illegal activity, and
- is made to a senior staff member, or officer of the School, the School's auditor or a person who the School has authorised to collect such disclosures.

1.3 Related policies

As a child safe School, all complaints about reportable conduct will be addressed in accordance with the School's Child Protection Policy.

Complaints regarding grievances 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.

1.4 Confidentiality

All parties involved in complaints handling are required to maintain appropriate confidentiality, including in relation to handling and storing of 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 might constitute reportable conduct, the matter will be addressed in accordance with the School's Child Protection Policy 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

3.1 The complainant

The vast majority of concerns in school can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. We ask that first concerns are raised with the relevant staff, where this is appropriate. 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 according to 4.1. Higher level complaints can be made to Deputy Principal, Head of Junior School or Principal. Any complaint about the conduct of a staff member should be directed to the Principal.

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 Principal or the Head of Junior School, via email: admin@calrossy.nsw.edu.au, letter, by appointment with the Principal (or delegate) or via the feedback mechanism on the School's website and/or the School HUB.

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint concerning the Principal the complaint should be made in writing and marked to the attention of the Chair of Calrossy Board, PO Box 1245, Tamworth NSW 2340. In this situation, the references in this policy relating to the role of the Principal should be read as references to the Chair of Board.

3.2 The School

The Principal, Deputy Principal and/or Head of Junior School will generally acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing as soon as practicable.

4. Handling complaints

4.1 How to Make a Formal Complaint

If a matter has not been resolved informally, a formal complaint can be made by contacting the Relevant Contact Person listed below:

- Academic Concerns in the Senior School > Heads of Department or Director of Studies
- Pastoral Care Concerns in the Senior School > Director of Student Wellbeing
- Concerns with Boarding > Head of Boarding
- All other matters in the Senior School > Head of Senior Secondary/Head of Calrossy 7 – 9
- All matters in the Junior School > Head of Junior School

Formal complaints will be managed in accordance with the following procedures:

4.2 Internal Complaints Handling Process

Step 1 – Valid complaints will be acknowledged as soon as practicable, and allocated a status, priority and target resolution date. It is our policy, where possible, to resolve disputes within 14 days.

Step 2 – The Relevant Contact Person will conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination. Where deemed necessary, the complaint may be handed to a higher level staff member.

Step 3 – Following the determination, if appropriate, the Relevant Contact Person will formulate a resolution and provide a response to the complainant. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

Step 4 – If the initial response is not acceptable the matter will be reviewed internally by the Principal who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Principal seek to resolve all disputes within 14 days from the date that the review process is initiated. The matter will be closed if the response of the Principal is accepted.

Step 5 – Should a matter remain unresolved, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives.

4.3 Assessing a complaint

The relevant staff member will generally assess the complaint and determine:

- whether the complaint is one to be addressed under this policy or whether it 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.

4.4 Managing a formal complaint

The Principal 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 Principal 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 Principal 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 elect to have an appropriate support person present at any meeting with representatives of the School about the complaint. However, the Principal 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 Principal to be inappropriate.

5. Contact

If you have any queries about this procedure, you should contact the Human Resources Officer for advice.

6. Implementation

This policy is implemented by:

- Staff training and professional development opportunities,
- Communicating this policy to the school community,
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the policy, and
- Reviewing and evaluating the policy annually.

7. Records

Records are kept and maintained on an ongoing basis through the school database network via Synergetic and The HUB (SchoolBox) and Staff files.

8. Document Publication

This document is to be made available on:

- The HUB – for staff, parents and students
- The official School website: www.calrossy.nsw.edu.au