

# Complaints

## Policy Scope

This policy relates to students and/or parents making a complaint as defined in this policy. Complaints relating to Child Protection are governed by the [Child Protection Policy](#). When a staff member raises a complaint it is governed by the grievances section in the Staff Handbook.

## Policy

The purpose of this policy is to define what a complaint is and to provide a clear process for students and parents who would like to raise a complaint with the school.

This policy also outlines how the school responds to a complaint including who is responsible and how complaints are investigated.

## What is a complaint?

A complaint or grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived situation or outcome.

The dissatisfaction may be based on a perception that the school has:

1. Done something wrong OR
2. Failed to do something it should have OR
3. Acted unfairly or inappropriately

The school divides complaints into informal complaints and formal complaints.

## Informal Complaints

### What is an informal complaint and how can someone raise an informal complaint?

Informal complaints can be:

1. An expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived situation or outcome (as defined)
2. Raised by a student or a parent to a member of staff
3. Be expressed as a comment or as a question
4. Usually verbal and not formally documented

### Examples include:

1. A student feels like they are being treated unfairly
2. A student feels like one teacher is not a “good teacher” and they express their complaint to another teacher
3. A parent is concerned about the timing of communication from the school
4. A parent is concerned about the application of the uniform guidelines

### **Who can receive an informal complaint?**

1. All full time and part time staff at the school can receive an informal complaint.
2. If a casual member of staff or a contractor receives a complaint they should refer the complaint to the Manager of Administration who will then deal with the informal complaint as per the process below.

### **What should be done when an informal complaint is received?**

1. The staff member who receives the complaint should be able to work to resolve the complaint. Examples include:
  - a. Providing additional information or another point of view to the person who is raising the informal complaint. For example: A parent is concerned that they have missed the sign up date for a school camp but the sign up date is actually in the future.
  - b. Providing an immediate solution to the informal complaint.
  - c. Discussing the matter further with colleagues before providing a solution.
2. Where possible, the staff member should respond to the informal complaint within three working days with a clarification or a solution.
3. The staff member should work to resolve the issue so that all parties are satisfied.

### **What happens if the informal complaint is about me?**

1. Work towards a solution to the complaint.
2. If you are concerned about the issue or about your own partiality, seek advice from a colleague.
3. An appropriate response to an informal complaint may include Performance Management as per the Staff Handbook.

## **Formal Complaints**

### **What is a formal complaint and how can someone raise a formal complaint?**

Formal complaints can be:

1. An expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived situation or outcome (as defined)
2. Raised by a parent or student to either the Deputy Principal or the Principal
3. The formal complaint must be in writing and it must be documented using the Formal Complaint Form

### **Examples include:**

1. A parent feels like the school has not followed policy and procedure to the point where there needs to be a formal complaint
2. A parent feels like there is an outstanding issue that has not been dealt with correctly

### **Who can receive a formal complaint?**

1. The Deputy Principal
2. The Principal
3. If the formal complaint is about the Principal, the person making the complaint can complete the Formal Complaint Form and address it to the Chairperson of the School Board.
  - a. In this instance, the complaint would be placed into a sealed envelope and delivered to the Administration Officer at reception. This sealed envelope will be delivered directly to the Chairperson.

### **What happens when a formal complaint is received?**

1. The Principal/Chairperson will acknowledge the receipt of the formal complaint to the person making the complaint within 7 working days.
2. The Principal/Chairperson or their delegate will investigate the information on the Formal Complaint Form.
3. For Procedural Fairness:
  - a. Where appropriate, the Principal/Chairperson will interview other people involved in the complaint.
  - b. The Principal/Chairperson will inform the person who is the subject of the complaint about the substance of the complaint and provide them with an opportunity to state their point of view.
  - c. The Investigation will be documented as per the Formal Complaint Investigation Form.
  - d. Before making any conclusions, the Principal/Chairperson will inform both the person making the complaint and the person who is the subject of the complaint of the results of their investigation providing them with a further opportunity to respond.
4. After the above has occurred, the Principal/Chairperson will inform all parties of their finding in writing including steps taken as a result. These steps could include (where appropriate):
  - a. No further action required
  - b. An apology
  - c. Changes to existing procedures
  - d. New procedures put in place
  - e. Performance Management
5. In some cases, the person making the complaint may be in breach of the Enrolment Contract that they signed and/or the person who is the subject of the complaint may be subject to disciplinary actions.
6. All decisions are to be stored on the Principal's private file on Google Drive.
7. The goal of this process is for a resolution.
8. Failing a resolution, there is an appeals process as listed below.

**What happens if either party would like to appeal?**

1. After the investigation has been completed, either party may be unsatisfied with the outcome. If so, either party may submit an appeal to the School Board by completing the Formal Complaint Appeals Form.
2. On completion, this form will be submitted alongside the investigation to the School Board.
3. The School Board will review the investigation.
4. For Procedural Fairness:
  - a. The School Board may or may not decide to revisit elements of the investigation
  - b. The School Board will note when the matter was discussed in the board meeting minutes
  - c. Before making final conclusions, the School Board will inform both the person making the complaint and the person who is the subject of the complaint of the results of their investigation providing them with a further opportunity to respond.
5. The School Board will provide their decision in writing and at this time the matter is considered closed.

**Documentation**

1. Formal Complaint Form
2. Formal Complaint Investigation Form
3. Formal Complaint Appeals Form

**Policy Review**

On change of legislation or at the discretion of the School Board of ACC Darling Downs Ltd.

**Policy Version**

4.0



**Formal Complaint Investigation Form**

**Name:**

**Date:**

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**Describe your process for completing the investigation into the formal complaint?**

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**Describe how you have applied the principles of procedural fairness in your investigation?**

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**Describe your finding that you will provide to both parties (after they have had a chance to respond to the preliminary findings)? This will also indicate the appropriate actions that will be taken as a result of the investigation.**

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**Formal Complaint Appeals Form**

(to be addressed to the Chairperson of the School Board and submitted to the Administration Officer at Reception)

**Name:**

**Date:**

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**Describe why you believe the findings are unsatisfactory?**

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This form will be included with copies of the original complaint and the investigation outcomes.