

PARENT AND STUDENT COMPLAINT POLICY

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1	POLICY STATEMENT.....	4
2	WHO IT APPLIES TO.....	4
3	LEGISLATION	4
4	DEFINITIONS.....	4
5	PROCEDURES.....	4
	COMMUNICATION OF COMPLAINTS OR CONCERN POLICY.....	5
	CAPS COOLGARDIE LEADERSHIP and STAFF WILL:.....	5
	POLICY AND PROCESS REVIEW.....	6
	PARENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE FLOW CHART	7
	STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE FLOW CHART.....	7
	PARENT AND STUDENT FAQ.....	8

1 POLICY STATEMENT

CAPS Coolgardie believes in establishing and maintaining a work environment that is safe and free from all forms of conflict, harassment and discrimination. Therefore the school will endeavour to maintain an environment that refuses to participate in, or condone, behaviour that breaches these criteria. Where conflict arises or code of conduct has been breached between parents and staff, parents and school, students and students and staff and students, a dispute policy will be used to reach a resolution.

2 WHO IT APPLIES TO

The policy applies to parents, students and staff members at CAPS Coolgardie as the Western Australian School Education Act 1999 includes a standard, applicable to Non-Government Schools that relates to 'the response to, and recording of, complaints and disputes at schools.' Sec 159(1)(k). This standard is reflected in The Non-Government Schools' Registration Standards and Requirements along with advisory information in relation to its satisfaction.

3 LEGISLATION

Western Australian School Education Act 1999

Incorporated Associations Act (2015)

Corporations Act 2001

4 DEFINITIONS

Complainant: A parent or student who makes a complaint.

Complaint: is an "expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its products, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected" (as defined by the Australian Complaint Handling Standard ISO AS 10002-2006). Within a school this would usually equate to an expression, in writing, of protest, objection, dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem, accusation, or

criticism and is usually dealt with in a formal manner. Irrespective of whether the complaint was first expressed as a concern, it would be expected to be in the form of a written communication, a letter or email, addressed directly to the relevant staff member, their superior, the Principal or the Chair of the school's governing body.

Unresolved complaint: a complaint that has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant.

Concern: is the expression of a worry, something that has made a person troubled or anxious about an issue and is expressed at a 'first level' ie to a class teacher at the classroom door or by telephone or email directly to the relevant staff member. Depending on the nature of the concern, it can often be resolved at this 'first level' in a more informal manner. NB: It would be prudent nonetheless for the teacher or staff member concerned to make and file a brief note regarding the issue and interaction in case of future escalation.

Dispute: would usually be viewed as an argument or disagreement and may be the result of a pursued unresolved complaint.

5 PROCEDURES

The guidelines cover complaints about the school as a whole, about a specific department in the school, about a particular school activity, about an individual member of staff or about one or more students. The policy is to allow an open and responsive complaints' handling process that is consistent and clear, to ensure that complaints are dealt with as quickly and as fair as possible to provide the school with helpful information to assist in the identification of trends and eliminate causes of future complaints.

The resolution to a complaint should follow the steps below:

If the source of the complaint is a parent or guardian

Step 1 – Make a complaint or concern by filling out the complaint form where possible.

Step 2 An appointment will be made to see the Principal or the Deputy to discuss the concern or complaint - issue resolved or if not proceed to step 3.

Step 3 – If the matter cannot be resolved a written letter addressed to The Board of the complaint is submitted to the Principal.

Step 4 - The letter will be submitted along with a report from the Principal as a CAPS Board item of discussion at the next available meeting.

Step 5 – The School Board will meet and make a recommendation as per its normal meeting schedule.

Step 6 – The CAPS board makes a decision on the matter and the decision is put in writing.

While a complaint or concern is being heard at the school level, all parties must work according to the current situation. The complaint however, must be addressed within 5 to 10 working days

Issues that cannot be resolved within the local level procedures (Steps 1-6) the board arbitrates the final resolution.

While the dispute is being considered by the School Board, all parties must continue to work according to the current situation and maintain confidentiality. The dispute however, must be in the process of being resolved within 30 working days of the scheduled board meeting. The central principle in complaints resolution is to resolve the complaint at the local level. Refer to flow chart.

If the source of the complaint is a student

Step 1 – The teacher and student should act to resolve a minor complaint to the satisfaction of both parties or if the student feels she/he cannot raise the matter directly with the staff member concerned, she/he may approach another staff member or the School Chaplains

Step 2 – If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, or if the matter is of a substantial nature, the matter should be referred to the Deputy Principal.

Step 3 – Failing a resolution at that level the matter should be referred to the principal for appropriate action.

Communication of complaints or concern policy

- The policy can be found on the school's website
- The policy can be found in the Parents' Handbook

CAPS Coolgardie Leadership and Staff will:

1. Ensure that students and parents are aware of the complaints procedure.
2. Manage the complaint process in a timely, fair and equitable manner.
3. Consider all complaints from parents or students as serious and not make assumptions or judgements about complaints.
4. Work towards a professional approach to listening to the parties involved.
5. Ensure confidentiality.
6. Ensure that documentation of the complaints procedure is managed and recorded through a register of complaints. The register should contain the following information:
 - date when the issue was raised and to whom it was raised;
 - name of complainant and relevant parties involved;
 - brief statement of the issue;
 - member of staff handling the issue;
 - name of the person/member of staff responsible for reviewing any decision made;
 - brief statement of outcome including date of resolution/outcome and location of detailed file (if applicable).

7. Provide support to parties involved when the need arises this can include another student or adult present during a meeting.
8. Ensure complaints made by parents or students will not adversely affect the students.
9. Ensure staff are informed about complaints that might be damaging to their reputation.
10. Provide training to help staff to with complaints that are made to them, but complaints that are also made about them.
11. Provide support to staff against whom a complaint is made. This can involve a colleague who is not involved in the complaint.
12. In the case of a situation involving the Police, The Principal or if unavailable, The Deputy Principal must take responsibility for action to be taken within the school and the Governing Body Chair should be informed as soon as possible and external authority such as the Department of Child Protection (DCP). If required a Critical Incident Report should be submitted to the Department of Education Services (DES).
13. In the case of a child protection matter staff should follow the child protection policy.

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints may be where there is no name or address supplied, or where the complainants say that they do not wish to be identified. Complainants should be encouraged to give their names and should be given reassurance on the issue of confidentiality. If they persist in wishing to remain anonymous, it is at the Principal's discretion as to what action, if any, should be taken, depending on the nature of the complaint.

Anonymous complaints should be recorded in the complaints register

Meeting Procedure

When a meeting takes place around a complaint the meeting will go as follows:

- a) Allow both sides to discuss the alleged incident and the issues around it.
- b) Attempt to resolve the complaint.
- c) Educate both sides about their rights and responsibilities
- d) Advise respondents on how to prevent further incidents in the future.

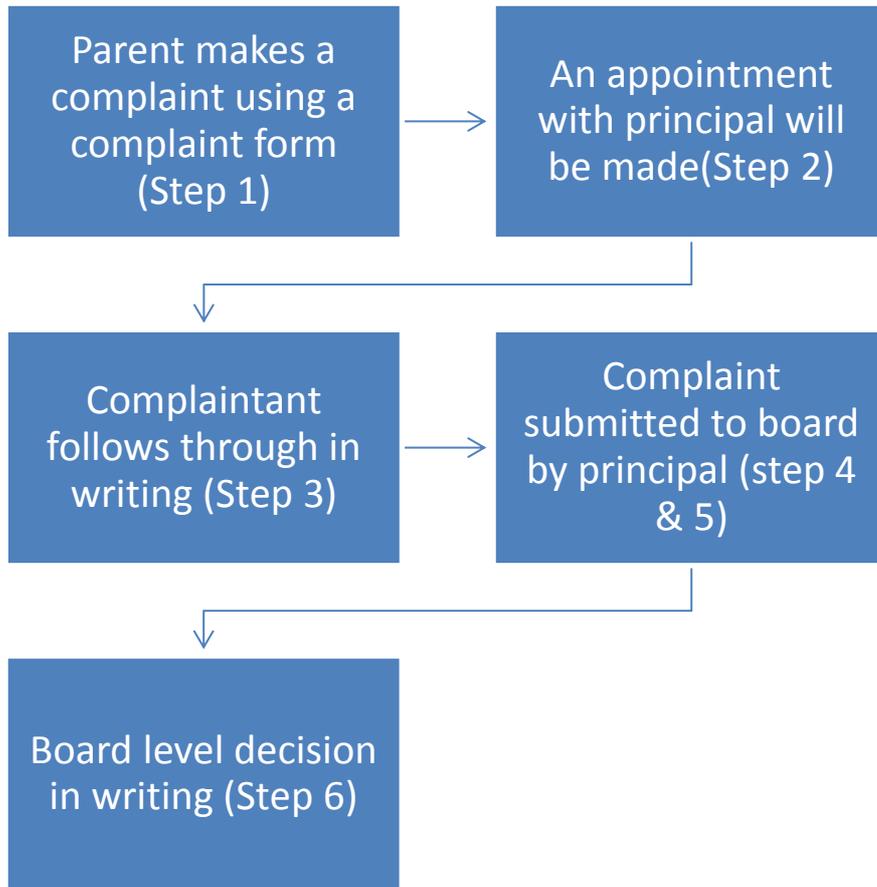
Policy and Process Review

The school's complaint policy and procedure will be reviewed around the scope, clarity and effectiveness of communication by the school. The School will review the process during an actual situation at the point of resolution and any required follow up. This will include the process, the ease and usefulness of the process, from the user's perspective.

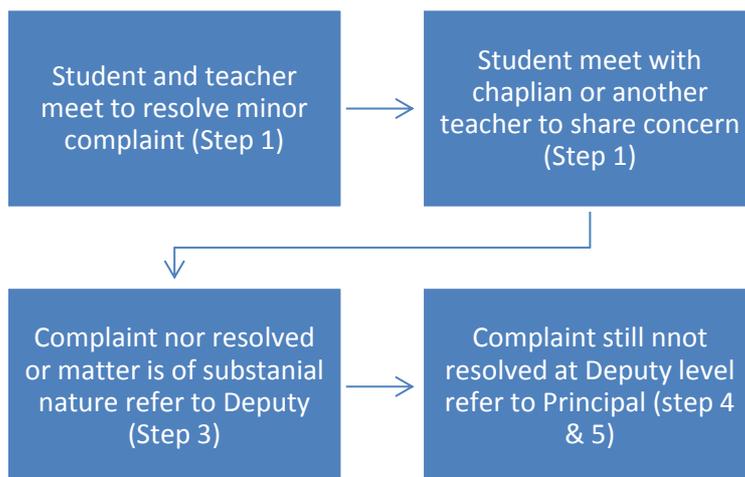
It would further include reviewing the effectiveness of staff induction, training and communication of updates in this area.

Complaints Policy	<i>Reviewed April 2017</i>	Next review Sept 2018	7
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PARENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE FLOW CHART



STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE FLOW CHART



CAPS Coolgardie welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes seriously complaints and/or concerns that may be raised.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction that needs a response.

We wish to ensure that:

- parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so.
- we respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way.
- parents realise that we listen and take complaints seriously.
- we take action where appropriate.

“How should I complain?”

When you contact the school, lodge a complaint form and then ask to speak to *the principal*. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you. Members of staff will be happy to help.

“I don’t want to complain as such, but there is something bothering me”

The school is here for you and your child and we want to hear your views and your ideas. Follow the complaints procedure or how should I complain question.

“I am not sure whether to complain or not”

If as parents you have concerns, you are entitled to raise them. If in doubt, you should contact the school as we are here to help.

“What will happen next?”

If you raise something by telephone or face to face with the principal, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction.

If you have made a complaint or suggestion in writing, we will contact you within 5 to 10 working days to respond to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed.

In many circumstances, once the complaint process is initiated the matter will need to be discussed with a colleague and consider it further before responding. You will be given a date by which time you will receive a response. If a detailed exploration of the issue is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible. This will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

Parents need to be aware that in some cases the school will not be able to discuss the details of action taken as it would be inappropriate e.g. if the action involved staff discipline.

“What happens about confidentiality?”

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Principal and those directly involved. The Chair of the School Governing Body may also need to be informed. It is the school’s policy that complaints made by parents should not adversely affect their children.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where for example, a child’s safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the Police or another external authority. If information is passed to a third party you will be informed, unless this is prevented by legal obligation.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints might not be pursued.

“What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?”

We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered.

If you are not satisfied, the Principal will offer to refer the matter to the Chair of the School Governing Body. Alternatively, you may wish to write directly to the Chair. The Chair will call for a full report from the Principal and will examine matters thoroughly before responding to ensure that the complaint has been handled in accordance with the school’s policy and procedure as well as to give further consideration.

When notified of the outcome of the Chair’s review and consideration, the opportunity of a meeting with the Chair will be offered if you remain concerned. You may wish to be supported by a friend, but legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage. If the meeting does not bring about a resolution, the matter will be arbitrated by the board.

The school recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to complain and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care.

STUDENTS FAQ

How do I make a complaint?

By talking about it – or by writing it down if you find that easier

You can do it by yourself, or as part of a group, or through your parents.

To Whom?

Anyone on staff.

Does it matter what the issue is?

No, it can be a big problem or a small one. By discussing it, you may come up with some positive ideas.

What will happen next?

If possible, the staff member will deal with it in person. If not, he or she will go on your behalf to someone who can help.

Do others have to know?

The teacher or the person you talk to will not talk to anyone else about your issue unless they have to, for your safety and well-being.

Even if you find the issue hurtful or embarrassing, we encourage you to talk to us as we want to make sure you feel safe and happy at our school.