



ST JOHN'S SCHOOL
SCARBOROUGH

**DISPUTE AND COMPLAINT RESOLUTION
PROCEDURES**

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St John's School is committed to handling complaints effectively and efficiently. To manage complaints effectively, we have established a Complaints Management System in line with:

- Principles 6 and 9 of the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*;
- the international complaints handling standard (*ISO 10002:2018 Quality Management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations*); and
- the Australian/New Zealand complaints handling standard (*AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organisations*)

Our school supports the rights of parents/guardians, students and staff to have their complaints taken seriously, and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

Our complaints management system allows us to effectively capture, manage and report on complaints. We commit to regular analysis of complaints received and the implementation of any actions to rectify any deficiencies identified.

We commit to making our complaints management procedures accessible and transparent. We will ensure our school community are aware of the school's process for dealing with disputes and complaints.

DEFINITION

Complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction with our school services, decisions, actions or those of its staff, or about the complaint management process itself.

Dispute means a conflict regarding a right, claim, or demand on one side, met by contrary claims or allegations on the other.

The rules of *procedural fairness* require:

- a) A hearing appropriate to the circumstances;
- b) Lack of bias;
- c) Evidence to support a decision; and
- d) inquiry into matters in dispute.

Students are defined as children and young people enrolled in St John's School.

INFORMAL COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION

The majority of issues causing concern can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. In most cases these issues can be resolved through informal discussions with appropriate staff members.

Our school welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes all concerns, disputes and complaints seriously. A concern will be treated as a less serious matter that may be resolved with a more informal approach.

A dispute or complaint will be treated as something that requires the formal process detailed below to be followed.

We encourage all members of our school community to first treat their issue as a concern when approaching the school, and then lodge a formal complaint if this is not handled to their satisfaction. However, in unique circumstances or where a matter involves **an immediate risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a student**, the matter should be referred directly to the principal.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF IN RESOLVING COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES

School staff and the school leadership are responsible for recording, investigating and resolving complaints and analysing them to identify causes and inform continuous improvement.

Principal	<p>The principal is accountable for ensuring that appropriate and relevant procedures are developed, implemented and reviewed on a regular basis and relevant reporting is completed.</p> <p>They are also responsible for ensuring all staff are educated about the school's complaints management procedures, and maintaining accurate records in the school's complaints register.</p> <p>The principal is authorised to record, investigate and manage complaints. They are required to maintain accurate records in the complaints register and liaise with parties to a dispute or complaint.</p>
Staff members	<p>All staff are authorised to deal with informal complaints. They are to record the resolution of informal matters in SEQTA. Where a person makes a formal complaint, staff must refer them to the principal.</p>

HOW TO MAKE A FORMAL COMPLAINT

We ask that, where appropriate, you first raise the matter directly with the relevant staff member. If that is not appropriate or the issue was not addressed to your satisfaction or you simply wish to make a formal complaint you can do so by any of the following means:

1. Write a letter to the Principal: admin@stjohns.wa.edu.au

Where a dispute or complaint is about the principal and there is no likelihood that it can be resolved directly with the principal, the immediate parties may refer the dispute or complaint to the Executive Director of Catholic Education Western Australia Limited (CEWA Ltd).

WITHDRAWAL OF A COMPLAINT

Anyone may withdraw a complaint or dispute at any stage of the resolution process. If a complaint is withdrawn, the matter will be deemed to be closed, unless we, at our discretion and in all the circumstances, wish to continue to address a matter raised.

INTERNAL FORMAL RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

Step 1 – Receiving and recording the complaint

- All formal complaints are recorded through school processes

Step 2 – Acknowledge the complaint

- All complaints will be acknowledged in writing by the Principal within 3 working days at the time of receipt.

Step 3 – Assess the complaint and address immediate risks

- The Principal will conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following the principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination.

Where there is an appropriate:

- CEWA Ltd policy or directive that provides a specific mechanism for addressing the dispute or complaint; or

- binding legislative or regulator mechanism (including an Enterprise Agreement) that addresses the issue raised in the dispute or complaint, that will be followed.
- Parties may involve a support person(s) to assist them in resolving the dispute or complaint.

Step 4 – Resolving complaints

- Following the determination, if appropriate, the Principal will provide a written response of the outcome with 10 working days. The matter will then be deemed closed.

Step 5 – Continuous improvement

- All complaints received will be entered into the school's complaints register and, where appropriate, a corrective action request will be made to address any underlying processes which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.

Step 6 – External resolution

- If the matter remains unresolved, the parties may seek external resolution alternatives – see **Reviews and appeals**.

REVIEWS AND APPEALS

Should a complainant be dissatisfied with the outcome of a formal complaint with the involvement of the immediate parties, or if there are unique circumstances, the matter can be referred to the next level by the complainant.

Once a decision has been made, parties may request a review of the decision in accordance with Procedures, including escalating the dispute or complaint to the Executive Director of CEWA Ltd. The Executive Director will investigate the complaint and/or areas of disputation in accordance with the rules of procedural fairness.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality applies with respect to both information relating to the person making the complaint, and if relevant, to a person against whom a complaint is made. Our school 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.

Children and young people have the same right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality as adults. Children and young people may waive their right to privacy and confidentiality if they decide to involve somebody else in the complaints process, e.g. to access support.

As far as possible and appropriate, due discretion will be respected and maintained by all parties throughout the resolution process, save where persons are required to be informed on a 'need to know' basis or where investigative, statutory or legal requirements stipulate that matters be disclosed, reported or discussed. Therefore, there can be no overriding legal obligation or right with respect to confidentiality.

Where complaints are made in circumstances where an alleged crime may have been committed or the matter falls under the *CEWA Child Protection Procedures*, the WA Police and CEWA Ltd will be contacted and formally advised.

RECORD KEEPING

The principal shall maintain appropriate records of the relevant particulars used to make a decision in response to any formal dispute or complaint. Where applicable this will include any statements made by the parties involved.

CHILD FRIENDLY COMPLAINTS

The principles that apply to complaints also are applied to complaints and concerns raised by students. Our school is committed to improving the visibility, accessibility and responsiveness of the complaints process for our students.

Students are encouraged to report complaints by:

- Talking to someone in the school they feel comfortable with

Complaints should be acknowledged at the time of receipt or as soon as possible afterwards. Children and young people should be supported during the complaints

process.

In circumstances involving an allegation or complaint in relation to grooming, child abuse and breaches of the Code of Conduct the school will follow the *CEWA Child Protection Procedures (Mandatory Reporting)*, and the matter is reported promptly to the responsible government authorities.