



Concerns and Complaints Policy

Aims

- A. To ensure students have access to a child-friendly complaints system.
- B. To direct complaints to the relevant person or group.
- C. To manage complaints positively, fairly and quickly.
- D. To resolve issues effectively.
- E. To maintain relationships between members of the community involved in a complaint.

Scope and Application

This policy is available on the school website.

This policy applies to:

- A. Employees.
- B. Students.
- C. Parents.
- D. Community members.
- E. Visitors to the school.

Definitions

For the purposes of the policy:

- A. A '**Concern**' – is an issue of interest (because of its importance and effect) which is raised informally in order to improve or change a situation. For example:

I believe that the school's physical education policy and program is inadequate. I don't think that it caters for students who have well-developed skills and who need to be involved in competitive sport. I think the school should review its policy in this area.
- B. A '**Complaint**' - is a formal expression of grievance where the complainant is seeking redress through the Kerry Street Complaints Form. For example:

My daughter has been left out of the school's netball team for the third time in a row. She is an accomplished netballer and deserves to be part of the team. It is not fair that she is left out and I want you to do something about it.

- C. **'Workplace Complaint/Grievance'** – a complaint made by an employee through the internal complaint process relating to decisions or actions within the workplace that are considered to be unfair, inappropriate, contrary to policy or unlawful.

Principles

- A. All members are welcome to provide feedback to the school.
- B. All members are welcome to raise their concerns and complaints with the school.
- C. A dedicated, child friendly complaints system will be visible, accessible and responsive to students, and an option available to lodge a complaint anonymously.
- D. A dedicated feedback email will be available via the School's website.
- E. Concerns may be made verbally or in writing.
- F. The Concerns and Complaints Procedure provides guidance on who is the most appropriate person to contact with concerns, though people may bring complaints to any member of staff or Board.
- G. If an informal concern has not been resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, either party can submit a formal complaint.
- H. A formal complaint must be made in writing utilising the Kerry Street Complaints Form (see Concerns and Complaints Procedure).
- I. Formal complaints will be received by a committee consisting of between two and four members of the Association, appointed by the Board Chair and/or Principal.
- J. The members of the Complaints Committee will be determined on a case by case basis for each separate complaint.
- K. The Complaints Committee will consist of a minimum of one representative selected from Staff, and one representative from Governance. Other Complaints Committee members will be selected from Staff, Board and Association Members as deemed relevant to the complaint.
- L. Complaints will be received positively and taken seriously.
- E. Resolutions will be sought that address the needs of all parties.
- F. The process of managing the complaint will be fair to all parties.
- G. All parties involved will be kept informed of what is likely to happen next, progress towards resolution and outcomes. Initial feedback will be given within one week of the concern being entered into the logbook.
- H. Complaints will be dealt with as quickly as possible, while allowing enough time for a satisfactory outcome.

- I. If a complaint concerns a specific individual, this person will be informed of the substance of the complaint.
- J. Confidentiality will be respected and maintained so far as is possible.
- K. Clear, confidential records of all complaints will be kept in a log book, along with copies of written complaints. This will be kept in the office under the supervision of the Principal and Board Chair.
- L. Staff professional development will include handling of complaints.
- M. It is not acceptable for students to receive adverse treatment because they or their parents have raised a concern or complaint.
- N. If any party to the complaint is dissatisfied with the decision of the Complaints Committee, refer to the Association Rules as outlined in the Constitution.

Remarks

It is helpful for everyone involved to keep in mind conflict resolution skills and attitudes:

- win/win,
- creative response,
- empathy,
- active listening,
- assertiveness,
- appropriate use of power,
- managing emotions,
- projection,
- designing and choosing options,
- negotiation and mediation.

Responsibilities

A. All members of Board and Staff

1. Assist members of the community to know who to approach with a concern.
2. Direct complaints to the school website Feedback tab and Complaints form.

B. Complaints Committee

1. Monitor the feedback email.
2. Receive and manage complaints according to the principles of this policy.
3. Employing a suitable independent person to assist with unresolved complaints.
4. Monitoring and revising this policy as needed.

C. Board Chair

1. In consultation with the Principal and/or Board determine the membership of the Complaints Committee.

2. Sit on the Complaints Committee for all complaints relating to the Principal.
3. Receive concerns and complaints relating to Governance.
4. Receive concerns and complaints relating to the Principal or other staff members (where considered appropriate or at the request of the complainant).
5. Ensure complaints records (relating to complaints received by the Chair) are maintained and stored confidentially.
6. Ensure all concerns are followed through to a resolution and follow up occurs to ensure solutions remain satisfactory.
7. Convene a Special Meeting, if required, as per the Association Rules.

D. Principal

1. Oversee development and implementation of a child-friendly complaints system.
2. Receive concerns related to the education program and its delivery, student conduct and well-being, staff conduct and well-being and performance of the Board.
3. Receive concerns related to the administration of the school, the school buildings, grounds or environment.
4. Receive concerns raised by staff members related to personal and workplace concerns.
5. Receive concerns brought to a staff member which have not been resolved satisfactorily.
6. Ensure incident reports are completed and records maintained and stored confidentially.
7. Ensure all concerns are followed through to a resolution and follow up occurs to ensure solutions remain satisfactory.
8. Monitor trends in concerns to address problems within the school.
9. Facilitate the accessing of appropriate support for all community members who lodge a complaint and receive a complaint if required.
10. Be available to the Complaints Committee, to assist in resolving a complaint.
11. Report concerns to the Board whilst maintaining the confidentiality of the complainant where possible.
12. Provide the school community with information about this policy which enables them to feel comfortable to give feedback, raise a concern or make a complaint, in a positive way, to the appropriate person.

E. Staff

1. Handle concerns related to their duties and responsibilities.
2. Refer concerns to the Principal where issues have not been resolved satisfactorily.

F. Parents

1. Concerns arising from interactions that occur at school or as a direct relationship of attendance at the school should be directed to an appropriate member of staff prior to initiating contact with other parents.

Related Legislation

- A. School Education Act 1999
- B. Equal Opportunity Act 1984
- C. Incorporated Associations Act 2015
- D. State and Federal Anti-discrimination legislation.

Related Kerry Street Documentation

- A. Procedures including:
 1. Complaints flowchart
 2. 'How to approach a problem at school'
 3. Concerns and Complaints procedure
 4. Complaints form
- B. Policies including:
 1. Non-discrimination Policy
 2. Child Protection Policy
 3. Curriculum Policy
 4. Privacy Policy
 5. Records Management Policy
 6. Communication Policy
- C. KSCS Constitution
- D. KSCS Organisation Chart

References

- A. National Principles for Child-Safe Organisations.
- B. Department of Education and Training, Disputes and Complaints Policy and Procedures
- C. Conflict Resolution Network of Australia (website, trainers' manual, conflict resolution workshops)
- D. Everyone Can Win, by Helena Cornelius and Shoshana Faire

Contact Person

Enquiries relating to this policy should be directed to the School Principal or the Board Chair.

Breaches of this Policy

Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Authorisation and Review

- A. This policy was authorised by the Kerry Street Council on 13/1/06
- B. The Grievance Policy was incorporated into this policy at a meeting of staff and council on 13/1/06. The policy was reviewed again in January 2007, on the recommendation of the Office of Non-government Education.
- C. This policy was reviewed September 2012
- D. This policy was reviewed September 2013. Changes to complaints flowchart were made at the recommendation of DES for Reregistration.
- E. Policy amendment made to procedure. Referral of complaints to AISWA was removed. Recorded in November 2015 minutes.
- F. Policy changed to clarify independent auditor clause June 2016
- G. Reviewed and Accepted December 2017
- H. To be reviewed Semester 2 2021

Revision History

Date	Revision	Detail
3/9/2017	v.1	Revised to incorporate new Complaints Procedure developed in conjunction with the review of the KSCS Constitution
July 2019	v.2	Revised to incorporate new requirements relating to child-friendly complaints system. Formatting changes, and edits to improve scope.