

# ARDEN



## Complaints Handling Policy

### Policy Statement

Arden Anglican School (“the School”) values feedback (both positive and constructive) from all members of the School community and considers complaints a valuable source of information to improve relationships, policy, practice and systems.

The School recognises the importance of having a process that fosters a culture of disclosure whereby complaints can be raised and then managed in a supportive, cooperative and respectful manner, with confidentiality and sensitivity.

To ensure that the School provides the best opportunity for fair outcomes for all members of the School community, the School has the following policy for dealing with complaints and grievances of a general nature.

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<p>Purpose</p>	<p>The purpose of this Policy is to assist Staff, Parents, Students and others connected with the School to understand how to raise a Concern or make a Complaint.</p> <p>This Policy sets out how Concerns may be raised and Complaints made by members of the School Community, and how such matters will be managed and resolved by the School. The School seeks to use feedback provided under this Policy to improve standards, reduce cause for further complaints, and raise stakeholder satisfaction.</p> <p>The School acknowledges that many Concerns and issues arise from simple misunderstandings or unclear communication and may be resolved in an informal manner without the need to follow the formal complaints process.</p> <p>It is hoped that this will be the case in most instances. Complaint resolution is best achieved when all parties consistently display respect, mutual trust and co-operation in their actions and their words.</p> <p>If a Concern is raised or a Complaint is made it will be taken seriously.</p>
<p>Scope</p>	<p>This Policy applies to all Concerns raised and the handling of Complaints made (as defined) by individuals and organisations in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• services provided by the School or</li> <li>• a Staff Member (as defined) with regards to their behaviour or conduct in connection with the School.</li> </ul> <p>This Policy <b>does not</b> extend to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal grievances between Parents or other members of the School Community.</li> <li>• Complaints which are whistleblowing disclosures (refer Whistleblower Policy).</li> <li>• Complaints about reportable conduct (refer Child Protection Policy and Handling Allegations of Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct Procedures).</li> <li>• Complaints regarding a Grievance between Staff Members about work matters (refer Staff Grievance Procedure).</li> <li>• Complaints regarding unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying between Staff (refer Discrimination, Harassment and Workplace Bullying Statement).</li> </ul> <p>This Policy applies in all School environments, both physical and online, and on-site and off-site School presence (e.g. camps and excursions).</p> <p>This Policy is not intended to extend the responsibilities of the School beyond the law.</p>
<p>Consequences</p>	<p>Failure by Staff to comply with this Policy may be, in some circumstances, be considered reportable or criminal conduct resulting in disciplinary action, including summary dismissal.</p>
	<p>For the purposes of this policy:</p>

Definitions & Terms	<b>Child / Children</b>	means a person who is under the age of 16 years [refer: section 3 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998].
	<b>Complaint(s)</b>	means an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the School, related to its services, Staff or operations, (including the actions or omissions of individual Staff Members) or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. An unresolved internal Staff grievance may result in progression to a complaint. Within a childcare and educational setting, complaints may relate to an act, behaviour, course of conduct, omission, situation or decision and can range in degrees of concern.
	<b>Complainant</b>	means the person who has the Complaint.
	<b>Concern(s)</b>	means its ordinary meaning and generally is 'lower level' than a Complaint. Concerns and Complaints may be about an act, behaviour, course of conduct, omission, situation or decision. They may be about any aspect of the School's operations, service or personnel.
	<b>Contractor</b>	means a person/s or organisation engaged by the School (including subcontractor/s and individual/s engaged by the contractor or sub-contractor) paid to provide goods or service/s.
	<b>Council</b>	means Arden Anglican School Council.
	<b>Council member</b>	means a member of the Council.
	<b>Grievance</b>	means, for the purposes of this Policy, an expression of dissatisfaction or complaint raised by a staff member in relation to perceived unfair treatment, injustice, unmet needs, or violation of rights within the context of the School's operations. This could be related to, but not limited to the conduct of another staff member at the School.
	<b>Parent</b>	means one or more parents, legal guardians or carers of a Student.
	<b>Procedural Fairness</b>	(also known as natural justice) means the principles developed to ensure, as far as practicable, that decision-making is fair and reasonable. It involves the decision-maker informing people of the case against them or their interests, giving them the right to be heard, not having a personal interest in the outcome and acting only on logically probative evidence.
	<b>Relevant Contact Person (RCP)</b>	means the member of Staff most appropriate to manage the Concern or Complaint per their role and responsibilities and as generally aligned to the Complaint Reporting FlowChart (draft in progress).
<b>Respondent</b>	means any person against whom a Concern or Complaint is brought.	
<b>School</b>	means Staff, Contractors, Council members, Volunteers, Parents, Students	

	<b>Community (SC)</b>	and members of the public who are making or receiving Concerns, Complaints and feedback.
	<b>School</b>	means Arden Anglican School.
	<b>Staff/ Staff Member</b>	means a person employed by the School on a permanent, temporary or casual basis, Volunteers and Contractors.
	<b>Staff Misconduct</b>	means behaviour by Staff which physically, verbally or emotionally compromises the safety or wellbeing of Students, Parents, Staff and/or Volunteers.
	<b>Student</b>	means a Child or Young Person enrolled at the School.
	<b>Volunteer</b>	means a person who has a valid <a href="#">Working With Children Check</a> , that has been cleared by the School and freely offers their time, skills, and services to support the School without receiving financial compensation.
	<b>WhistleBlower Disclosure</b>	<p>means a disclosure which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is made by a Council member, Staff Member, a person who supplies goods or services to the School, including an employer of a supplier or a relative of any of these people;</li> <li>involves alleged misconduct, an improper state of affairs or circumstances, or illegal activity, and</li> </ul> <p>is made to a senior Staff Member, or officer of the School, the School's auditor or a person whom the School has authorised to collect such disclosures.</p>
	<b>Young Person</b>	means person aged 16 or 17 years.
<b>Policy Roles &amp; Responsibilities</b>		All members of the School Community have a responsibility to understand and adhere to this Policy.
	<b>School Council</b>	The School Council is responsible for reviewing and ratifying this policy following the review and recommendation of the Governance Committee.
	<b>Governance Committee</b>	Following review and recommendation of the Principal, the Governance Committee is responsible for reviewing and recommending this policy to Council.
	<b>Principal</b>	The Principal is responsible for reviewing and recommending this policy in line with the confirmed review date, or earlier as required, and submitting it for Committee review. The Principal is responsible for ensuring the policy aligns with relevant legislation and/or school requirements and is available to members of the School Community.
	<b>Deputy Principal</b>	The Deputy Principal is responsible for managing and updating the policy as

		and when required but no later than the confirmed review date. The Deputy Principal is to update the policy to reflect changes to the School's requirements or legislation/regulations and ensure that the policy and related principles are communicated to all Staff.
	<b>School Executive</b>	The School Executive is responsible for supporting the Deputy Principal with the identification of changed school requirements and/or emerging issues to ensure the policy continues to achieve its purpose and remains relevant and current.
	<b>Staff</b>	Staff are responsible for complying with this and all other relevant school policies and procedures, including associated documents, Guidelines and Codes of Conduct.

## Policy Principles & Guidelines

Type of Complaints	<p>Complaints may be made to the School <b>informally</b> and <b>formally</b>, depending on the nature of the Complaint. Complaints raised, addressed and resolved informally are considered to be Concerns.</p> <p>A Complaint may be made in person, by telephone, email or in writing. Anonymous Complaints, or Complaints made under a pseudonym, will not be acted upon.</p> <p>Complaints related to child protection and potential litigious situations are best raised under formal guidelines. (Please see our guide to reporting Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct on our website.)</p>
Informal Complaints	<p>Most issues causing concern in schools can be handled quickly and in an informal manner.</p> <p>Informal Complaints may be addressed to relevant Staff. These approaches can be made either in person or in writing.</p> <p>If a constructive resolution can be achieved through this channel, with Students, Parents and Staff satisfied that resolution has been reached, then the matter can be closed.</p> <p>Informal Complaints should <b>not</b> be made via the following means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a Parent approaching a Student who is not in that Parent's custodial care to raise a matter;</li> <li>• using a social media platform to raise a Complaint – irrespective of whether the platform hosts school content, Staff personal pages, or other affiliated pages; or</li> <li>• raising a Complaint with a Staff member in a social setting unrelated to school events;</li> </ul> <p>It is preferable that Concerns or Complaints be raised by the party involved or in the case of a Student, his or her Parent, rather than involving any third party.</p> <p>If a resolution cannot be achieved via an informal approach, or a formal approach is preferred, then a formal Complaint can be made.</p>
Formal Complaints	<p>The expectation is that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints will be assessed, investigated and managed in a timely manner at the</li> </ul>

	<p>appropriate level, in line with their complexity and nature;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all parties will be treated respectfully, can put their case forward and be heard;</li> <li>• decisions will be made objectively having considered the perspectives and facts presented from all parties; and</li> <li>• appropriate confidentiality will be adhered to by all parties involved.</li> </ul> <p>A formal Complaint can be raised at any stage and by the following means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organising a face-to-face meeting onsite with the relevant Staff or leadership member based on the nature and complexity of the incident or situation to be discussed.</li> <li>• organising an online (MSTeams) meeting or telephone conference with relevant Staff or leadership members based on the nature and complexity of the incident or situation to be discussed.</li> <li>• sending a Complaint, in writing via email or letter addressed to the appropriate Staff, School Executive, Principal or Chair of Council.</li> </ul> <p>If the nature of the Complaint is about an Executive member or Principal and it is felt the matter will not be dealt with in a satisfactory manner, then the formal Complaint process should be directed to the Chair of School Council.</p>				
Confidentiality	<p>Confidentiality applies with respect to information relating to both the Complainant and the Respondent. Confidentiality, unless otherwise required by law, is required from all parties, and the School in its commitment to maintain confidentiality, will only share information and address issues with those who genuinely need to know.</p> <p>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.</p>				
Complaints and Allegations of Staff Misconduct or Reportable Conduct	<p>Allegations of Staff Misconduct and reportable conduct are the most critical in the Complaints Handling prioritisation process and are managed by the School in a different manner to other Complaints.</p> <p>The School has legal obligations to report certain Staff conduct to external authorities. If your Complaint relates to alleged Staff Misconduct or reportable conduct please make your Complaint to the Principal, or if this person is the subject of your Complaint, please notify the Chair of the School Council.</p> <p>For more information about the School’s complaints handling procedures regarding allegations of Staff Misconduct or reportable conduct, please refer to our Procedures for Handling Allegations of Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct <a href="#">linked here</a> and available on the website.</p>				
Related	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="435 1837 646 1879">Policies</td> <td data-bbox="646 1837 1503 1879">2020_AAS_Child Protection Policy_v3.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="435 1879 646 1913"></td> <td data-bbox="646 1879 1503 1913">2019_AAS_PrivacyPolicy_220519</td> </tr> </table>	Policies	2020_AAS_Child Protection Policy_v3.1		2019_AAS_PrivacyPolicy_220519
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Information		2016 May Unlawful Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Statement for Employees, Contractors and Volunteers	
		Student Anti-Bullying Policy - July 2015	
		2022_AAS_Whistle Blower Policy_v1.2	
	Procedures & Guidelines		2020 AAS Community Code of Conduct v1.2.
			2024_AAS_Staff Code of Conduct v1.3
			2015 March Procedural Fairness Statement
			2025_AAS_HandlingAllegations_Staff_Misconduct_Reportable_Conduct_v1.1
			2025_AAS_Staff Grievance Procedure_v1.1
			2025_AAS_Staff Grievance Reporting Form_v1.0
			2025_AAS_Complaint Handling Procedures_v1.0
Source of Obligation		2025_AAS_Complaint Reporting Flowchart_v1.0	
		<p>The Children’s Guardian Act 2019 legislates ‘adopting the Child Safe Standards as the primary framework that guides Child safe practice’ in NSW. Section 8A empowers the OCG to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- assist child safe organisations (the School) to implement the Child Safe Standards by raising awareness and providing guidance, training and education</li> <li>- monitor the effectiveness of the School’s implementation of the Standards</li> <li>- investigate Complaints regarding an organisation’s implementation of, and compliance with, the Standards; and</li> <li>- enforce compliance with the Standards through the imposition of sanctions.</li> </ul>	
Related Legislation Regulations, Standards and/or Obligations	This Policy is governed by the following New South Wales		
	<b>Legislation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Children’s Guardian Act 2019</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Disability Inclusion Act 2014</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Education Act 1990</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and 13 Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)</a></li> </ul>	
	<b>Regulations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013</a></li> </ul>	
	<b>Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual Sect 8.2</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care Standard</a></li> </ul>	
		<p>The NSW Registration Manual (B8.2) requires the School must have and implement a policy and procedure for managing complaints from students and/or parents that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how to raise a concern</li> <li>• the school responds to concerns.</li> </ul> <p>The school must make the complaints policy publicly available.</p>	

		This means that the policy must be made available on the school’s publicly accessible website, not be protected behind a firewall or login, and be provided to parents/guardians in hardcopy upon request.
Publication, Communication and Engagement	<p>This policy is implemented by being readily available on the School’s website and internal SchoolBox portal as well as included in the School’s induction and annual Child safety training processes.</p> <p>Information about the complaints process may also be disseminated to all members of the School Community through appropriate channels such as the Schoolbox notices and news posts, assemblies, staff meetings, parent information evenings and included in relevant publications.</p> <p>The School reserves the right to change or modify this Policy at any time by notice on the School portal (currently SchoolBox).</p>	
Getting Help	Staff may seek assistance or provide feedback about this document by emailing the Policy Author or <a href="mailto:compliance@arden.nsw.edu.au">compliance@arden.nsw.edu.au</a> .	
Author and Review Information	<p><b>Policy Author:</b> Deputy Principal</p> <p><b>Policy Access:</b> Public</p> <p><b>Document Name:</b> 2025_AAS_Complaints Handling Policy_v1.3</p> <p><b>Version:</b> 1.3</p> <p><b>Approved by:</b> School Council</p> <p><b>Date Approved:</b> 05 March 2025</p> <p><b>Review Frequency:</b> Every 3 years or earlier as required</p> <p><b>Next Review Date:</b> 2028</p>	