

## COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION POLICY

<b>STATUS</b>	Approved	<b>Document No.</b>	3.20.1A
<b>Authorised by:</b>	Board Chair	<b>Date of Authorisation:</b>	27 April 2026
<b>Review Date:</b>	Annually	<b>Next Review Date:</b>	March 2027
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	School Governing Body (Cairns Rudolf Steiner School Ltd)		
<b>References</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Standards Australia, Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2022, NEQ)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Child Safe Organisations   Queensland Family and Child Commission</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>National Office Child Safety – Complaint Handling Guide</u></a></li> <li>• CHSS Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy</li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>CHSS Child Safe Standards – Statement of Commitment</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>CHSS Complaints Resolution Procedure</u></a></li> <li>• CHSS Enrolment Contract</li> <li>• CHSS Child Protection Policy</li> <li>• CHSS Work Health and Safety Policy</li> <li>• CHSS School Wide Behaviour Management Policy</li> <li>• CHSS Anti-bullying Policy</li> <li>• CHSS Code of Conduct</li> <li>• CHSS Anti-Discrimination Policy</li> <li>• CHSS Sexual Harassment Policy</li> <li>• CHSS Disability Discrimination Policy</li> <li>• CHSS Workplace Bullying Policy</li> <li>• CHSS Privacy Policy</li> <li>• CHSS Constitution or Board Charter</li> <li>• CHSS Sexual Harassment Policy</li> </ul>		
<b>PURPOSE</b>	The purpose of this policy is to provide written processes about receiving, assessing, investigating and otherwise dealing with complaints. <sup>1</sup>		
<b>SCOPE</b>	Any person directly affected by the subject of a complaint. Examples may include staff, students or a student’s parent or guardian, contractors, or community members.		

<sup>1</sup> [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Regulations 2017, s.7](#)

## Policy Statement

CHSS acknowledges the right of students, parents/guardians, staff and others to complain when dissatisfied with the school's services, including an action, inaction or decision of the school. The school encourages constructive criticism and complaints. CHSS is committed to ensuring that complaints received are handled in a responsive, efficient, consistent, effective, transparent and fair way.

CHSS will ensure staff can recognise, receive, and appropriately refer complaints to the informal or formal complaints procedure.

CHSS recognises that time spent on Resolution complaints can be an investment in better service to students and parents/guardians and a better culture for staff, and views complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process.

CHSS promotes a safe, inclusive and culturally responsive environment for all students, ensuring their safety and wellbeing are prioritised. CHSS is committed to students exercising their right to speak up and participate in school processes and decisions that affect them.

CHSS is committed to promoting safe, inclusive and a culturally responsive environment for all students, ensuring their safety and wellbeing are prioritised in every aspect of the school's operations.

## Definitions

<b>Complaint</b>	An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the school, related to the school's services, staff or the Resolution of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. <sup>2</sup>
<b>Informal Complaint</b>	A complaint about a matter that is likely to be simple, straight forward, easily manageable, or minor, where a simple or quick resolution is appropriate such as discussion of the matter with a relevant staff member.
<b>Formal Complaint</b>	A complaint about a matter that is serious, complex or may pose a threat to the health and safety of any person. Examples include serious allegations or breaches of policy, complaints against a senior staff member, including the Head of School or an informal complaint that could not be resolved informally. Assessment of the complaint is required by the Head of School, the HoTL and/or the Board Chair.
<b>Complainant</b>	The person, organisation or their representative making a complaint. <sup>3</sup>
<b>Respondent</b>	The person who is referred to in a complaint by a complainant as the person responsible for their concerns or who can best respond to their concern.

<sup>2</sup> Standards Australia, Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2018, NEQ), s.4.3

<sup>3</sup> Standards Australia, Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2018, NEQ), s.4.2

## Complaints Resolution Principles

CHSS will manage complaints according to the following (which include principles of procedural fairness):

- complaints will be taken seriously, dealt with fairly and objectively, without judgement and addressed in a reasonable timeframe
- complaints should be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible, having regard to the nature of the complaint
- interested parties to the complaint (for example, the complainant and any respondent) will be heard and/or may provide relevant information in relation to the complaint
- confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- a child-centred approach will be maintained, and all complaints will be managed in a manner that prioritises the student's safety, wellbeing, and voice
- a trauma-informed and culturally safe approach to managing complaints will be prioritised
- the complainant and any respondent will be offered support as appropriate
- victimising behaviour towards a complainant, respondent or other people associated with the complaint, will not be tolerated
- complainants that lodge a complaint on reasonable grounds will not suffer any other reprisals on the basis of lodging the complaint

## Complaints that may be Resolved under this Policy

CHSS encourages anyone who feels impacted by an issue involving the school to file a complaint. Complaints can address matters such as:

- the school, its staff or students having done something wrong
- the school, its staff or students having failed to do something they should have done
- the school, its employees or students having acted unfairly or impolitely
- issues of student or staff behaviour that are contrary to the CHSS School Wide Behaviour Policy, CHSS High School Agreement, CHSS Parent Code of Conduct and CHSS Staff Code of Conduct including inappropriate staff conduct as reported by a student<sup>4</sup>
- issues related to learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- issues related to communication with students or parents or between staff
- issues related to school fees and payments
- general administrative issues
- issues relating to non-compliance with a process outlined in school policies or procedures, for example the child protection policy, discrimination policy, or privacy policy<sup>5</sup>

Student complaints may be brought by students or by parents on behalf of their children, as appropriate in the circumstances.

## Issues Outside this Policy

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<sup>4</sup> Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 s.16(2)(a)

<sup>5</sup> Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 s.16(5)

The following matters are outside the scope of this policy and should be managed as follows:

- Child protection concerns including allegations of sexual abuse, likely sexual abuse or harm to children should be dealt in accordance with the school's CHSS Child Protection Policy.
- Student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the CHSS Anti-Bullying Policy or CHSS School Wide Behaviour Management Policy.
- Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the CHSS School Wide Behaviour Management Policy.
- Student or staff violence or criminal matters should be directed to the CHSS Head of School who will involve the Police as appropriate.
- Disputes relating to a staff member's employment should be directed to their manager and dealt with under the enterprise agreement and/or employment law. This does not include disputes about work health and safety matters or complaints about relevant unlawful conduct under the sexual harassment policy, which may be dealt with under the school's WHS Policy or Sexual Harassment Policy.
- Disputes between board directors, between CHSS company members and board members or between CHSS members should be dealt with in accordance with the CHSS Constitution and other relevant governance policies.
- Formal legal proceedings should be managed as appropriate in the circumstances.
- Complaints relating to the education and training services provided by the school to an overseas student should be dealt with in accordance with the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* and National Code and the school's Overseas Student's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Process.

## Responsibilities

### School

The school has the following roles and responsibilities:

- develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the school's Complaints Resolution Policy
- appropriately communicate the school's Complaints Resolution Policy to students, parents and staff
- ensure that the Complaints Resolution Policy are readily accessible by staff, students and parents
- upon receipt of a complaint, manage the complaint in accordance with the Complaints Resolution Policy
- ensure that appropriate support is made available to all parties to a complaint
- take appropriate action to prevent victimisation or action in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them
- appropriately implement remedies
- appropriately train relevant staff
- keep records
- conduct a review/audit of the Complaints Register in regular intervals
- report to the school's insurer when that is relevant.

## All Parties to a Dispute

The complainant and respondent both have the following roles and responsibilities:

- comply with the school's Complaints Resolution Policy
- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner
- not provide deliberately false or misleading information
- not make frivolous or vexatious complaints or retaliatory complaints
- act in good faith and maintain a mutually beneficial relationship of trust and cooperation
- act in a calm, courteous manner and non-threatening manner
- acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced
- maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- not victimise or act in reprisal against any party to the dispute or any person associated with them.

## Staff Receiving and/or Managing Complaints

Staff receiving and/or managing complaints have the following roles and responsibilities:

- act in accordance with the school's Complaints Resolution Policy
- refer the complainant to the school's Complaints Resolution Policy and provide additional information as necessary
- maintain confidentiality as far as possible
- keep appropriate records
- forward complaints to more senior staff, including the Head of School, if the complaint cannot be resolved at the initial level or if it involves serious issues that require the involvement of more senior staff
- not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

## Implementation

CHSS is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints at the school, including by the development and implementation of this policy and via the clear support and promotion of the policy. CHSS will implement the policy in line with the Complaints Resolution Procedure.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Complaints Resolution Procedure and the steps within the procedure are to be undertaken in line with the Complaints Resolution processes.

Cairns Hinterland Steiner School encourages the raising of complaints when dissatisfaction occurs in relation to an action, inaction or decision from any part of the school.

CHSS is also committed to regular training of staff on the implementation of this policy during induction and annually thereafter.

The school will make this Policy and related Procedure readily available to all stakeholders (staff, students, parents and others) through the following ways:

- On the school's website
- Available from Reception upon request
- Items in the newsletter, from time to time, about this Policy & Procedures
- Email contact for complaints posted on the school's blackboard and noticeboards
- Raised in community and student forums that the school encourages complaints from all stakeholders including students.

### **Complaint Register**

CHSS will maintain a complaint register with details such as the date, source and description of complaints, the staff managing the complaint, the actions taken, outcome and the date the complaint was closed.

The complaint register will be stored securely.

All complaints shall be entered onto the complaint register as soon as practicable after the complaint is received. The complaint register will not contain complaints about the Head of School. Records of complaints about the Head of School will be maintained by the Board with access restricted to the Board.

To safeguard confidentiality and maintain the integrity of the complaint process, access to the entire complaint register will be limited to the Head of School, the Business Manager and the Board Chair.

The Head of School may authorise the sharing of specific, relevant entries from the complaint register with other designated staff members (such as the Senior Leadership Team), provided measures are taken to protect the confidentiality of all parties involved, particularly ensuring that respondents to a complaint do not gain inappropriate access to information about the allegations against them.