

Overseas Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

Definitions:

German School Johannes Gutenberg is the name of school provider; **CRICOS Provider ID:** 02379D

German International School Sydney is the trading name of the school

The **Principal Executive Officer (PEO)** is the Principal. The PEO may delegate a responsibility to an appropriate staff member.

Student Complaint (NESA definition): A student complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made by a student about any aspect of their education, learning environment, or school-related services, where the student seeks action or resolution. Student complaints may relate to academic matters, administrative decisions, or other issues affecting student welfare.

Education agent: a person or organisation that recruits or refers overseas students to the School and provides information or assistance to students and their families regarding study options, enrolment processes, and student visa requirements.

Policy

Issues or concerns may arise because of a misunderstanding, miscommunication, or mistake and the German School Johannes Gutenberg would prefer that a student first addresses an issue or concern informally.

German School Johannes Gutenberg will always provide students with access to professional, timely, inexpensive processes for handling complaints and appeals, to protect overseas students' right to natural justice and procedurally fair processes.

Procedure

An overseas student can approach any member of staff at the German International School Sydney for an initial discussion at any time about an issue or concern.

Other informal ways that issues or concerns can be resolved include:

- Talk to the student's class teacher;
- Arrange a meeting to talk to Student Counsellor; and/or
- Parents write an email to class teacher / student counsellor / Head of Secondary School / Principal.

If informal approaches have not worked or are not appropriate, an overseas student may wish to make a formal complaint.

A student can make a formal complaint about:

- German School Johannes Gutenberg;
- The Education agent, if applicable; and
- The Homestay Agency, if applicable.

How to submit a formal complaint/appeal

1. A student can submit a formal complaint by sending an email to the Principal. The overseas student may submit accompanying documentation to support the complaint/appeal.

Assessment of a formal complaint/appeal

1. When a complaint/appeal is received, the Principal will provide a written acknowledgement to the overseas student and parent/legal guardian. The following details or documentation will be in the acknowledgement:
 - an assessment of the issues raised will commence within 10 working days of the complaint/appeal being made and the outcome will be finalised as soon as practicable;
 - the overseas student's enrolment will be maintained while the complaint/appeal is being assessed;
 - a summary of the assessment process;
 - the overseas student can present their case at no cost and be accompanied or assisted by a support person at any meetings;
 - further documentation may be requested during the assessment of the complaint/appeal; and
 - a copy of the *Complaints and appeals - Overseas Students policy and procedures and the Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures*.
2. The Principal will commence an assessment of the complaint/appeal within 10 working days of it being submitted and the outcome will be finalised as soon as practicable.
3. The Principal will investigate a complaint/appeal. An investigation may include, but is not limited to, interviews and reviewing relevant documentation submitted by the overseas student or others.
4. The overseas student will have the opportunity to formally present their case and be accompanied by a support person in all meetings. The Principal will explain the process to the student.
5. The Principal will decide the outcome of a complaint/appeal.

Communication of the decision about a complaint/appeal

1. The overseas student and the parent/legal guardian will be given a written statement of the decision about the complaint/appeal, including reasons for the decision.
2. If the decision is not in favour of the overseas student the Principal will advise the overseas student and the parent/legal guardian in writing within 10 working days of concluding the investigation, of their right to access an external complaint handling and appeals process at minimal or no cost.
3. The contact details of The Overseas Student Ombudsman will be provided to the overseas student in this communication.

Decision in favour of the overseas student

1. If the internal or any external complaints/appeal process results in a decision in favour of the overseas student and their parent/legal guardian, German School Johannes Gutenberg will immediately implement the decision or recommendation.
2. German School Johannes Gutenberg will immediately take the preventative or corrective action required by the decision and advise the overseas student and their parent/legal guardian of that action in writing.

Records

1. Records relating to complaints, appeals, preventative or corrective actions will be stored in the overseas student's file by the Registrar.

Document Management

Policy name	Overseas Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
Version	1.1
School Leader responsible	Principal / PEO
Board portfolio	Governance and Strategy
Related documents	Complaints handling policy and procedure
Version history	Version 1.0 – 15 July 2025
Last review / Update	Approved on 25 February 2026
Next Review	Scheduled for February 2027
Approved by	Michael Cordes (Principal) and Tammie Christie (Board of Directors)

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