



Complaints and Appeals Procedure

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the procedures for lodging and responding to complaints made by the School community in accordance with the principles set out in the School's Complaints and Appeals Policies.

Scope

This procedure applies to any member of the School community wishing to make a complaint within the scope of the Complaints and Appeals Policy, including international students.

This procedure is not applicable to :

- student complaints, which are covered by the Student Complaints Management Procedures.
- staff complaints, which are covered by the Staff Complaints Procedure.
- Whistleblower complaints, which are covered by the Whistleblower Policy.

Management of Local Concerns and Informal Complaints

Haileybury Rendall School encourages communication and feedback from parents/guardians and its School community. Constructive feedback does not constitute a complaint, rather it provides the School with an opportunity to improve its services to students.

A member of the public or parent/guardian who has feedback for the School should discuss their concerns with the relevant teacher, staff member or Head of School as early as possible. This process allows the School to hear from its community and take action to improve its services.

A person with a complaint is encouraged to discuss their concerns with the most relevant person (e.g. Classroom/Tutor Teacher, Year Level or International Student Coordinator, Head of School, etc) at an early stage so that the School can work together with the affected parties to resolve the matter as promptly and efficiently as possible.

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Informal complaints may be escalated to a formal complaint process at any time, and must be escalated to the Principal if the complaint concerns:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing complaints/reports
- Matters that allege serious misconduct, corruption or illegal behaviour
- The School Board
- Privacy issues that must be dealt with under the School's Privacy Policy
- Legal issues and requests for compensation or payments
- Issues that have a wider School or systemic implication.

If the concern or complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant through the informal process, the formal complaints procedure may be followed as set out in this document.

Management of Formal Complaints

There are five steps to the formal complaint procedure:

- Receiving a formal complaint
- Investigating the complaint
- Complaints Interview
- Complaints resolution and closure
- Appeals (internal or external).

Step 1: Receiving a formal complaint

The formal complaint should be made in writing to the Principal.

Although in writing is the preferred method for lodging formal complaints, complainants may choose to make the complaint verbally, in person, via video conference, or by phone. To make a formal verbal complaint, complainants should make arrangements to meet with or speak to the Principal.

If the complainant arranges to meet with the Principal in person or via video conference, they may choose to have a support person present. The support person could be a relative or a friend, but it is not appropriate for that person to be a legal representative, staff member or student of Haileybury Rendall School.

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Conversations held in relation to the complaint must remain respectful and constructive. If any party is of the view that the conversation has become confrontational and is no longer conciliatory, either party may ask for the conversation to be temporarily halted and re-scheduled for completion at another time.

If the complainant decides to make the complaint verbally, in person, via video conference, or by phone, the School will use the formal complaints form to record the complaint. The complainant will be invited to review the information collected in the form to ensure that the initial verbal complaint has been accurately recorded.

The Principal will establish the nature of the complaint and assign the complaint to the relevant respondent. In some cases, the Principal or relevant respondent will maintain oversight of the investigation and response to formal complaints, and will provide an independent point of escalation in the complaints handling process.

If the complaint relates directly to the Principal, it will be managed by the CEO | Principal Haileybury Melbourne, or a suitable delegate assigned by the CEO | Principal.

All formal complaints will be acknowledged in writing as soon as possible and within 5 business days of receipt.

Step 2: Investigating the Complaint

The Principal may appoint an appropriate, senior member of staff who is not directly involved in the complaint to investigate the issue. If deemed necessary by the Principal, an external investigator may be appointed at the School's expense.

For complaints relating to child protection, it may be necessary to escalate complaints to external bodies, such as the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities, Northern Territory Police, the Northern Territory Teacher Registration Board, or the Office of The Children's Commissioner Northern Territory. In this case, investigations by these bodies may take precedence over the investigation by the School.

In carrying out an investigation, the School will keep written accounts of all interviews and discussions and will maintain the confidentiality of all parties to the extent possible in order to effectively investigate the issue.

Step 3: Complaints Interview

Interviews may be held when the complaint is lodged, during the investigation or resolution process, or to close out a complaint. Interviews may be held with both the complainant and the respondent either in person or via video conference.

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The Principal, or other senior staff member responsible for handling the complaint, will normally chair the interview.

Complainants may choose to have a support person present. The support person could be a relative or a friend, but it is not appropriate for that person to be a legal representative or Haileybury Rendall School staff member or student. If the Principal deems it necessary, additional support from an interpreter may be arranged.

The interview will discuss the matter thoroughly, ideally using the following steps:

- a clear description and understanding of the issue
- the claimed impact and whom it impacts
- the potential result if the issue is not resolved
- the action(s) requested in order to resolve the complaint.

At each step of the process, all those attending the interview will have the opportunity to put forward their point of view and will be treated with dignity and respect.

It may not be possible to agree on the way forward in just one interview; in this case, further interviews will be scheduled until all those involved agree that the issue has been considered as thoroughly as needed.

At any stage in the process, the Principal may decide that it would be helpful to seek either informal or formal mediation in order to resolve the complaint. If this is necessary, it will be conducted at the School's expense.

Step 4: Complaints Resolution and Closure

All parties should agree when the complaint (or an aspect of the complaint) is considered closed. If not everyone agrees, the complaint procedure should continue until a resolution is found or closure agreed upon, even if the complainant and the School agree that the complaint is dismissed or that no further action should be taken, or the complainant seeks an external investigation by a relevant Government Regulator.

In managing the issue, the following steps should be followed:

- A statement confirming that those involved consider the complaint (or an aspect of the complaint) to be resolved or that it should be closed
- How the complaint has been resolved or a decision made on closure of the complaint
- The reasons for reaching a decision addressing the issues that were raised in the initial complaint

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- A description of each specific action or decision, including a note as to who is responsible for the action and the due date.

These steps will be summarised briefly and will be included in the documentation of the process.

When the complaint is resolved (or dismissed), a follow-up meeting or conversation should be scheduled to ensure that the agreed actions have been implemented and that no further matters are outstanding.

A written response outlining the issues, the decision made, and the outcome of the complaint should be sent to both the complainant and the respondent. The written response will contain details of the internal or external appeal avenues available to the complainant. The complaint will be closed if the outcome of the complaint is accepted.

Haileybury Rendall School will endeavour to provide a written response within 21 business days of acknowledging receipt of the formal written complaint, the actual timeframe being dependent on the complexity of the issues involved and whether an external investigation is required.

Step 5: Appeals (Internal or External)

Making an Appeal

If a complainant feels that the complaint has not been adequately resolved, they may appeal in writing to the HRS Board within 14 days of the school closing the complaint.

The grounds for appealing must be either that:

- a) the complaints policy and procedures were not followed, or
- b) the resolution of the complaint is claimed to be insufficient, unfair, biased, unreasonable and/or disproportionate.

The appeal will use the record of the complaint as agreed and will not normally re-hear the complaint itself.

Complainants should indicate how, if legal, possible and practicable, they would want the appeal to be resolved.

Responding to the Appeal

The HRS Board will decide how to proceed and will make recommendations for any action to resolve the matter.

The HRS Board may approve the appointment of an external consultant to conduct an investigation, mediation and/or arbitration.

Complainants will be provided with a copy of the final decisions of the appeal.

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External Appeals

The complainant should be advised that they may lodge a complaint with the Northern Territory Education Department or the Overseas Students Ombudsmen if they have exhausted the School's complaints process and believe that the matter relates to the Minimum Standard for School Registration or provisions and care related to International Students. Matters relating to the education and support of students with disabilities may be appealed to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commissioner.

Governing Legislation

Education Act 2015 (NT)

Education Regulations 2015 (NT)

Child Safe Standards Ministerial Order 870

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000

Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2001

Related Documents

2026 Business Notices

One Haileybury Complaints Policy

Child Protection and Safety Policy

School Child Safe Code of Conduct

Whistleblower Policy

Privacy Policy

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