



Concerns and Complaints Management Procedure

Published 1/09/2019

Author: Terry Eason

Contents

Contents.....	2
Preamble.....	3
Scope.....	3
Context.....	3
Procedures.....	4
Implementation.....	8
Contact Person	8
Appendix 1 – Flowchart for Internal Handling of Concerns and Complaints.....	9

Preamble

'Do not accuse a man without cause, when he has done you no harm' Proverbs 3:30

'If you are offering a gift at the altar and remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift before the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift'. Matthew 5:23-24

'If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. Matthew 18:15-16

At Swan Christian College we appreciate the need and want to build community with parent/carers, students and staff. To achieve this all stakeholders, need to work positively and cooperatively together. From time-to-time there are situations where the harmony of relationships will be challenged. The purpose of this policy and procedure is to resolve complaints and grievances in a way that is respectful to all parties involved and affords procedural fairness.

Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all Swan Christian College employees, contractors, service providers, parents and students..

Context

Related Policies and Procedures

- Procedure for Parent Communication with the College
- Child Friendly Complaints Procedure
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- SCEA Staff Grievance Policy
- SCEA Complaints Management Policy

Procedures

The steps outlined below, together with the flowcharts are intended to provide guidance as to how to handle complaints generally.

Every incident will vary in degree of seriousness and not all parts of the steps outlined below will be required to be undertaken in every circumstance.

Step 1 – Dealing with Informal Concerns

It is likely that from time-to-time a member of the College community may make a statement or send an email expressing dissatisfaction with an aspect of the College's service or operations.

Often these concerns can be resolved quickly and easily usually through verbal communication. In many instances the complainant may not consider that they are making a complaint but rather providing constructive feedback.

All members of the college community who have a concern are encouraged to contact the staff member who is most closely connected to the issue or whom they feel most comfortable speaking to.

To assist members of the community to determine who to speak to regarding a concern the College has published a document called Parent Communication Procedure

While a concern may seem minor, if the College was to receive numerous such concerns, it could indicate a larger problem that needs to be addressed. It is for that reason all concerns and complaints received by staff must be logged with our Complaints Manager.

The following information should be emailed by the staff member receiving the concern to feedback@swan.wa.edu.au

- Date of concern/complaint
- Name of complainant
- Contact details of complainant
- Complainant type, for example, parent, student, staff member
- Response action
- Person actioning complaint
- Feedback provided to the complainant
- Complainant satisfaction
- Policies/procedures amended

Step 2 – Receiving and Lodging Complaints

All concerns and complaints received by staff, regardless of how they are communicated, must be logged with the Complaints Manager.

Community members wishing to lodge a complaint directly with the college can do so by emailing the Complaints Manager feedback@swan.wa.edu.au .

Where a complaint is received, rather than a concern which can be resolved immediately, the Complaints Manager must send a written acknowledgement to the complainant within three working days.

Step 3 – Screening Complaints

Once a complaint is received the Complaints Manager will:

- enter details into the Complaints Register
- either accept or reject the complaint and, if accepted;
- allocate the complainant an incident priority considering such criteria as severity, complexity, impact and the need and possibility of immediate action;
- establish a targeted resolution date; and
- assign ownership of the complaint, if appropriate, to a member of the College Executive team who will be responsible for investigating the complaint

Step 4 – Establishing the Facts and Communicating to the Complainant

Once a complaint has been accepted an internal investigation will be undertaken. If the complaint involves a specific member of staff the investigation will be conducted as follows:

- The member of the executive responsible for the investigation will contact the staff member and arrange to meet to discuss the matter and gain access to relevant documentation.
- At the meeting the staff member will be provided with details of the complaint and be asked to provide their version of events. The meeting will be documented.
- The facts of the complaint with the staff member's response will be matched and, any discrepancies discussed with both parties.
- A report summarising key findings of the investigation will be prepared by the Executive undertaking the investigation and submitted to the Complaints Manager.
- If the complaint relates to a matter not specific to a staff member, the Complaints Manager will conduct an investigation based on the incident.
- The Complaints Manager will contact the complainant prior to the target resolution date and keep in regular contact, advising the status of the investigation and each time confirming when the next communication should be expected.

Step 5 – Making a Determination

After considering all of the facts available, the Complaints Manager (in conjunction with the principal if required, will make a determination which addresses all aspects of the complaint. The following options are available:

- accept the complaint and take rectification action;
- accept the complaint, or part there of; or
- reject the complaint and provide reasons for such rejection

Step 6 – Formulation or Proposed Resolution

The resolution for any complaint will depend upon the nature of the complaint. Some complaints are administrative in nature and the remedy may be to rectify an administrative error or issue a verbal or written apology. Other resolutions maybe more complex and require a multifaceted approach.

In formulation a proposed resolution the following matters are to be considered:

- the extent to which others may have suffered in the same way as the complainant but did not make a formal complaint;
- level of authority required internally to implement the proposed resolution;.
- implementation of a strategy for following up where appropriate; and
- how information will be disseminated to relevant staff members.

Step 7 – Presenting a Final Response

Regardless of the outcome of the investigation or subsequent determination, the complainant must be advised of the following in writing:

- the substance of the original complaint;
- an outline of the investigation undertaken;
- the finding of the investigation; and
- any proposed resolution or offer of redress

All final responses and/or offers of redress must be approved by the Principal and/or the CEO and be made in writing as soon as a decision has been made.

Step 8 - Complaints Register

A Complaints Register will be maintained by the Complaints Manager.

The Complaints Register is reviewed at Executive Meetings and during regular meetings between the Complaints Manager and the Principal. Key information will be provided to the Chief Executive Officer and SCEA Board on a regular basis.

Step 9 – Rectification and Risk Management

Regardless of whether a complaint has been resolved internally or not, it is important for the College to reflect on the circumstances that led to the complaint and reduce the risk of such a complaint happening again and to improve our internal systems and procedures.

In order to ascertain whether or not rectification work is required, the Complaints Manager will meet with the person responsible for the relevant area of the College, review the underlying fact leading to the complaint being made, and if necessary make a recommendation regarding rectification work required.

The effective management of complaints and the rectification of underlying process from which a complaint has arisen are key elements of the College's School Improvement Plan

Step 10 – Closure of Internal Complaint Handling

The complaint will be deemed to be closed once:

- The complaint has been resolved with the complainant (either internally or externally) or all reasonable internal and external options have been exhausted.
- All relevant information has been captured in the relevant complaint instance;
- Consideration has been given to the underlying risk associated with the complaint; and
- Any recommendation with respect to rectification work has been recorded.

Step 11 – Referral to Chief Executive Officer

If a complaint cannot be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at a school level the complainant can write to or email the SCEA Chief Executive Officer outlining their complaint.

The CEO will obtain all of the information gathered by the school and speak to all parties to the complaint if required.

The CEO will review the College's final response and will determine if further action is required to be taken. The CEO will then respond to the complainant in writing.

Chief Executive Officer
1 Padbury Terrace
Midland WA 6056
Telephone: 9274 6411
Email: info@scea.wa.edu.au

Step 12 – SCEA Board

If a complaint cannot be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at a CEO level the complainant can write to or email the SCEA Board Chair outlining their complaint.

SCEA Board Chair
PO Box 254
Midland WA 6936

Email: info@scea.wa.edu.au

The Board Chair may elect to engage the SCEA Grievance committee to investigate if required. The Board Chair will the make the final ruling.

Step 13 – Record Keeping

The College is required to keep records of complaints, reports and allegations received, actions taken, decisions made and outcomes. All complaints will be recorded in the Complaints Register with all documentation kept on a complaints file located in the College Administration.

Information must be retained permanently for students of indigenous origin or in out-of-home care and for other students for a period of 75 years from the date of birth of the student. For matters related to child protection (suspected harm or risk of harm to a student), all information will be stored permanently.

Implementation

Published on SEQTA for parent and staff access

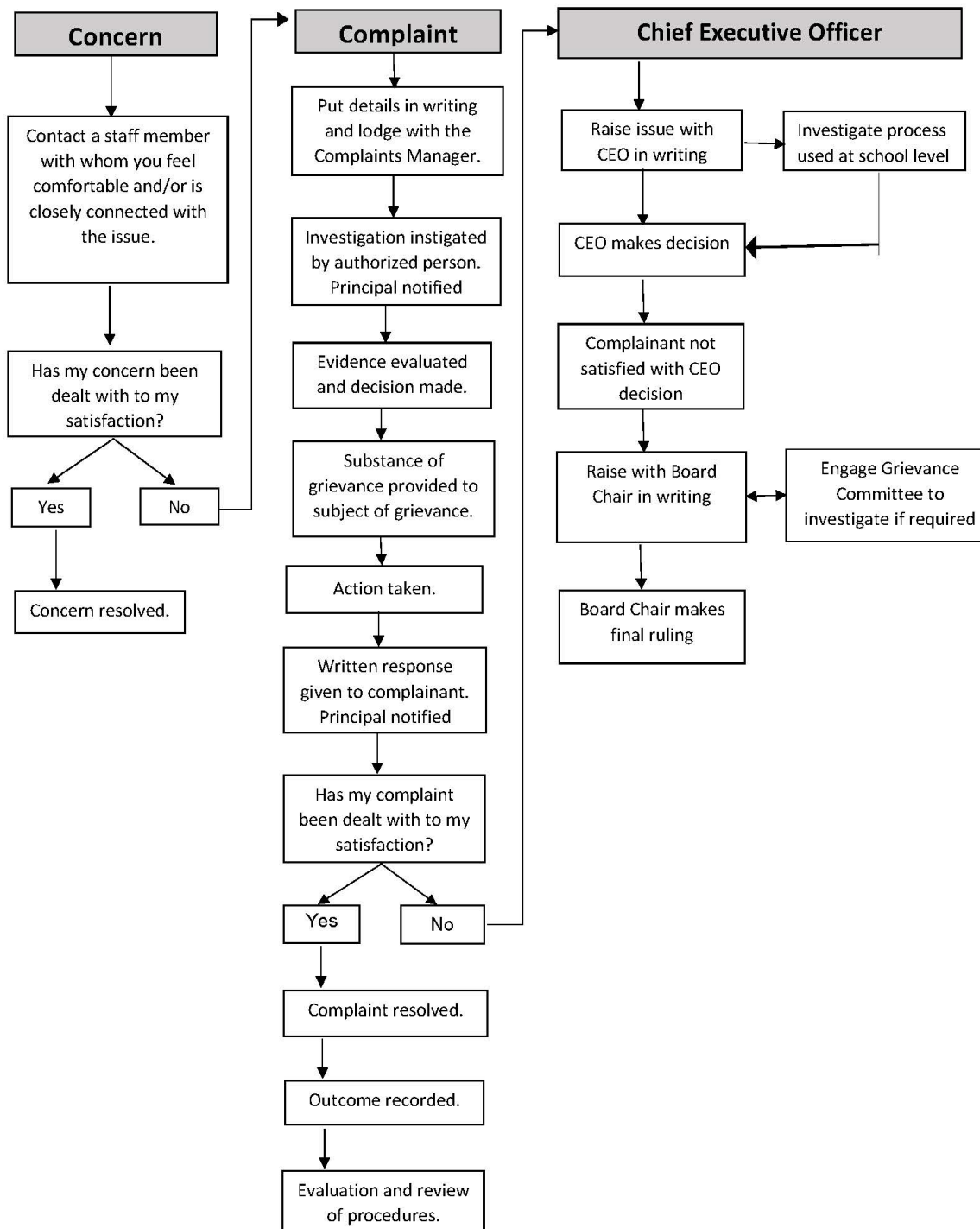
Published in College newsletter

Contact Person

Deputy Principal

Appendix 1 – Internal Handling of Concerns and Complaints

FLOWCHART OF INTERNAL HANDLING OF CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS



NOTE: If at any stage of the process the complaint is withdrawn by the complainant, written confirmation of this will be provided by the College to the complainant.