

Coffs Harbour Christian Community School's Complaints Handling Policy

Coffs Harbour Christian Community School (CHCCS) welcomes feedback from all members of the school community and takes all complaints or concerns that may be raised seriously. This Complaints Handling Policy is designed to assist you to understand how to make a complaint.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to CHCCS, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Complaints and allegations of staff misconduct or reportable conduct are managed separately to other complaints. Refer to the section at the end of this policy - Complaints and Allegations of Staff Misconduct or Reportable Conduct for more information.

Coffs Harbour Christian Community School's Commitment

CHCCS is committed to handling complaints effectively and efficiently. Our Complaints Handling Program includes the establishment of an online complaints management system which allows us to effectively capture, manage and report on complaints. Regular analysis of complaints received and the implementation of rectification action, where deficiencies are identified, are key to the School's commitment. Our internal complaints handling process is available at no cost.

Informal Complaints Resolution

The vast majority of issues causing concern in schools can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. We therefore ask that, where appropriate, you first raise your concern directly with the relevant staff member. Even if the issue is resolved informally, all staff are required to log issues through our complaints management system so we are able to identify any systemic issues arising, and take appropriate rectification action.

How do I make a Formal Complaint?

If you have been unable to resolve a matter informally, or simply wish to make a formal complaint you can do so by any of the following means:

1. Sending an email to admin@chccs.com.au
2. Writing a letter to the School addressed to "The Principal".
3. Telephoning the School and asking to speak to your child's Year Advisor.

All formal complaints will be logged into our online complaints management system and managed in accordance with the following procedure.

Our Internal Complaints Handling Process

Step 1 - All formal complaints are logged through our online complaints management system where they are screened by a Head of School (Junior, Middle or Senior), or in the case of complaints against the Principal by the Chair of the School Board

Step 2 – All valid complaints will be acknowledged in writing, as soon as practicable, and allocated a status, priority and target resolution date. It is our policy, where possible, to resolve all disputes within 14 days.

Step 3 – The Head of School will conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination.

Step 4 - Following the determination, if appropriate, the Head of School will formulate a resolution and provide a written response to the complainant. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

Step 5 - If the initial response is not acceptable the matter will be reviewed internally by the Principal or the Principal's delegate, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Principal or their delegate seek to resolve all disputes within 14 days from the date that the review process is initiated. The matter will be closed if the response of the Principal, or their delegate, is accepted.

Step 6 - All complaints received will be entered into our Complaints Register and, where appropriate, a corrective action request will be made to address any underlying processes which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.

Step 7 - If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality applies with respect to both information relating to the person making the complaint, and, if relevant to a person against whom a complaint is made. CHCCS is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process.

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.

Complaints and Allegations of Staff Misconduct or Reportable Conduct

Complaints and allegations of staff misconduct and/or reportable conduct are managed by the *School/College* in a different manner to other complaints. This is because the *School/College* has legal obligations to report certain staff conduct to external authorities. Staff misconduct is a broad term that could include breaches of professional boundaries, codes of conduct or standards of behaviour, whereas reportable conduct is a term defined in law as including:

- any sexual offence or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including child pornography offences, sexual touching or an offence involving child abuse material) including grooming behaviours
- any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child
- any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child (whether or not, in any case, with the consent of the child).

If your complaint relates to alleged staff misconduct or reportable conduct please make your complaint to the Senior Child Protection Officer (Mr Andrew Lynn), or if this person is the subject of your complaint please notify the Principal.

For more information about CHCCS 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** document available on our public website.