

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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1 PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 Freshwater Creek Steiner School welcomes feedback from all members of the school community and accepts that, at times, a member of our community may be dissatisfied with an aspect of the school's services, administration or operations, and wish to make a complaint.
- 1.2 This Complaints Policy and Procedure is designed to assist in understanding how we define a complaint, how to make a complaint, and how the school handles complaints.
- 1.3 Effective handling of complaints includes focusing on the issue at hand rather than on individuals. This leads to a more respectful, safe, supportive and cohesive school community, which is in the best interests of the students.
- 1.4 All parties work actively to address complaints, with the emphasis upon natural justice, resolution and an improvement in our service.

2 DEFINITION

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

3 SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy covers complaints regarding:

- 3.1 School services
 - Learning programs, including excursions and camps
 - Staff performance or behaviour
 - Student behaviour
 - School community activities.
- 3.2 Administration processes, including communication.
- 3.3 Operations, including safety and behaviour of people other than staff and students, on the school site.

This policy does not cover complaints regarding:

- 3.4 Staff disputes with their employer (the School), which should be addressed through the dispute resolution procedure in the FWCSS Enterprise Agreement 2018.
- 3.5 Complaints about the FWCSS Association (as represented by the School Council), which should be addressed through the Grievance procedure in the Rules of the Association.
- 3.6 Complaints about the Head of School, which should be addressed to the School Council.

4 POLICY

- 4.1 Freshwater Creek Steiner School is committed to handling complaints respectfully, effectively and efficiently.
- 4.2 Any person can make a complaint under this policy.
- 4.3 Our Complaints Handling Procedure allows us to capture, manage, respond to 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.
- 4.4 The school will communicate clear guidelines for whom to talk to in the case of questions, concerns, or dissatisfaction with any matter pertaining to the school's services, administration or operations.
- 4.5 If the school receives a complaint against a student, the student's Parents/Carers will be informed according to the guidelines in the Behaviour Management policy and/or at the discretion of the Head of School.
- 4.6 This policy includes a Complaints form, which should be used for submitting a written complaint.
- 4.7 This policy and procedure, and the complaints form, are available on request from administration, or to download from www.fwcss.vic.edu.au
- 4.8 Complaints may be taken to College for reflection and consideration.
- 4.9 Complaints will be treated as confidential unless otherwise specified.

5 PROCEDURE

How Do I Make a Complaint?

- 5.1 Check above to ensure this policy and procedure applies for your complaint.
- 5.2 A complaint can be made verbally, or by completing the Complaints form, available at the end of this policy, and downloadable from the school website.
- 5.3 If the complaint relates to another adult in the school, contact them and endeavour to address the concern directly.
- 5.4 If the complaint relates to a student, contact their Class teacher and endeavour to address the concern directly.
- 5.5 If the complaint relates to a learning program, contact the relevant Class teacher and endeavour to address the concern directly.
- 5.6 If the complaint relates to an administrative or operational issue, contact the Business Manager.
- 5.7 If you are not satisfied with the response from the complainee, the Class teacher, or the Business Manager, or cannot address the complaint with them directly, contact the Head of School.

6 IMPLEMENTATION

How does the school handle complaints?

- 6.1 Written complaints will be responded to within 3 school term days of receipt.
- 6.2 The Class teacher, Business Manager or Head of School may bring relevant school policies and procedures to the attention of the complainant.
- 6.3 Staff will take steps to establish the validity of the complaint.
- 6.4 If, after examining the complaint, the Head of School, Business Manager and/or other relevant staff identify a deficiency, rectification action will be implemented within a documented timeline.
- 6.5 Once the need for action has been determined, the complainant will be informed of the steps taken to establish the validity of the complaint, rectification action if any, and the timeline.
- 6.5 Complaints may be taken to College for consideration and reflection.
- 6.6 Written complaints are kept on file by the Head of School, for a minimum of one year.
- 6.7 Analysis of written complaints, rectification actions and their effectiveness are reported to School Council at least once per year.
- 6.8 It may not always be possible to fully resolve all complaints to the complainant's satisfaction. This could happen if the complainant has unrealistic expectations about the outcome of their complaint, or if the school's policies or regulations are contrary to the complainant's views.
- 6.9 If, at the completion of all the school's procedures, the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction; or if the complainant is dissatisfied with the manner in which the complaint was handled by the school, the complainant may take the matter to the School Council.

- 6.10 The Department for Education has no power to directly intervene in any complaints relating to the operations of the Freshwater Creek Steiner School. If the complaint alleges a contravention in an area relating to the school's registration the complaint can be made to the Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority (VRQA).
- 6.11 If the complaint relates to a teacher's right to teach in Victoria then a complaint can be made to the Victorian Institute of Teachers (VIT).

7 AUTHORITY AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Behaviour Management Policy
- FWCSS Enterprise Agreement 2018
- Freshwater Creek Steiner School Rules of Association
- Complaint form

8 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	School Council
Administrator	Head of School
Original Approval Date	June 2019
Approval and Amendment History	Details
Next Review Date	June 2020
Approval and Amendment History	
Notes	None