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Complaints Handling Policy
April 2024

Complaints Handling Policy

Version: 4

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1 Introduction

Enkindle School (Enkindle) is committed to ensuring that student, family, and employee complaints are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective, and fair way.

Enkindle views complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process.

Enkindle acknowledges the right of students, families, and employees to complain when dissatisfied with an action, inaction, or decision of Enkindle and encourages constructive criticism and complaints.

Enkindle recognises that time spent on handling complaints can be an investment in better service to students, families, and employees.

2 Purpose and scope of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that student, family and employee complaints and disputes are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective, and fair way.

Students, families, and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements.

3 Definitions

Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the school, related to the school's services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.
Informal Complaint	A complaint about a matter that is likely to be simple, straight forward, easily manageable, or minor, where a simple or quick resolution is appropriate such as discussion of the matter with a relevant staff member.

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Formal Complaint	A complaint about a matter that is serious, complex or may pose a threat to the health and safety of any person. Examples include serious allegations or breaches of policy, complaints against a senior staff member, including the principal or an informal complaint that could not be resolved informally. Assessment of the complaint is required by the TISAI Committee.
Complainant	The person, organisation or their representative making a complaint.
Respondent	The person who is referred to in a complaint by a complainant as the person responsible for their concerns or who can best respond to their concern.

4 Policy Details

Complaints that may be Resolved under this Policy

Enkindle encourage students, parents and employees to lodge promptly any concerns regarding sexual harassment, child protection, discrimination, workplace bullying and privacy breaches as well as more general complaints that include areas such as:

- Enkindle, its employees or students having done something wrong,
- Enkindle, its employees or students having failed to do something they should have done,
- Enkindle, its employees or students having acted unfairly or impolitely,
- issues of student or employee behaviour that are contrary to their relevant Code of Conduct,
- issues related to learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning,
- issues related to communication with students or parents or between employees,
- issues related to school fees and payments,
- general administrative issues.
- Student complaints may be brought by students or by parents on behalf of their children, as appropriate in the circumstances.

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Issues outside this Policy

The following matters are outside the scope of this policy and should be managed as follows:

- Child protection concerns or risks of harm to children should be dealt with in accordance with the law and the school's Welfare Policy.
- Student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the Positive Behaviour Management Policy.
- Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the Positive Behaviour Management Policy.
- Employee complaints related to their employment should be directed to their direct line manager.
- Student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to the Principal who will involve the Police as appropriate.
- Formal legal proceedings.

Complaints Handling Principles

Enkindle is committed to managing complaints according to the following principles:

- complaints will be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible
- complaints will be taken seriously,
- anonymous complaints will be treated on their merits
- complaints will be dealt with fairly and objectively and in a timely manner,
- Enkindle will determine the appropriate person to deal with the complaint in the first instance.
- mediation, negotiation, and informal resolution are optional alternatives,
- procedural fairness will be ensured wherever practicable, including the right of interested parties to the complaint to be heard,
- confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible,
- all parties to the complaints will be appropriately supported,
- Enkindle will give reasonable progress updates,
- appropriate remedies will be offered and implemented,
- provide a review pathway for parties to the complaint if warranted,

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- complainants, respondents, and people associated with them will not be victimised because of lodging the complaints and they will not suffer any other reprisals,
- Enkindle will keep records of complaints,
- the school's insurer will be informed if a complaint could be connected to an insured risk.

Responsibilities of Enkindle Village School

The school has the following role and responsibilities:

- develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the school's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures,
- appropriately communicate the school's Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures to students, parents and employees,
- ensure that the Complaints Handling Procedures are readily accessible by employees, students and parents,
- ensure that appropriate support is provided to all parties to a complaint,
- take appropriate action to prevent victimisation or action in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them,
- appropriately train relevant employees,
- keep records,
- conduct a review/audit of the Complaints Register at monthly board meetings
- report to the school's insurer when that is relevant,
- refer to the TISAI Committee immediately for any claim of legal redress.

Responsibilities of all Parties to a Dispute

The complainant and respondent both have the following role and responsibilities:

- apply and comply with the school's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures,
- lodge the complaint as soon as possible after the issue arises,
- expect that the complaint will be dealt with fairly and objectively; in a timely manner; with procedural fairness wherever practicable; that confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible,
- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner,
- not provide deliberately false or misleading information,

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- not make frivolous or vexatious complaints,
- act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner,
- act in a non-threatening manner,
- to be appropriately supported,
- acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties,
- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced,
- maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties,
- not victimise or act in reprisal against any party to the dispute or any person associated with them.

Responsibilities of Employees Receiving Complaints

Employees receiving complaints have the following role and responsibilities:

- act in accordance with the school's Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures,
- inform the party lodging the complaint of how complaints can be lodged, when they should be lodged and what information is required,
- provide the complainant with information about any support or assistance available to assist them in lodging their complaint,
- provide the complainant with a copy of the school's Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures,
- maintain confidentiality,
- keep appropriate records,
- to forward complaints to the Deputy Principal or the Principal, as appropriate,
- not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

Implementation

Enkindle is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints at the school as per the Enkindle Village School Complaints Handling Procedure, including by the development and implementation of this policy and via the clear support and promotion of the policy. Enkindle is also committed to regular training of employees on the implementation of this policy.

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Complaint Register

Enkindle will maintain a complaint register with details such as the date, source and description of complaints, the employee managing the complaint, the actions taken, outcome and the date the complaint was closed. The complaint register will be stored securely. All complaints shall be entered onto the complaint register as soon as practicable after the complaint is received. The complaint register will not contain complaints about the Principal. Records of complaints about the principal will be maintained by the Board with access restricted to the Board. To safeguard confidentiality and maintain the integrity of the complaint process, access to the entire complaint register will be limited to the Principal. The Principal may authorise the sharing of specific, relevant entries from the complaint register with other designated staff members (such as the senior leadership team), provided measures are taken to protect the confidentiality of all parties involved, particularly ensuring that respondents to a complaint do not gain inappropriate access to information about the allegations against them.

5 Legislation

- [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Regulations 2017](#)
- [Australian Education Regulations 2013](#)
- [Fair Work Act 2009](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Age Discrimination Act 2004 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Racial Discrimination Act 1975 \(Cth\)](#)

6 Supporting Documents

- Enkindle Village School Complaints Handling Procedure

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- Enkindle Village School Work Health and Safety Policy
- Enkindle Village School Anti-Discrimination Policy
- Enkindle Village School Sexual Harassment Policy
- Enkindle Village School Disability Policy
- Enkindle Village School Workplace Bullying Policy
- Enkindle Village School Privacy Policy

7 Approval Details

Policy Delegate	Principal
Approval Authority	TISAI Committee
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8 Review History

Version	Date	Reviewed by	Modifications
3	April 2024	Head of Curriculum & TISAI Committee	New template /format General spelling/grammatical errors Terminology “parents” to “families” Implementation Complaint Register

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