

Grievance Policy for the Community and Public

1. Purpose and Scope

This procedure applies to St Columba Anglican School and Columba Cottage (Early Learning Centre and OSHC) in handling grievances made in respect of services provided by the school or against staff members, which includes employees, contractors, and volunteers.

St Columba Anglican School will seek to resolve complaints informally where possible but acknowledges that in some cases a person may wish to make a formal complaint.

This procedure does not extend to personal grievances between parents, guardians, or other members of the school community.

2. Whistleblowing Complaints

This procedure does not extend to complaints which are whistleblowing disclosures. The procedure for processing whistleblowing complaints is dealt with in the school's whistleblowing policy.

In summary, a whistleblowing disclosure is a disclosure which:

- is made by a Council member, staff member, a person who supplies goods or services to the school, including a volunteer, an employer of a supplier or a relative of any of these people;
- involves alleged misconduct, an improper state of affairs or circumstances, or illegal activity, and
- is made to a senior staff member, or officer of the school, the school's auditor, or a person who the school has authorised to collect such disclosures.

3. Related Policies

Complaints about reportable conduct will be addressed in accordance with the school's **Child Protection Policy**.

4. Confidentiality

All parties involved in complaints handling are required to maintain appropriate confidentiality, including in relation to handling and storing records.

5. Grievance Resolution Procedure

If you have a grievance you are entitled to use the following processes to have it resolved. The best way of resolving a grievance will depend on the circumstances. However, you are encouraged to act promptly once a grievance situation arises. This avoids unnecessary escalation of the problem. There are a number of options open to you and you should choose the option with which you are most comfortable.

Option 1: Speak to the member of staff/person

You may speak directly with the relevant person/s if you feel comfortable doing so. Sometimes speaking to the person involved, or writing to them can resolve the situation. You should indicate the substance of your grievance and advise them that if the matter cannot be resolved you may lodge a formal grievance with his/her line manager.

Option 2: Lodge a Grievance with the Line Manager

You may lodge a grievance with the line manager of the person with whom you have a grievance if you are unable to resolve it through reasonable contact. At this stage, the issues should be forwarded in writing to allow the person to have the context of your grievance. You should clearly set out the substance of your grievance, including times and dates of relevant incidents. If you do not feel comfortable with a written complaint, you can raise this with your manager in a face-to-face meeting.

Option 3: Columba Cottage Executive Director, Head of School or Deputy Principal

If you are not comfortable raising the matter with the individual concerned or their line manager, or you have done so and are not satisfied with the response, you may lodge your grievance with the Columba Cottage Executive Director, Head of School or Deputy Principal. Once again it would be helpful if this complaint is put in writing. You should clearly set out the substance of your grievance, including times and dates of relevant incidents. If you do not feel comfortable with a written complaint, you may request a face-to-face meeting with the Columba Cottage Executive Director, Head of School or Deputy Principal.

Option 4: Principal

If you have followed the above steps and are not satisfied with the response, you may lodge your grievance directly with the Principal. This complaint must be put in writing and emailed to principal@scas.nsw.edu.au. You should clearly set out the substance of your grievance, including times and dates of relevant incidents. If you do not feel comfortable with a written complaint, you may request a face-to-face meeting with the Principal.

Option 5: Chair of School Council

If you have followed the above steps and are not satisfied with the response, you may lodge your grievance with the Chair of the School Council. This complaint must be put in writing and emailed to councilchair@scas.nsw.edu.au. You should clearly set out the substance of your grievance, including times and dates of relevant incidents.

Note: Please be aware that Governance regulations mean that the only access to the School Council is via the Chair. If your grievance relates to an operational matter the Chair will discuss the matter with the Principal and provide a response.

6. Process

Once you have lodged your grievance, details will be recorded and an investigation will be conducted. This will determine the substance of the grievance and whether action is necessary.

The person whom you have raised the grievance against will be provided with details of the complaint and will have the opportunity to respond to any allegations which have been raised against them.

7. Appeals

Members of the School community may lodge an appeal in relation to a decision made by a member of staff.

- Proper grounds for an appeal are, not that the decision was unfavourable but, that the decision was somehow flawed.
- Well-founded appeals should be directed in writing to the immediate supervisor of the staff member responsible for the decision, within 10 working days of becoming aware of the decision.
- This staff member will manage the appeal in most cases; however, they may need to pass it on to another staff member for a variety of reasons, including to ensure natural justice is upheld. Members of the School community may further appeal the formal outcome of an appeal.
- Proper grounds for a further appeal are, not that an initial appeal was not upheld but, that the person who managed the initial appeal has not observed the principles of natural justice. It should be noted that the Chair of the School Council is the highest School authority to which an appeal may be made.
- It should also be noted that unless the School has breached the law or a relevant regulation, there is no external source of accountability to which parties may appeal.

8. Feedback

For information on leaving Feedback, see [here](#).

9. Cross Reference/Related School Documents

1. Whistleblower Policy
2. Child Protection Policy

10. Review and Circulation

Responsible Area	School Executive
Version	1
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11. Version Control

Version	Date	Approved by
1	19.06.2024	School Executive
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