



Kincumber Public School Policy Complaints Handling

Key Accountability: Educational Programs

Departmental Policy References:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0051>

Next review date: Term 2 2024

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to communicate to the school community how the school manages complaints. It should be read in conjunction with the DoE policy *Complaints Handling*.

Rationale

At school we make many decisions every day and try hard to do our best for all students. We like to know when things are going well and we also want parents and carers to tell us about their worries, concerns or complaints as soon as possible.

The NSW Department of Education (DoE) seeks to resolve difficulties, grievances and complaints in a prompt, impartial and just manner. The majority of complaints are resolved informally. However, some types of complaints need to be treated in special ways because of particular legislation, policies and procedures and may require the use of separate procedures or be referred to another unit within or outside the department. Refer to the procedures for examples:

https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/policy-library/associated-documents/School-complaint-procedure_AC.pdf

The principles of this policy include that:

1. You have a right to let us know about the problem you are experiencing.
2. You have a responsibility when raising a concern that you communicate in a positive and constructive way. [See this guide](#).
3. Our support and respect for you or your child will not lessen in any way if you use these procedures to report a concern.
4. Concerns, including those about individuals (including students, staff members and other members of the school community), should be raised with the school. P & C meetings and social media are unsuitable forums to raise concerns.
5. Individuals who are the subject of a complaint are entitled to have their rights to privacy and confidentiality respected, and they also have the right to respond to complaints.
6. Complainants are courteous to, show respect for and cooperate with school staff.



Implementation

At Kincumber Public School you can expect we will:

1. Deal with your concern or complaint honestly and politely.
2. Look into the matter raised thoroughly, fairly and as quickly as possible.
3. Keep you up-to-date with what we are doing.
4. Explain our decisions.
5. Apologise if we have made a mistake.
6. Tell you what we are doing to put things right.
7. Focus on solving the problem.

Who can make a complaint?

Anyone can make a complaint including students, parents, carers and community members. We can assist you to make a complaint.

What can a complaint be about?

The complaint can be about any aspect of the service provided, or not provided, at Kincumber Public School including:

- The conduct or decisions of our staff.
- Our work methods, practices, policies or procedures.

How are complaints managed?

A complaint is managed in four steps:

1. Receiving and clarifying a complaint
2. Deciding how to handle a complaint
3. Finding out about the complaint
4. Making a decision about a complaint

1. Receiving and clarifying a complaint

Anyone at the school can receive your complaint in writing, by email, by phone, by portal message or in person. A staff member who receives a complaint will determine and advise you whether the complaint can be resolved informally or whether it should be referred to a supervisor and why.

Often the first point of contact for complaints in person or by phone is our school office staff. They will take a complaint and refer it to the person delegated to deal with the nature of the complaint. This may be the class teacher, assistant principal or principal. They will ask for some brief details from you about the nature of the complaint to assist in the assessment process and to determine if a member of staff is available to assist.

In most cases, concerns about student behaviour, organisation and curriculum are referred to the class teacher or relevant Assistant Principal of that stage. Concerns about specific school activities are referred to the teacher delegated with responsibility. Concerns about a person, school policies or procedures are referred to the principal or an assistant principal. The school will keep records of complaints received.



School staff are unable to provide personal details of other students to complainants when concerns around student behaviour are raised.

The beginning and end of a school day are busy times for teaching staff and it may not be possible to sort things out immediately due to other teaching responsibilities or staff absences. However, you can expect any matter that can be resolved informally to be actioned within five working days of receipt.

2. Deciding how to handle a complaint

If your complaint cannot be resolved in an informal way or is assessed as more serious or subject to special procedures, we **may** ask you to put it in writing including:

1. Your contact details.
2. Specific details of the problem.
3. The outcome you are seeking.

The principal will assess how the complaint should be managed including:

1. The formal procedure that is applicable.
2. Providing advice in writing on which procedure will be used and by whom.

3. Finding out about the complaint

If other procedures do not apply, the principal or delegate collects and analyses information relevant to the matter including facts and other contributing factors.

4. Making a decision about a complaint

If other procedures do not apply, the principal or delegate will provide you with a written response to a formal complaint within twenty working days of receipt by the principal, including reasons for the decision. If you remain dissatisfied you may request a review of the decision.