



POLICY TITLE:	Parent/Student Grievance and Complaint Resolution Policy and Procedure
DATE APPROVED:	22 March 2018 by HSS
TO BE REVIEWED:	March 2021 by SMT
RELATED DOCUMENTS:	KWS Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Policy Student Anti - Bullying Policy (under review) Behaviour Management Policy KWS Student Code of Conduct

PREAMBLE

The Complaint Resolution process may occur when a parent feels aggrieved about a matter associated with his or her child's treatment by staff or other students of the school, or when the parent disagrees with a decision, action or behaviour which occurs at school, that may affect the wellbeing of the child or the working relationship between home and school.

DEFINITION

Informal complaints resolution – does not involve an investigation or result in disciplinary action. The main focus is to ensure that parents are able to be heard and have their concerns noted. Informal action is usually appropriate where:

- The allegations are of a less serious nature
- The parent does not wish to have formal action taken
- The student's interests are best served by keeping the process at an informal level

Formal complaints resolution – focuses on looking at whether a complaint can be substantiated, following a written complaint from a parent. Formal procedures are usually appropriate where one or more of the following occurs:

- Informal attempts at resolution have failed
- The complaint involves serious allegations of misconduct and informal resolution could compromise the rights of the parties
- The allegations are denied and an investigation is required to substantiate the complaint
- The complainant wishes a formal complaints procedure from the outset

POLICY

1. Although a parent has the right to make either an informal or formal complaint they are encouraged to commence with the informal process, as this can usually achieve a more timely and satisfactory resolution for both parties.
2. The parent has a right to formalise their complaint at any time.
3. The investigation procedure will adhere to natural justice principles and ensure fairness for all concerned.
4. An investigation will occur as soon as possible after the complaint is received.
5. An impartial person, who can carry out the investigation without hindrance, will conduct the investigation.
6. The allegations will be conveyed to the alleged perpetrator in full.
7. The alleged perpetrator will be given the opportunity to respond and defend themselves against the allegations.



8. If there is a dispute over facts, statements from witnesses and other relevant evidence will be gathered.
9. A finding will be made as to whether the complaint has substance.
10. A report documenting the investigation process, the evidence, the finding and recommended outcome(s) will be submitted to the Principal or appropriate decision-maker.
11. The Principal or decision maker will implement the recommended outcome(s) or decide on an alternative course of action.
12. The parties will be permitted to have a support person accompany them to any interviews or meetings.
13. A formal complaint will not be dismissed on the grounds that no one saw or heard the incident(s) occur.
14. Those responsible for investigating complaints will consider all available evidence

Both *formal and informal complaints resolution* processes aim to:

- a. Ensure the incident is resolved as quickly as possible in an appropriate manner
- b. Allow the student to continue his or her studies in as uninterrupted a fashion as possible.

PROCEDURE

Parents may choose to seek advice from the relevant member of Senior Management or the Principal prior to deciding on their course of action.

Those who wish to pursue a complaint resolution process have the following options:

Informal Complaints Resolution

The parent asks the Principal or a senior staff member to speak to the perpetrator on their behalf. This person privately conveys the parent's concerns and seeks to resolve the matter.

Formal Complaints Resolution

a. Lodging the complaint

- The complaint should be in writing to the Principal or relevant member of the Senior Management Team
- It should contain specific allegations, including dates, times and names of any witnesses.

b. Initial response

- The Principal or SMT member is to meet with relevant parties as soon as possible and explain the formal process, along with their rights and responsibilities. This includes:
 - the expected timeline with regard to resolution of the complaint
 - how the complaint will be investigated
 - who will receive copies of any statements or records of interview
 - who may be present at interviews
 - whether parties can refuse to participate
 - what interim measure will be put in place to ensure the wellbeing of the complainant and his or her child during the investigation.



c. Appointment of an investigator

- In consultation with the parent, the Principal is to appoint an independent investigator to consider the complaint.
- This person is to be made aware of their role and the rights of each person involved in the investigation.
- Either party may elect to challenge the independence and impartiality of the investigator providing they present reasonable grounds.

d. The Investigation

- The investigator will formally interview the complainant and detail the allegations.
- Witness statements may be gathered at this point.
- The investigator will formally contact the alleged perpetrator providing full details of the complaint, interview times, the process and their rights.
- The investigator will then interview the alleged perpetrator and provide them with the opportunity to respond and defend themselves against the allegations. If they admit to their behaviour the matter can be referred to the Principal for appropriate action, which may include disciplinary procedures.
- If the alleged person disputes the allegations, further investigation should be carried out. Statements from witnesses and other relevant evidence will be gathered.

e. Findings

- The investigator will provide the Principal with a written report on the findings of the investigation. The report will document the process, the evidence, the finding (if the complaint has substance) and recommended outcomes.
- The Principal, or decision maker, will then meet with both parties individually to explain to them the findings of the investigations as well as formally notifying them in writing.
- The Principal, or decision maker, will outline the steps involved to assist the individuals to return to a working relationship.
- The recommended outcomes could include any combination of the following:
 - Counselling
 - Disciplinary action
 - Formal apology
 - Conciliation/mediation
 - Official warnings that are noted on the perpetrator's student file
- If there is insufficient proof to substantiate the complaint the Principal will remind those involved of the expected standards of conduct and monitor the situation carefully.

f. Appeal

If either party wishes to appeal the decision they may do so if they feel this is warranted, in writing to the Principal.

g. Register of Complaints

A register of complaints received and actions taken is kept by the Head of Senior School.