

Issues Resolution Policy and Guidelines

Policy

This Policy applies to Kamaroi Rudolf Steiner School in handling complaints made in respect of services provided by the school or against staff members, which includes employees, contractors and volunteers.

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

A complaint or grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the school about an educational and/or operational matter relating to services provided by the school or the behaviour or decisions of a staff member, contractor or volunteer, including misconduct.

If a parent/carer or student has a concern about the conduct of a staff member, they should raise their concern with the school in accordance with the **Issues Resolution Procedure and Guidelines**.

If a complaint that concerns the behaviour of a staff member may constitute reportable conduct, the matter will be addressed in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy.

Please refer to the school's Child Protection Policy for information about reportable conduct. Complainants are not required to assess whether their concern meets the threshold of reportable conduct before making a complaint. Any concern about a child's wellbeing may be reported under this policy.

Complaints may be made by a student or parent/carer.

Raising a complaint

The complainant

Informal complaints may be raised by a complainant directly with the person involved. However, if the complainant does not feel comfortable doing so or the matter is one where it may not be appropriate to do so a complaint can be made to the Principal. Any complaint about the conduct of a staff member should be raised directly with the Principal in the first instance.

Should the matter not be resolved through informal processes, the complainant may raise the matter formally with the school. A formal complaint can be made in writing to the *Principal*, via email kamaroi@kamaroi.nsw.edu.au

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint concerning the Principal the complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of the Board via email roegentle@gmail.com. In this situation, the references in this policy relating to the role of the Principal should be read as references to the Chair of Board.

The School

The Principal will generally acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing as soon as practicable.

Handling complaints

Assessing a complaint

The *Principal* generally will assess the complaint and determine:

- whether the complaint is one to be addressed under this policy or is a staff grievance or reportable conduct matter which are dealt with by the relevant policies, see **Managing a formal complaint**; and
- the priority of the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised; and

- whether the school may be required to report the matter to the Ombudsman, Police, Family and Community Services or other relevant authorities should the complaint relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

Managing a formal complaint

The **Principal** generally will manage a formal complaint by:

- a) advising the complainant of the likely steps that will be undertaken by the School in relation to the complaint;
- b) if appropriate, advising the relevant parties of the complaint at the relevant time and providing them with an opportunity to respond;
- c) collecting any additional information the School considers necessary to assess the complaint;
- d) making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved (“resolution decision”); and
- e) advising the complainant in writing, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution decision of the **Principal** and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

There may be circumstances where some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the school will determine, on a case by case basis the most appropriate method of handling the complaint.

A complainant and the relevant parties that the complaint is about may choose to have an appropriate support person present at any meeting with representatives of the School about the complaint. However, the School maintains the right to determine whether the person’s preferred support person is appropriate and may not approve the attendance of a support.

Whistleblowing complaints

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

In summary a whistleblowing disclosure is a disclosure which:

- is made by a board 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.

Related policies

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

Complaints regarding a grievance between staff members about work matters, including work relationships and decision made by other staff members which impact on their work, are addressed in accordance with the school’s Staff Grievance Policy.

Complaints regarding unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying between staff are generally addressed in accordance with the school’s Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Statement.

Complaints regarding data breaches are generally addressed in accordance to the schools Privacy policy.

Confidentiality

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

If you have any queries about this procedure, you should contact the Principal or Business Manager for advice.

Issues Resolution Procedure and Guidelines

Kamaroi School has a commitment to resolving issues of concern brought to our attention. Matters raised will be evaluated and worked with as promptly as possible.

The education of children is enhanced when the school can function in a free flowing exchange between parents and staff: thus parents are encouraged to approach the school with concerns at the earliest possible time.

When parents bring concerns to the school confidentiality will be maintained when appropriate. The 'steps' outlined below will involve only as many people as is thought necessary to deal thoroughly with any matter.

Parent/Guardian Initiated Communication with Teachers

Parents/guardians should have regard to the fact that our teachers are professionals and have multiple responsibilities outside of their direct teaching commitments, including their family. Therefore meetings at short notice during a school day cannot be scheduled. Teachers cannot engage in "Doorway" conversations at any time including while the teacher is teaching or just before school - as it is a disruption to children and teaching/preparation.

Ways to communicate with teachers:

When seeking to arrange a meeting with a classroom or specialist parents/guardians should make a formal appointment for a face to face meeting.

The class teacher is the first "port-of-call" for all concerns regarding student educational, social and behavioural matters.

Parents should arrange a meeting *sooner* rather than later, to facilitate early resolution to the satisfaction of all.

Appointments with teachers can be made at a mutually convenient time with the class teacher via email or by e.g. telephoning the school office on 02 94501651, by email kamaroi@kamaroi.nsw.edu.au

Where possible we will endeavour to arrange relevant meetings at a mutually convenient time after receiving a request.

Please note

- Enquiries relating to specific performance or educational issues should be addressed to a student's teacher.
- General curriculum enquiries should also be addressed to the class teacher.
- Pastoral care enquiries should be addressed to a student's class teacher who will then contact the Student Support Coordinator.
- If the matter or issue is relevant to a specialist subject area, such as music or eurythmy, parents/guardians can arrange a time to meet with the relevant specialist teacher using the methods above.

Step 2

- If a parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the response of a teacher they should request an appointment with the Principal who will suggest ways that the matter can be handled or determine what process is most appropriate to the circumstances.

For a formal and serious complaint an action timeline will be communicated to you in writing.

You should be aware that when a complaint is made in writing about the performance of an individual staff member, that staff member shall receive documentation of the complaint.

The Principal will notify the Kamaroi Board Chairperson, who will assist in resolution if the matter remains unresolved after a period of time which, in the opinion of the Principal, warrants such intervention.

If the Principal is the subject of complaint the Chairperson of the Board of Directors should be contacted for assistance in resolving the issue.

Responsibilities

Aggrieved Person

To bring their concern at an early stage and with an approach that facilitates constructive problem solving.

Board of Directors

The role of the Directors is one of providing information and advice where requested by the Principal and, if necessary, undertaking a role in the resolution of complaints at the school level.

In the first instance, the Board Chair will be notified if there is a dispute escalation.

The Role of the Principal

The Principal has responsibility for the quality of industrial relations at the school level, which includes the prevention and resolution of concerns, issues and conflicts. The school monitors its procedures in relation to issues and concerns and their effectiveness in their annual parent survey.

Concerns, Issues and Conflicts shall be handled:

- With confidentiality
- With impartially
- in a timely manner
- In accord with to a clear policy/procedure that everyone involved has been informed of.

In dealing with these matters the Principal may:

1. Obtain full information from the concerned party about their concern, with a clear articulation of the issue they want resolved.
2. Decide whether he/she is the appropriate person to continue handling the issue.
3. If yes, put the concern of the complainant to the subject person/people for their side of the story.
4. Decide whether the complaint is valid or not (this may involve talking with other witnesses)
5. Seek information and advice from relevant sources where applicable.
6. If the issue is deemed significant the Principal will record it on the issues register.
7. Decide how the complaint should be resolved (again, this may involve talking with others/mediation).
8. Act on the decision, informing both or all concerned parties what will happen and reasons for the decision.
9. Advise parties involved of other avenues available to them if dissatisfied with the outcomes.
10. Monitor the outcome for an appropriate period of time.
11. Liaise with Board Chair, relevant industrial and legal advisers where applicable.