

Loganlea SHS Complaints Management

Introduction

Complaints may be communicated to the principal and/or other school staff from parents/carers, community members, staff or students in a variety of forms. Loganlea SHS has a goal that all complaints will be handled in a positive and transparent way.

This document outlines the procedures undertaken at this school to manage complaints. Complaints management at this school is underpinned by section 46 of the Education (General-Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld), Education Queensland's Complaints Management - State Schools and Making a Complaint located on the department's website.

Complaints Management Phases

There are four key phases in handling a complaint, with the option of a fifth phase for a review of a complaint outcome:

- Phase 1 - Receiving and clarifying the complaint
- Phase 2 - Deciding how to handle the complaint
- Phase 3 - Finding out about the complaint
- Phase 4 - Making a decision about the complaint
- Phase 5 - Review

It should be noted that if the person making the complaint has communicated the issue/concern on social media, either on a private medium that has been brought to the attention of the school, or on a public medium, the school will request that the social media content is deleted.

Parents/carers and community members should also be aware that this type of social media communication may be referred to Department of Education and Training individual for legal action.

Students should be aware that this type of social media communication can be determined as a breach of the school's Responsible Behaviour Plan and consequences applied as necessary.

Phase 1 - Receiving and clarifying the complaint

Any member of staff can receive a complaint. Complaints may be made with the assistance of an advocate, interpreter or by a third party where necessary and agreed between the complainant and the school.

When a staff member receives a verbal complaint they will:

- listen carefully to the issues being raised
- summarise the issues to clarify and check that they understand clearly what the complaint is about
- find out what the complainant hopes will happen as a result of the complaint

- tell the complainant that they may use the support of a third party in progressing the complaint, if they feel this is needed
- resolve the complaint if possible, or assure the complainant that an appropriate staff member will address their complaint
- advise the complainant what will happen with their complaint

Some complaints may be resolved at the first point of contact with information and/or an explanation, together with an apology and recognition of the effect the situation has had on the person, or an undertaking that action will be taken to prevent the problem recurring.

When the complaint is not resolved immediately, the complaint is referred to the principal or appropriate officer (Head of Department or Business Manager) as soon as is practicable.

A member of staff who receives a verbal complaint that is not resolved informs the complainant of the further options of:

- putting their complaint in writing, or
- assisting the member of staff to record in writing, particulars of their complaint.

In general, if the complainant agrees to put the complaint in writing, the member of staff takes no further action unless or until a written complaint is received.

Documentation

The school will seek to document all complaints, and as such the complaint should:

- use objective language clearly stating the facts
- contain any relevant information in as close to chronological order as practically possible
- use quotation marks, where appropriate and necessary
- if lodged in writing, be neatly and legibly written, in pen, in clear language
- include, where necessary, initialled and dated corrections
- include the signature of the author, and the time and date of the incident/complaint

Phase 2 - Deciding how to handle the complaint

Co-ordination of complaints

The principal has the final responsibility for the management of all complaints that relate to school management issues under his/her jurisdiction. The complaint may be referred to another staff member in the school for action (for example, the deputy principal, business manager or another nominated staff member).

If the complaint relates to departmental policy, or a departmental policy position, the complainant may be advised to take their complaint to the relevant regional office. If the complaint is in relation to official misconduct, student protection or a perceived breach of privacy, the complaint will be directed to the Ethical Standards Unit and the Legal Administrative Law Branch.

Record of complaint

The principal will ensure that records of a complaint and any referral of a complaint are kept for either internal or external review.

Phase 3 - Finding out about the complaint

When the principal believes that more information about a complaint is required he/she or their delegate will gather all the necessary facts about the complaint while keeping in mind the principles of natural justice for all parties concerned.

The principal or delegate investigates complaints by:

- collecting and analysing information relevant to the matter
- working collaboratively with all people involved
- finding the facts relating to the matter
- identifying any contributing factors to the matter
- consulting the relevant DETE Procedure Register on issues that relate to the complaint
- documenting the investigation report or outcome

Phase 4 - Making a decision about the complaint

Based on the facts gathered in Phase 3 about the complaint, the principal or delegate will make a decision on the complaint.

Notifying the complainant of the decision

Within 28 days of the receipt of the complaint, the principal will provide the complainant with either:

- a written or verbal response, including reasons for the decision, or
- a written or verbal notification that their complaint has been referred to an internal or external agency

Phase 5 Review Phase

If the complainant is not satisfied with the school's response, they are encouraged to discuss it further with the school principal and/or advised to contact the principal's supervisor, the Executive Director, Schools at the regional office.

Further review of the decision is available from the Queensland Ombudsman as described in "Making a Complaint".

Brenton Farleigh
Principal Loganlea SHS
5 May, 2020