

Complaints & Grievance Policy & Procedures

Version 2 - 2023

AC

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Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedures

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1. PURPOSE

1.1 The Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedures document is intended to be provided to stakeholders of Assyrian Christian Schools (ACS) to provide a mechanism for identifying complaints and/or grievances about matters at ACS. This document specifies a process to be applied to such grievances when raised with ACS and makes clear that ACS will decide the most appropriate method of dealing with the matter on a case-by-case basis.

1.2 ACS' policies which are made from time to time are made pursuant to the requirements set out in Section 47 of the Education Act and of the NESAs for registration of the College.

2. SCOPE

2.1 This policy applies to all stakeholders associated with ACS.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Complainant means any person who has a concern or grievance.

3.2 Complaint/Grievance means a concern or expression of dissatisfaction about any act, behaviour, omission, situation, or decision that someone thinks is wrong, unfair, unjust or discriminatory. A grievance may be brought against ACS, a specific department or about an individual member of staff.

3.3 _____

7. PROCEDURES IN ADDRESSING THE COMPLAINT OR GRIEVANCE

7.1 A person may at any time contact ACS regarding a complaint or grievance.

7.2 Stakeholders will be notified of this process through the following methods:

7.2.1 Professional Development Days in January of each year for staff

7.2.2 In meetings with staff

7.2.3 Student assemblies

See *for General Principles of Complaints.*

7.3 Staff

7.3.1 A teaching staff member may do this by emailing the Principal or Deputy Principal.

7.3.2 If the complaint is about the Deputy Principal, the Principal would be notified.

7.3.3 A non-teaching staff member may email the Senior Executive member responsible for their area.

7.3.4 If the complaint or grievance is about the Principal or Chief Financial Officer, a staff member may email the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). If it is about the CEO, a staff member would email the Chair of the Board.

7.3.5 If the complaint or grievance is about a student, the staff member should email the appropriate Wellbeing Co-ordinator/Leader.

7.3.6 Complaints or allegations of staff misconduct or reportable conduct must be reported directly to the CEO. This must be reported immediately in writing, clearly detailing the issue. The CEO will immediately notify the Chair of the Board.

7.4 Students

7.4.1 If a student has a complaint or grievance about another student or a staff member, they should firstly discuss this with their Year Co-ordinator / Grade Leader or a trusted member of staff. Based on the discussion, the staff member may advise the student to

7.5 External stakeholders (including parents)

7.5.1 External complaints or grievances should be made via the school website or via email/letter to the school

• St Hurmizd - admin@sthurmizd.nsw.edu.au

• St Narsai - info@stnarsai.nsw.edu.au

7.5.2 The Office Manager who receives the external complaint will forward the information to the Principal or CEO, who will then share this complaint or grievance with the relevant staff member (identified in Point 7.3) who will be responsible for documenting and following up on the complaint or grievance.

7.5.3 Parents who have concerns specifically about staff should email the Deputy Principal (for teaching staff at St Hurmizd) lbraD@shaps.nsw.edu.au

8. APPENDIX 1

Dealing with Complaints – Initial concerns

1. Senior Executive staff should be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint or grievance. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.

2. These key messages deal with complaints, but the underlying principle is that concerns ought to be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. It would be preferred if both parties were able to resolve issues as soon as possible.

Framework of Principles

3. An effective Complaints/Grievance Procedure will:

- Encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- Be easily accessible and publicised
- Be simple to understand and use
- Be impartial
- Be non-adversarial
- Allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- Respect people's desire for confidentiality
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- Provide information to ACS' Senior Executive team so that services can be improved.

Investigating Complaints

4. It is suggested that at each stage, the person investigating the complaint or grievance ensures they:

- Establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- Meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary)
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- Conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- Keep notes of the interview.

Resolving Complaints

5. At each stage in the procedure ACS will want to keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology
- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again
- an undertaking to review ACS policies in light of the complaint.

6. It would be useful if complainants were encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage. An admission that ACS could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence.

7. An effective procedure will identify areas of agreement between the parties. It is also of equal importance to clarify any misunderstandings that might have occurred as this can create a positive atmosphere in which to discuss any outstanding issues.

8. If properly followed, a good complaints procedure will limit the number of complaints that become protracted. However, there will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the investigating staff member is able to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

