

Student and Guardian Complaint Procedure

Guiding Policy

This procedure is informed and guided by the Student and Parent Grievance Policy.

Rationale

It is essential that students and guardians understand the complaints process. A consistent, confidential, fair and non-discriminatory process for handling client complaints is an essential component of high quality service delivery.

Procedure

Students and guardians may register a complaint in a variety of ways: verbally, over the telephone, or in writing. All complaints will be treated professionally and consistently.

1. If a staff member or director receives a verbal complaint and cannot resolve it immediately, it is to be referred to the Head of School (HOS). The HOS may be able to resolve the matter informally. If this cannot be done the complainant is to be given the option of proceeding to a formal (written) complaints process.
2. If the client decides to proceed to a formal complaint, the HOS will ask the client to complete a Complaint Form, and will:
 - Reassure the complainant that all complaints are treated confidentially and that they will suffer no loss of service because they have made a complaint.
 - Explain the complaints procedure.
 - Remind the complainant that they have the right to use an advocate of their choice, and refer them to appropriate client advocacy services.
 - If the complaint is about the HOS the complaint form will be passed onto the receptionist which will be forwarded immediately to the chair of the board.
3. The HOS or Board of directors (whichever is relevant) will acknowledge receipt of the written complaint to the complainant within 5 working days of receipt of the written complaint.
4. If the written complaint is of a serious nature, the HOS will inform the Chair of the Board immediately.
5. In assessing and responding to complaints, the HOS or the board of directors will act fairly and justly, and ensure that the process remains transparent. The following questions should guide the HOS/board of directors in deciding what actions are to be taken to respond to the complaint:

What is the nature of the complaint?

- Is it about dissatisfaction with the college's services?

- Is it about the treatment that the client has received from staff/volunteers?
- Is it about discrimination, harassment or abuse?

Who is involved?

- Is the complaint about a staff or volunteer?
- Is the complaint about another student?
- Is the complaint about the HOS or the Board of Directors?
- Is the complaint about an external contractor?

Is there sufficient information to make a fair judgment about what happened?

- When was the complaint made in relation to when the incident actually occurred?
- Where did the incident take place?
- Where there any witnesses?
- Were the parties involved, in a clear physical and psychological state free from any alcohol, drug or medical influences when the incident occurred?

If the complainant alleges serious discrimination or sexual harassment by a worker or volunteer, the HOS/board of directors will advise the complainant that they have the right to lodge a complaint with the Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland (Tel: 1300 130 670). If the complaint relates to other illegal activity the client may choose to report it to the police.

If the HOS/board of directors needs additional information beyond what is on the complaint form, further clarification is to be sought from the complainant. This information should be recorded in writing. The HOS/board of directors will decide the course of action based on the information provided. It is preferable that grievances are resolved by negotiation and discussion between the parties, in particular by facilitated discussion between the person making the complaint and the person against whom the complaint has been made.

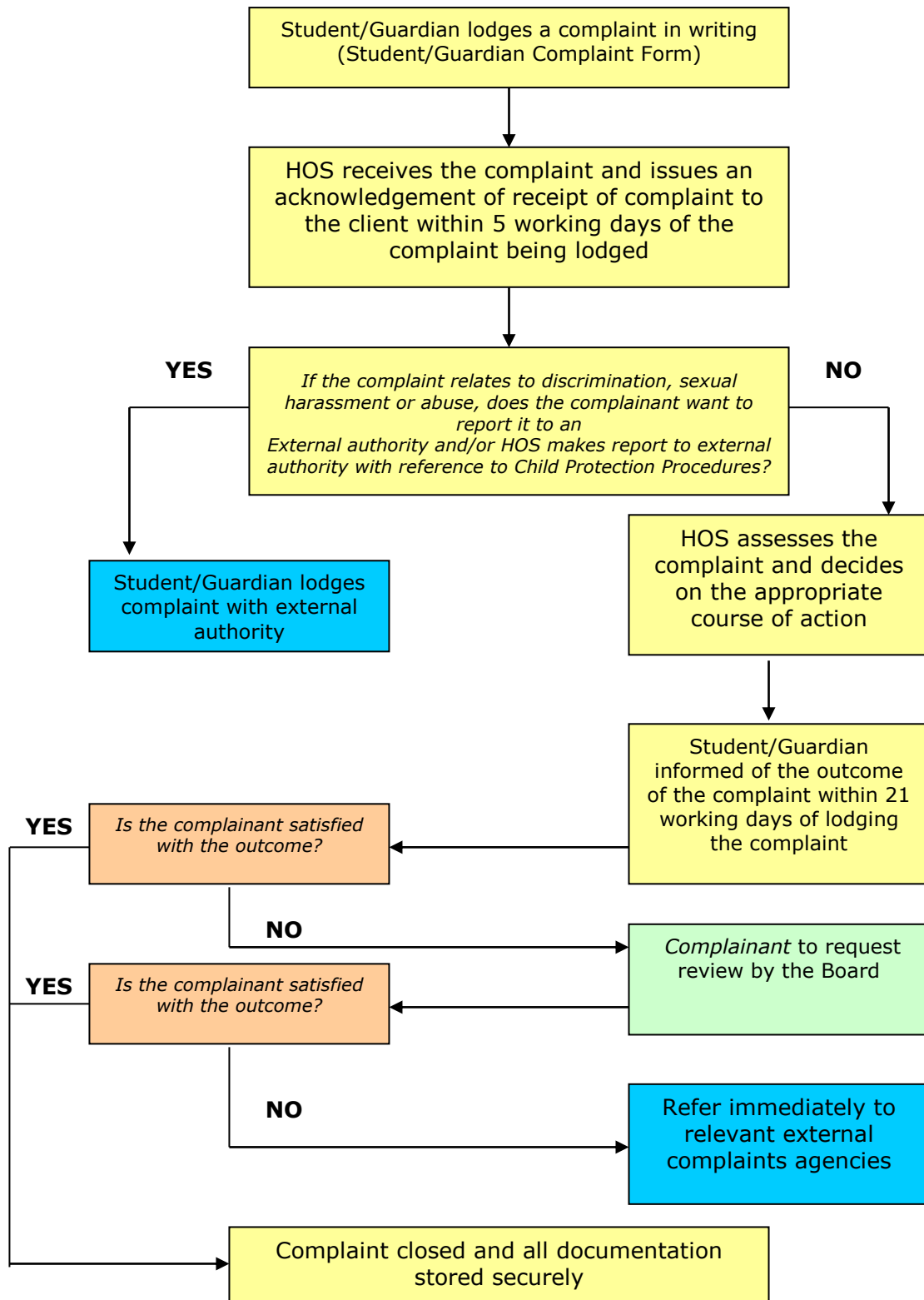
6. The HOS/board of directors will contact the complainant within 21 working days of receiving the written complaint to discuss what action is proposed/has been taken, and will seek feedback on the complainant's satisfaction with the action.
7. If the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, the complainant may request a review of the complaint by the Board of Directors. The Board will take all steps possible to address the complaint. The complainant will be kept fully informed of the process towards resolution.
8. If, after following the above process, the complaint remains unresolved, the client is to be advised that s/he may take the complaint to an external authority, such as the Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland (Tel: 1300 130 670), the Human Rights Commission (Tel: 1300 656 419).
9. If a complaint against a staff member, volunteer or Board member requires disciplinary action, the relevant procedures, such as Child Protection Procedure, Code of Conduct Procedure will be followed.

10. The complaints process, including the actions taken by the organisation to respond to the complaint, must be recorded by the HOS/board of directors and stored securely in the Students/Guardians complaints file. All documents must be kept for the period stated in the Archiving and Disposal Procedure. Where relevant, knowledge gained through the complaints procedure will be used to improve service delivery within the organisation through the Planning and Evaluation Procedure.
11. The complainant may withdraw the complaint in writing to the HOS/board of directors at any time. The HOS/board of directors will seek to ensure that the complainant is satisfied with the decision to withdraw the complaint and, where appropriate, refer them to counselling or support services.

As far as possible, the fact that a student/guardian has lodged a complaint, and the details of that complaint, will be kept confidential amongst the people directly concerned with its resolution. The student/guardians permission is to be obtained before any information is given to other parties whom it may be desirable to involve in order to resolve the complaint satisfactorily.

See the Flow Chart: Formal Complaint Handling Process on the following page.

FLOW CHART: FORMAL COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCESS



Related Procedures and Forms

- Complaint Form
- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety Procedure
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Code of Conduct Procedure

Policy Review and Version Tracking				
Version	Date to be Reviewed	Person Responsible	Comments	Date Adopted
1	Jan 2017	Tanya Genito	Procedure approved	Jan 2015