



**KOROWAL SCHOOL**  
Human-centred education • Kindergarten to HSC

# Korowal School Limited

## Complaints Handling Policy

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# 1. Document Control

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**Document name:** Complaints Handling Policy  
**Document owner:** Korowal School Limited ('Korowal')  
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**Approved:** Principal  
**Date approved:** March 2019  
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**Stakeholder distribution:**

Distribution	Responsibility	Date
Executive Team	Review and Recommend for Approval	Feb 2021
Principal	Approval	March 2021

## Version control:

Version	Date	Updated by	Description
4.0	26/3/19	Executive Team	Final

## 2. Policy Statement

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- 2.1** Korowal School endeavours to provide a harmonious environment where complaints can be heard in a mutually respectful environment, with the common goal being to find the best way to address the issues raised and restore harmony. Complaint handling at Korowal School is fair, efficient and accessible. All matters are dealt with according to the relevant policies and procedures. The School has a respectful and productive workplace culture where consumers, members of the community, students and staff can raise their concerns directly.
- 2.2** A complaint at Korowal refers to any circumstance, where a statement is received by the School that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable.
- 2.3** Parents should not deal directly with students with whom they have a grievance. The grievance is to be brought to the attention of the Class Teacher or Year Co-ordinator.
- 2.4** Wherever possible, staff should attempt to directly resolve an issue or complaint raised by a member of the School community, a consumer, or other person by providing feedback or relevant information. Staff should also attempt to resolve issues and concerns with other staff, face to face.
- 2.5** If a complaint cannot be resolved directly or face to face, it should be referred to the Principal, Primary or High School Co-ordinator. If the complaint is about the Co-ordinator, it should be referred to the Principal. In the case of it being against the Principal, the matter is to be addressed in writing to the Chair of the Korowal School Board ([chair@korowal.nsw.edu.au](mailto:chair@korowal.nsw.edu.au)). Any formal complaint by a staff member about another staff member should be made in writing using the staff complaint form linked to the staff complaint procedure. All staff involved in a complaint must keep information confidential and only discuss the issues raised by the complaint on a 'need to know' basis. Staff who raise a complaint must not be subjected to reprisal action.
- 2.6** The Principal or Co-ordinator will appoint a 'complaint manager' to manage the complaint process (including managing it themselves unless the complaint is about them). The complaint manager should gather information, assess the issues raised by the complaint and consider reasonable outcomes.
- 2.7** Some complaints are not dealt with by the School. Where there is a risk of significant harm to a student, the matter must be referred to the Child Protection Helpline as advised by the Mandatory Reporter Guide. Allegations of criminal conduct must be referred to NSW Police.
- 2.8** A number of other complaints must be referred to particular specialist areas as specified in the School Community and Consumer Complaint Procedure (2.2) and the Staff Complaints Procedure.
- 2.9** If a complaint is made anonymously, the person who receives the complaint should, wherever possible, consider the issues raised and respond appropriately.
- 2.10** Complaints should be finalised within 20 working days and all parties will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint, the reasons for any decisions and the outcomes that will be implemented.
- 2.11** A complainant can request a review of a complaint outcome, which should be done within 10 working days from the decision, and will be carried out by an independent person and a person of equivalent or more senior level within the School Executive, who has not previously managed the complaint. In most instances this would be the Principal.

## 3. Purpose

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The purpose of this policy is to support the School's commitment to strengthening the way it handles and resolves complaints.

The current approach detailed by this policy and implementation documents is the result of consultation and is consistent with broader policy reforms on complaint management, including our 'See Something Say

Something 'Protected Disclosures Policy and Procedures, Whistleblower Service, and engagement in the National Redress Scheme.

## 4. Scope

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This policy applies to all employees of Korowal School including directors on the Board.

## 5. Related policies

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This policy is related to the School's other policies including but not limited to:

- *Code of Conduct for Students and Parents*
- *'See Something Say Something' Protected Disclosures Policy and Procedures.*
- *Privacy Policy*

## 6. Legislation

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This policy has been drafted to comply with the following legislation:

- *Privay Act 1998*
- *Ombudsmans Act 1989*
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012*

## 7. Definitions

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For a full list of the definitions relevant to the School's policies refer to the [Definitions Register](#)

## 8. Principles

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The School requires all stakeholders to support the Complaints and Handling Policy.

### 8.1 Procedural Fairness

Korowal School acts on procedural fairness as a basic right for all when dealing with authorities. Procedural fairness refers to what is sometimes described as the 'hearing rule' and 'right to an unbiased decision'.

**The 'hearing rule' includes the right of the person against whom an allegation has been made to:**

- know the allegation related to a specific matter and any other information which will be taken into account in considering the matter.
- know the process by which the matter will be considered.
- respond to the allegation.
- know how to seek a review of the decision made in response to the allegations.

**The 'right to an unbiased decision' includes the right to:**

- impartiality in an investigation and decision making.
- an absence of bias by a decision-maker.

Principles of Effectiveness complaints handling

## 9. Responsibilities

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### 9.1 The School Executive

- supports a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution in accordance with the policy and procedures.
- manage individual complaints in accordance with this policy and procedures, when appropriate.
- review complaint outcomes and management.
- escalate high risk and systematic issues arising from complaints.
- identify and support complaint managers to manage complaints in accordance with this policy and procedures.
- encourage staff to resolve concerns directly wherever possible.
- review any systematic issues arising from complaints.
- support all staff involved in the complaints process.

### 9.2 Members of Korowal School Board

- support a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution.
- help foster a workplace that is respectful and productive.
- review any systematic issues arising from complaints.
- review complaints that could not be resolved by the School Principal when requested, handle certain individual complaints in accordance with this policy and procedures and support staff to handle complaints promptly and responsively, handle any complaint involving the School Principal.

### 9.3 All staff

- treat all people with respect, including people who make a complaint and any person who is the subject of a complaint.
- read and comply with this complaints policy and procedures.
- identify when complaints are being made and assist people to make complaints if they wish to do so.
- respond to individual complaints, when requested.
- escalate certain complaints and reviews of complaint handling to more senior staff, if necessary.

## 10. Records

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Notification documents will be archived for a minimum of seven (7) years on the School Drive, and if they are highly confidential, in a restricted access locked e-file.

# 11. Further Information

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## **Implementation documents**

- Korowal School Community and Consumer Complaints Procedures

## **Related documents**

- Complaints & Compliments Form