




Complaints and Grievances Policy

Korowal School provides the opportunity for parents, students and staff to raise issues of concern directly with the person/s involved. Staff are able to meet with parents or students face to face to discuss any issue and will only respond to emails to set up meetings. If preferred, a meeting with a member of the School executive can be made.

It is important that time is given to deal with concerns and that matters are dealt with according to any relevant policies.

It is required that matters being dealt with by the School on behalf of students, parents or staff be kept confidential.

Korowal School invites feedback from its parent, student and staff body and endeavours to provide a harmonious environment where dissatisfaction can be heard in a mutually respectful environment, with the common goal being to find the best way to restore that harmony.

Policy reviewed	November 2017
Next review	July 2018
Principal's signature: 	

Procedural Guidelines

Parent/Guardian

Parents should not deal directly with students with whom they have a grievance.

In the event of a concern or grievance needing to be raised, communication as a general principle, should be directly with the staff member involved. If this is not feasible then comments, complaints, criticisms about any school matter should be made to any member of the school executive. Matters being dealt with by the School on behalf of students and/or parents will be handled with due discretion.

We require that parents respect the sensitivity of information and apply due discretion while the school handles the matter. Details of the complaint will be shared with staff on a need-to-know basis.

If the response to the grievance or complaint is not satisfactory, the Principal will act to resolve the matter and is responsible for communicating with all parties.

If it should happen that the issue has not been satisfactorily resolved or the complaint or grievance relates to the Principal, the matter may be taken to the Chair of the Korowal School Council at chair@korowal.nsw.edu.au

At its sole discretion, the School may appoint an external party to facilitate resolution of the event.

Students

Students are encouraged to speak to their class teachers in the first instance. It is part of a class teacher's role to teach students appropriate skills of how to raise and resolve issues.

If the issue is a sensitive one, or if exploration of the matter takes considerable time, a student may need support from another student or from an adult (e.g. wellbeing support person). Students are encouraged to choose a person with whom they feel comfortable to provide this support. In complex situations, once the matter is resolved, the outcome should be discussed with the student by a member of staff. A written record may be shared to make sure that it is fully understood.

Complaints that appear trivial still need to be considered.

Students are encouraged to put any concerns in writing, addressed to the School Executive.

Students are also required to maintain respect around the sensitivity of the issue.

At its sole discretion, the School may appoint an external party to facilitate resolution of the event.

Staff

In the event of a concern or grievance needing to be raised, communication as a general principle, should be directly with the staff member involved. If this is not feasible then comments, complaints, criticisms about any school matter should be made to any member

of the school executive. Matters being dealt with by the School on behalf of staff will be handled with due discretion.

We require that staff respect the sensitivity of information and apply due discretion while the school handles the matter. Details of the complaint will be shared with other staff on a need-to-know basis.

If the response to the grievance or complaint is not satisfactory, the Principal will act to resolve the matter and is responsible for communicating with all parties.

If it should happen that the issue has not been satisfactorily resolved or the complaint or grievance relates to the Principal, the matter may be taken to the Chair of the Korowal School Council at chair@korowal.nsw.edu.au

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Staff Responding To Complaints/Grievances

1 Dealing with the Complainant's Feelings

This can be achieved by:

- listening
- acknowledging the concerns
- avoiding immediate judgments
- avoiding debate in early stages of the discussion

2 Dealing with the Specific Elements of a Complaint

This can be achieved by:

- determining the nature of the complaint. Is it about procedures, the quality of education, the behaviour of individuals, etc?
- clarifying the specific details of the complaint
- determining what the complainant wants to achieve in terms of resolution.

3 Minimizing the Risk of Escalation

The next steps in the process can be used if the complaint is not immediately resolved.

They may include:

- further investigation/research
- determining if there is another appropriate mechanism to handle the complaint, including meeting any legislative requirements
- setting boundaries on the investigation
- setting a timeline for responses
- referral to key personnel with expertise, where appropriate eg. AIS

4 Objective Judgment

Present the complaint without being in any way judgmental if it needs to be presented to others during the investigation.

5 Responding

- Meet timelines (or inform about delays)
- Provide reasons for decisions
- Allow the complainant a fair hearing

- Respond in accordance with the merits of the complaint, along with the ethos/values of the school and/or legislation and/or legal advice.

6. Follow up by a designated staff member is undertaken to ensure that action taken has been effective.

Resolution of a grievance or complaint may occur through:

- acknowledgement of a problem
- raising awareness of a problem or concern
- accepting an outcome which may be different from the one sought, but which is perceived to be well-considered and fair to all concerned
- a considered letter issued to the complainant covering the issues raised, how they were considered and what action will be taken.

Notice for Students

If you have any concerns, complaints or suggestions the School would like to hear.

How do I raise a concern?

- By talking about it or by writing it down if you find it easier. You can prepare it by yourself, or as part of a group, or through your parents.

To whom?

- Your parents/carers or an identified support person.
- The staff member most directly concerned.
- You may wish to begin with a staff member with whom you relate well or anyone on staff.
- The student wellbeing person.
- A senior staff member, including the Principal.

Does it matter what the issue is?

No, it can be a big problem or a small one. By discussing it, you may come up with some positive ideas.

What will happen next?

If possible, the staff member will deal with it in person. If the staff member is not able to deal with it, the matter will be referred to another senior member of staff, who is more able to respond to the matter you raise.

Do others have to know?

If you are worried about confidentiality, tell the staff member – they will understand and discuss this with you.

Will I cause trouble by asking questions or making a complaint?

You have a right to raise issues of concern to you. Think through your role in the problem (if any); seek out a trusted staff member for advice on particular issues.

Even if you find the issue painful, difficult or embarrassing, don't worry, it will only be discussed by staff involved.