



## GUIDELINES 05.05.03-G

# Complaints Handling Guide

St Gabriel's School welcomes feedback from all members of the School community and takes all complaints or concerns that may be raised seriously. This Complaints Handling Guide is designed to assist you to understand our complaints handling process.

### **What is a Complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to St Gabriel's School, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

### **St Gabriel's School's Commitment**

St Gabriel's School is committed to handling complaints effectively and efficiently. To manage complaints effectively, we have established a Complaints Handling Program in line with both the international complaints handling standard (ISO 10002:2014 Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations), and the Australian/New Zealand complaints handling standard (AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations).

Our program includes the establishment of an online complaints management system which allows us to effectively capture, manage and report on complaints. Regular analysis of complaints received and the implementation of rectification action, where deficiencies are identified, are key to the School's commitment. Our internal complaints handling process is available at no cost.

### **Informal Complaints Resolution**

Most issues causing concern in schools can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. In most cases these issues can be resolved through informal discussions with appropriate staff members. Even if an issue is able to be resolved informally, all staff are required to log issues through our complaints management system, so we are able to identify any systemic issues arising and take appropriate rectification action.

### **How Do I Make a Formal Complaint?**

If you have been unable to resolve a matter informally, or simply wish to make a formal complaint you can do so by any of the following means:

1. Sending an email to [complaints.STG@stgabriels.nsw.edu.au](mailto:complaints.STG@stgabriels.nsw.edu.au)
2. Writing a letter to the College addressed to "The Complaints Manager".
3. Telephoning the College and asking to speak to the Deputy Principal.

All formal complaints will be logged into our online complaints management system and managed in accordance with the following procedure.

### **St Gabriel's School Internal Complaints Handling Process**

**Step 1** -All formal complaints are logged through our online complaints management system where they are screened by one of our Complaints Officers, the Complaints Manager, or, in the case of a complaint directly related to conduct by the Principal, Deputy Principal or Member of the School Board, the EREA Regional Director.

**Step 2** – All complaints will be acknowledged in writing as soon as practicable, and in any event within 10 business days. They will be allocated a status, priority and target resolution date. It is our policy, where possible, to commence an initial investigation and make a preliminary determination within 10 business days of acknowledging the complaint.

**Step 3** – The Complaints Officer shall conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination.

**Step 4** - Following the determination, if appropriate, the Complaints Officer shall formulate a resolution and provide a written response to the complainant. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

**Step 5** - If the initial response is not acceptable the matter will be reviewed internally by the Principal or the Principal's delegate, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Principal or their delegate seek to resolve all disputes within 20 business days of the acknowledgement of the complaint. The matter will be closed if the response of the Principal, or their delegate, is accepted. Where appropriate, the matter may be escalated to the EREA Regional Director.

**Step 6** - All complaints received will be entered into our Complaints Register and, where appropriate, a corrective action request will be made to address any underlying processes, which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.

**Step 7** - If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives.

### **Who Handles Complaints?**

At the school level against:

- parent or volunteer – the Principal or one of the College's Complaints Officers;
- against a teacher – the Principal or one of the College's Complaints Officers;
- against a member of the Executive Staff – the Principal or the Complaints Manager;
- against the Principal or Deputy Principal – the relevant EREA Complaints Officer;
- against a member of the College Board - the Principal and the relevant EREA Complaints Officer, who will work with the Chair of the College Board;
- against the Chair of the College Board – the relevant EREA Complaints Officer.

### **Complaints relating to Child Protection**

There may, at times be concerns or complaints that need to be raised with St Gabriel's School that relate to a child protection matter.

When St Gabriel's receives child protection-related complaint's, the School must first determine if the complaint triggers mandatory reporting to the police and/or child protection agencies relevant to NSW, or constitutes reportable conduct or misconduct by a staff member. If so, St Gabriel's must undertake that report.

All complaints regarding Child Protection matters are to be referred directly to the College Principal either by direct phone contact or via email at: [principal@stedmunds.nsw.edu.au](mailto:principal@stedmunds.nsw.edu.au). If the Child Protection complaint is against the Principal, the matter is to be referred to the EREA Regional Director.

Child protection complaints that do not raise concerns of unreported abuse or reportable conduct by a staff member, or a risk of abuse at a school; will be managed in the same manner as other complaints received by St Gabriel's. The complaints will be recorded to ensure that any further developments relating to the same incident or issue are monitored.

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality applies with respect to both information relating to the person making the complaint, and, if relevant to a person against whom a complaint is made. The School is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process.

Personally identifiable information about a complainant will only be made available for the purpose of addressing the complaint and (unless the complainant consents) will be actively protected from disclosure.

<b>Date of Next Review</b>	May 2023
<b>Approval Authority</b>	School Principal
<b>Related Policies and Procedures</b>	05.05.00-G – Complaints & Disputes Policy 05.05.01-G – Complaints & Disputes Procedure 05.05.04a-G – Complaints Handling Guide – App A 05.05.04b-G – Complaints Acknowledgement Letter – App B