

COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY



PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that student, parent and employee complaints and disputes are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective and fair way.

SCOPE

Students, parents and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements.

REFERENCE

- [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Regulations 2017](#)
- [Australian Education Regulations 2013](#)
- [Fair Work Act 2009](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Age Discrimination Act 2004 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Racial Discrimination Act 1975 \(Cth\)](#)
- AIIIC Enterprise Bargaining Agreement or equivalent
- AIIIC Work Health and Safety Policy
- AIIIC Anti-Discrimination Policy
- AIIIC Sexual Harassment Policy
- AIIIC Students with Disabilities
- AIIIC Privacy Policy

Approved By: College Board

Contact: Principal

Date Approved: July 2023

Status: Approved

Reviewed | Bi-annually

Next Review Due: July 2024

This policy may be updated or revised from time to time. The College will not notify you each time the Policy is changed.

Policy Statement

Australian International Islamic College is committed to ensuring that student, parent and employee complaints are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, and effective and fair way.

Australian International Islamic College views complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process. Australian International Islamic College acknowledges the right of students, parents and employees to complain when dissatisfied with an action, inaction or decision of the school and the school encourages constructive criticism and complaints. Australian International Islamic College recognises that time spent on handling complaints can be an investment in better service to students, parents and employees.

Complaints that may be Resolved under this Policy

Australian International Islamic College encourage students, parents and employees to lodge promptly any concerns regarding sexual harassment, child protection, discrimination, workplace bullying and privacy breaches as well as more general complaints that include areas such as:

- the school, its employees or students having done something wrong
- the school, its employees or students having failed to do something they should have done
- the school, its employees or students having acted unfairly or impolitely
- issues of student or employee behaviour that are contrary to the school's code of conduct
- issues related to learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- issues related to communication with students or parents or between employees
- issues related to school fees and payments
- general administrative issues.

Student complaints may be brought by students or by parents on behalf of their children, as appropriate in the circumstances.

Issues Outside this Policy

The following matters are outside the scope of this policy and should be managed as follows:

- Child protection concerns or risks of harm to children should be dealt with in accordance with the law and the school's Child Protection Policy.
- Student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the Student Bullying Policy
- Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the Behaviour Management Policy.
- Employee complaints related to their employment should be directed to their supervisor.
- Student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to <<the Principal>> who will involve the Police as appropriate.
- Formal legal proceedings.

Dispute Resolution Principles

AIIIC is committed to managing disputes according to the following principles:

- disputes will be resolved promptly and with as little disruption as possible
- disputes will be taken seriously
- anonymous complaints will be treated on their merits like any other dispute when possible
- disputes will be dealt with fairly and objectively and in a timely manner
- mediation, negotiation and informal resolution are available alternatives to investigation
- procedural fairness will be ensured wherever practicable

- Australian International Islamic College will determine the appropriate person to deal with the complaint in the first instance. Complaints should be resolved with as little formality and disputation as possible
- confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- all parties to the dispute will be appropriately supported
- all parties are entitled to reasonable progress updates
- appropriate remedies will be offered and implemented
- a review mechanism will be offered
- complainants, respondents and people associated with them will not be victimised as a result of lodging the dispute nor will they suffer any other reprisals
- the school will keep confidential records of disputes.

Responsibilities

School

AllIC has the following role and responsibilities:

- develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the school's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures
- appropriately communicate the school's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures to students, parents and employees
- ensure that the Complaints Handling procedures are readily accessible by staff, students and parents
- upon receipt of a complaint, manage the complaint in accordance with the Complaints Handling procedures
- ensure that appropriate support is provided to all parties to a complaint
- take appropriate action to prevent victimisation or action in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them
- appropriately implement remedies
- appropriately train relevant employees
- keep records
- conduct a review/audit of the Complaints Register from time to time
- monitor and report to the governing body on complaints
- report to the school's insurer when that is relevant
- refer to the school's governing body immediately any claim for legal redress.

All Parties to a Dispute

The complainant and respondent both have the following role and responsibilities:

- apply and comply with the school's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures
- lodge the complaint as soon as possible after the issue arises
- expect that the complaint will be dealt with fairly and objectively; in a timely manner; with procedural fairness wherever practicable; that confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner

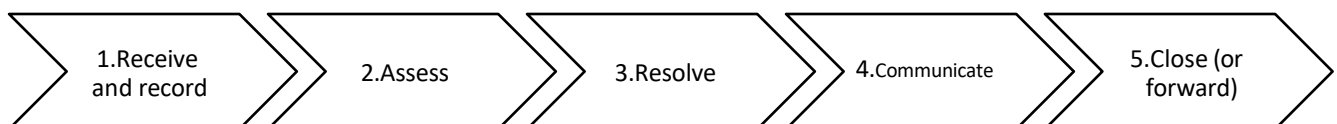
- not provide deliberately false or misleading information
- not make frivolous or vexatious complaints
- act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner
- act in a non-threatening manner
- to be appropriately supported
- acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced
- maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- not victimise or act in reprisal against any party to the dispute or any person associated with them.

Employees Receiving Complaints

Employees receiving complaints have the following roles and responsibilities:

- act in accordance with the school's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures
- inform the party lodging the complaint of how complaints can be lodged, when they should be lodged and what information is required
- provide the complainant with information about any support or assistance available to assist them in lodging their complaint
- provide the complainant with a copy of the school's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures
- maintain confidentiality
- keep appropriate records
- To lodge the complaint in the Complaints Register
- to forward complaints to more senior employees, including the Principal, as appropriate
- not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

Diagram: Complaints handling process



Implementation

AIIC is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints at the school, including by the development and implementation of this policy and related procedures, and via the clear support and promotion of the policy and procedures.

AIIC is also committed to appropriately training relevant employees (especially senior staff) on how to resolve complaints in line with this policy and the related procedures.

AIIC will keep appropriate records of complaints, will monitor complaints and their resolution and will report on a high-level basis to the school Board on complaint handling at the school.

AIIC will act to encourage students, parents and employees to contribute to a healthy school culture where complaints are resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible.

PROCEDURE

Complaints handling process

Receive and record

Determine if the complaint is a complaint or something else e.g. an issue or an enquiry.

It is not a complaint when a student, parent or guardian: requests information e.g. about the College service or policy; requests a change in a service or requests a new service from the College; makes suggestions for improving a service from the College; expresses a concern about a situation in the College; or provides feedback on the performance of the College.

Record the complaint. Complaints from students, parents and guardians must be recorded in the College's complaints register. Complaint records must be secure to ensure protection of privacy. Relevant details of the complainant, the complaint and desired outcome, must be recorded. Information recorded must be objective and factual. Complaints about Principals, complex complaints and requests for internal review forwarded to the Director of colleges must be recorded by the complaints receiving officer in the Board complaints register.

Assess

Assessing a complaint can involve: clarifying the problem; identifying causes and impacts; gathering information; and talking to relevant employees.

Resolve

Decide solution. Solutions include: providing explanations and reasons; suggesting a compromise; implementing specific actions; referring the complainant to a different process; or making improvements.

Wherever possible, complaints must be resolved immediately at the point where the complaint is received. When resolved, the complaint is updated in the register and closed.

Communicate

Communicate to the complainant the process used, progress made, outcomes decided and the reasons for the decision.

Close (or forward)

If resolved, close the complaint record. Record the outcome, including action to be taken and communications with the complainant. Then close the record. If unresolved, forward to a senior employee.

Response times

While the attempt will always be made to promptly initiate a response and resolve complaints, the time required to resolve a complaint will depend on the nature and complexity of the complaint, as well as employee availability.

As a guide:

- simple complaints and reviews may take **up to 20 working days**.
- complaints requiring some assessment may take **up to 45 working days**.
- complex complaints* may take **up to 90 working days or longer**.

Receipt of written complaints or written requests for a review must be acknowledged by the receiving College or office as soon as possible.

These guiding timeframes apply during College terms. Additional time may be required if a complaint from a student, parent or guardian is submitted toward the end of a College term or outside of College terms.

The Principal must ensure these timeframes are communicated to students, parents and guardians to ensure understanding of the time required by the College to resolve complaints.

Complaints that identify a potential or actual breach of legislation may be subject to specific timeframes.

Internal review

Internal reviews are only undertaken when a complainant submits a written request for a review to the Principal. An internal review assesses the merits of the:

- original complaint and
- process used by the College to resolve the complaint and
- outcome decided.

The result of the internal review will either:

- support the original outcome decided or
- propose a modified, or new, outcome.

Who performs an internal review

Principal reviews the complaint resolution of a College employee

When a complainant submits to the Principal a written request for a review of a College employee's resolution or process used, the Principal must perform the internal review and communicate the result to the complainant.

Director of Colleges review of the complaint resolution of a Principal

When a complainant submits to the Principal a written request for a review of a Principal's resolution or process used, the Director of Colleges must coordinate the internal review in consultation with the Board and, if required, School Operations. A nominated Board delegate communicates the result to the complainant.

Complex complaints

A complaint is complex when it raises several distinct matters or significant system-wide issues; requires legal advice or advice from an external third party; involves an issue that is notifiable under legislation; or requires the involvement of School Operations.

Principals must liaise with the Director of Colleges on complex complaints. If required, the Director of Colleges liaises with the School Operations to determine capacity and appropriate action.

Complaints about a Senior Leader must be forwarded to the Principal and Director of Colleges.