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Next Review: January 2019

Complaints Procedure

Quintilian School Policy

The Quintilian School as a community school recognises and encourages parental involvement in the education of their children. The school recognises that under the Education Act 1999 it must have in place a dispute resolution procedure. It is essential that our procedure is child friendly and the School has used the 'Are You Listening Guidelines' produced by the WA Commissioner for Children and Young People to ensure students are able to raise concerns easily within the school.

Complaints from members of the public will be treated in a similar way to complaints from parents, staff and students, although most complaints from the public would be referred directly to the Principal.

The school listens to the parent body by a number of ways:

- Parents are actively encouraged to be partners in their child's education.
- Class meetings are held on a regular basis and at least each year.
- Teachers are available to parents before, during and after normal classroom hours and parents are encouraged to firstly discuss matters directly with teachers.
- Parental surveys are held linked to specific matters.
- Parent forums are held where appropriate.
- Board newsletter items are regularly included in the school newsletter..
- School newsletters are published regularly during term times.
- Parents are welcome to discuss any matter with the Principal.
- Parents may contact Board members to raise concerns and may write to the School Board for formal consideration of their complaints.

Students' complaints, problems or concerns

It is well recognised that 'empowering children and young people to understand their rights, to report problems and concerns and effectively support them to address the issue raised is critical. Taking children and young people seriously if they raise a matter of concern and ensuring that staff and volunteers have appropriate training and processes to ensure that such matters are dealt with effectively' is of paramount importance. Taken from Summary – [*Creating Child Safe Organisations Report on Consultation with Children and Young People June 2015*](#), WA Commissioner for Children and Young People

At Quintilian School, students are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable, whether it is the class teacher, another teacher, a member of the support staff or the Principal. Students may also raise concerns via a parent, guardian or any trusted person. Students may raise concerns in any manner they feel most comfortable with, for example, verbally, in writing or by email.

Complaints or concerns that may appear trivial in the first instance will still be treated seriously. Quintilian School recognises that young people (our students) may test the complaints procedures on relatively minor issues before finding the confidence to raise something painful, such as bullying or another more serious matter.

With all students concerns, but particularly if the complaint or concern is a difficult one, or if exploration of will take time, it is understood that a student may need support from another student or from a trusted adult. Students are to be encouraged to choose a person with whom they feel comfortable to provide this support.

Lodging Complaints

We encourage parents or students who have concerns to make it known to the School as soon as possible. We are more than willing to listen and to work together to find a resolution to the issue. Often what may seem to be a small issue or concern can be addressed easily, but if left can escalate into major and more difficult issues.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. A complaint may be made if a parent, staff member or student thinks that the school has for example:

- Done something wrong
- Failed to do something it should have done
- Acted unfairly or impolitely
- Another person or student has acted inappropriately

All complaints will be handled to ensure natural justice and procedural fairness principles are applied to all parties. In the first place, if a concern is regarding classroom matters, then this matter should be raised with the teacher concerned. If the matter cannot be resolved with the teacher, or is of a serious nature, then parents are encouraged to raise their concerns with the Principal. Meetings will be arranged as soon as is possible so that resolution can be as quick as possible. However, the Principal may not be able to resolve the matter until they have discussed the matter with the staff or other parties concerned.

The Principal may share serious complaints with the Chair of the School Board.

Details of serious complaints to the Principal will be recorded and will contain the following information:

- The date when the issue was raised
- Name of the parent, staff member
- Name of the student
- Brief statement of the matter
- Staff, parents, students involved
- Details of follow up telephone calls or conversations
- Brief statement of the outcome
- Date of closure of the complaint
- Any referral to the Board Chair

Copies of correspondence will be kept electronically and copies of letters or reports kept on the staff member or student's file.

Confidentiality

This is an important issue for students, parents and staff. It is important that any complaint be treated in a confidential manner and with respect to all parties.

It may be possible to deal with a problem without naming individuals. Even if no name is given, the matter and process to resolve the complaint may be clear. Depending on the nature of the complaint and on the circumstances, it may be impractical to investigate without identifying the member of staff, the parent or the child – it may also be in the interest of the staff member, parent or child to do so.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly, also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the Police or other external authority. If information is passed to a third party, you will be informed, unless this is prevented by legal obligation.

Members of staff should know about complaints that might be damaging to their reputation. Such complaints will be known only to themselves and to those who have to be consulted.

Where there is a situation involving the police, the Principal, or next most senior staff member if the Principal is unavailable, must take responsibility for action in the school and the Board Chair should be informed as soon as possible.

Anonymous Complaints

Quintilian School does accept anonymous complaints and will act judiciously in accordance with the seriousness of the complaint.

Anonymous allegations about child abuse (including physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, neglect or grooming), will be monitored closely, but no action taken until there is more certainty about the veracity of the allegation.

Where a parent, staff member or student wishes to remain anonymous about any matter, it is the Principal's discretion as to what action, if any, should be taken, depending on the nature of the complaint.

Resolution

Sometimes the very acknowledgement of an issue is all that the parent, student or staff member requires and the feeling that their opinions are listened to and valued. Resolution may also come from any of the following:

- Parent, student or staff discussions with the staff member, parent or student has resolved the matter satisfactorily
- Knowing that changes have been made and that matters will be different in the future
- Knowing that the school is now alert to a possible problem
- An outcome which may be different from the one they sought, but which they perceive to be well considered
- A considered letter
- An apology, if appropriate

With intractable complaints the Principal will raise the issue with the Chair of the School Board. After discussion with the Principal the Chair should respond to the parents, notifying them that he/she is reviewing the matter and will proceed under Rule 23 of the Quintilian Constitution which addresses Disputes and Mediation. If a briefing is required from a member of staff, this should occur in the presence of the Principal. If a meeting is requested, the Chair will offer to meet the parents at a time convenient to them. Those involved are:

- The Chair of the School Board
- The Principal and, at the most, one other member of staff
- The parents

Parents and the staff member should be allowed to bring along a supportive friend who is not involved in the complaint if required. Legal representation is not appropriate at this stage.

If a solution is unable to be reached then the Chair should engage an independent arbitrator in accordance with Rule 23 of the Constitution.

