

Complaints Policy

Purpose Statement

To ensure that a clear process exists to enable raising and addressing complaints in alignment with the principles of natural justice.

Guiding Principles

- All members of the Kristin School community have the right to raise concerns and complaints about the school and have those concerns and complaints addressed.
- This policy sets out the process by which concerns, and complaints, are to be dealt with by Kristin School. Kristin School is open to feedback on this policy, and desires to work with its community in all matters.

Definitions of Concerns and Complaints

Concerns: A concern is a matter that causes worry or disquiet that can be resolved collaboratively at the level, or close to the level, where the concern was generated. All members of the school community (including staff, students and students' families) are welcome to raise matters of concern with individual members of staff, and issues are encouraged to be resolved collaboratively and at as low a level as possible. If a concern is raised with a staff member that staff member may seek support from a senior staff member to address the concern. If a concern is unresolved those holding the concern may decide to make a complaint.

Complaints: A complaint is a serious concern that the complainant wishes to be investigated and resolved. Complaints may be made about students, staff, Board Members or school procedures or requirements.

A complaint must:

- a) Be in writing;
- b) State in detail the reason for the complaint;
- c) Be based on specific and factual information, with all information provided; and
- d) Identify the complainant.

Process for dealing with a complaint

- Where suitable the complainant is encouraged to first seek to resolve the issue at the lowest possible level by communicating with the person whose actions have given rise to the complaint.

- If the complaint is about a student's behaviour, then the student discipline procedures apply.
- A complaint against a School Principal should be addressed directly to the Executive Principal.
- A complaint against the Executive Principal should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Governors.
- Complaints against the Board or a Board member must be submitted to the Board in writing.
- Staff or Board members are available to receive concerns and comment about the school from any source but shall redirect that concern or complaint in the first instance to the relevant Principal (or Board Chair if concerning the Executive Principal) for action.
- If after a direct approach to the person whose actions have given rise to the complaint the problem remains unresolved, then a written complaint should be made to the relevant School Principal. Once a complaint is received the complainant can expect to have receipt acknowledged in writing within five working days, unless exceptional circumstances exist. The complainant will be informed as to who will be investigating the complaint, who the decision maker will be, and the likely timeline to undertake the investigation.
- Any investigation that takes place will comply with the relevant employment agreement(s) (where applicable) and legislation.
- If the relevant Principal has serious concerns regarding a staff member's actions or nature of the allegations, he/she should raise the matter with the Executive Principal. The Executive Principal may seek legal/industrial advice from an approved source and notify the Board's insurers.
- Where complaints are formally investigated, written notes of all meetings should be taken, and of agreements made, and action(s) taken. Such documents will be held by the Principal or the Executive Principal, as appropriate or, in the case of an employee, on the employee's personal file.
- Complainants can expect to be advised in writing of the outcome of their complaint. If they are unsatisfied with the outcome, they may then forward their complaint to the Executive Principal, and then if required, the Board of Governors. They will be informed of the outcome of the complaint as far as is allowed by law, and to preserve the dignity of all parties involved.
- If the Board believes there is sufficient cause, they may choose to involve an independent/external person or group to review a complaint to ensure the process and outcome has been fair and reasonable. The Board has the right to determine

whether they choose to accept the recommendation(s) of such an independent review.

- The Board recognises that not all complainants will be satisfied with the outcome of the investigation into their complaint. Once reconsidered, if the Board is confident of its decision, it may refuse to enter into any further discussion/correspondence regarding the complaint.

Process for dealing with historical complaints (including of abuse)

When a historical complaint is received about a staff member/student; about any kind of sexual, physical, emotional or psychological abuse:

- The complaint will be received in a compassionate and empathetic manner and documented thoroughly. Apologies are given for perceived harm real to that person.
- An independent reviewer will be appointed to investigate the complaint thoroughly, based on the principles of natural justice.
- Kristin School will notify its insurance company and in conjunction with the Board Chair, prepare a media strategy where appropriate.
- The independent reviewer will make recommendations to the school about:
 - Compensation and reparation.
 - Potential risk to other former staff/students and existing staff/students.
 - Any institutional redress required.
 - The extent of evidence and whether it meets the threshold of a criminal conviction and/or referral to the police.
 - Any policy or procedural changes needed to prevent further abuse.

Kristin School will:

- Implement appropriate reparation to ensure that any wrongs are made right, that the case is well documented, and that all information is available to the complainant.
- Make any institutional changes where necessary to prevent any further abuse.
- Ensure that any persons who are affected by the inquiry are supported.

Associated Policies/Documents: Discipline Policy, Kristin School Behavioural Code of Conduct (School Rules), School Uniform Policy.