



Complaints Management in Anglican Education

Guidelines and Procedures
Version 1.0

Supporting document for the:
Complaints Management in Anglican
Education Policy



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1. Introduction

These Guidelines and Procedures are approved and published by the Anglican Schools Commission (ASC), Anglican Church Southern Queensland (ACSQ). Their purpose is to help apply the Complaints Management in Anglican Education Policy in practice and should be read alongside the Policy.

They are informed by legal requirements (referenced where applied) and Australian standard: Guidelines for complaint management in organisations (ISO 10002:2019, NEQ).

As described in the Policy, this document details the following mandatory requirements:

- Section 2: Guidelines that are to be met by local operating procedures within each School, ECS or associated business. Noting:
 - Sections 2.2 provides guidance on applying policy principles in practice
 - Sections 2.3 reinforces policy requirements
 - Section 2.4 provides greater details of response management requirements.
- Section 3: Procedures for Stage 5, where complaint is provided to the Executive Director, ASC. This occurs when:
 - ACSQ is the Approved Provider of the Education & Care Service (ECS), or
 - a School is owned or controlled by the ACSQ.
- Section 4: Procedures for Appeals to the Archbishop of the Diocese of Brisbane.

2. Guidelines for local operating procedures within School, ECS or other associated business

2.1 Overview: Focus Areas

The following focus areas are identified for attention and priority within local complaints management processes:

- Welcome complaints
- Provide clear processes
- Ensure staff awareness
- Seek early resolution
- Acknowledge receipt of complaints promptly
- Assess the complaint to identify the most appropriate response
- Manage the expectations of the complainant by giving information about intended response and their involvement
- Inform the complainant about the outcome
- Keep and manage records of information received, actions taken, decisions made and outcomes
- Undertake analysis and reporting on a quarterly and annual basis.

2.2 Guidance on applying policy principles in practice

The Policy requires that *at all levels there is a proactive approach to creating an operating environment that encourages the receipt of feedback and complaints; and seeks to enable complaints to be actively managed*. To facilitate this in practice, the following is applied to local operating procedures.

2.2.1 A complaints management system

An effective complaints management system is implemented and maintained in each School, ECS or associated business, including at minimum:

- Local operating processes include procedures of escalation of unresolved complaints and disputes through the staged process, as well as options for appeal, or other relevant actions
- Appropriately resourced staff and supporting operating systems
- Adequate complaints management communication and guidance for both complainants and staff
- Key performance indicators, including record keeping requirements
- Collection of information and analysis to meet assurance (reporting) requirements.

The Policy requires that *all reasonably practicable actions are taken for the complaints management system to be accessible, including for people who require assistance*. This includes local processes that enable:

- Complaints to be made by any person (the complainant), or by an authorised representative of the complainant
- Complaints to be made anonymously. Noting it is reasonable that this may impact on the ability to address the content of such complaints and this limitation should be communicated in information about the complaints management system.

To achieve this, Schools, ECS, or associated businesses:

- Considers cohorts of people who use or are impacted by each service provided, and
- Implements mechanisms that sufficiently enable these cohorts to access the complaints management system.

2.2.2 Communication about the complaints management system

It is important that all people feel encouraged to voice their concerns. Local processes should be flexible, to increase the accessibility of the complaints management system, particularly for people who may need assistance. There are to be:

- Access to readable and easy to understand information about how to make a complaint and the complaint process
- Flexible methods for making a complaint, for example, in person, over the phone, or in writing via email, letter or online.

Each School, ECS or associated business is responsible for publicising information, for all relevant stakeholders, on how and where a complaint can be made, including support available. This information is:

- Written in easy English and provided in a range of formats and, where applicable, languages
- Accessible on websites, reception areas and other relevant media
- Contextualised to the local School, ECS or associated business
- Describes the complaints process, notably including:
 - Where, how and when complaints can be made
 - When acknowledgement of complaints can be expected
 - What information should be provided by the complainant.
- Consistent with this Policy and these Guidelines, notably including:
 - the staged approach
 - the Appeals process
 - exclusions and considerations that may apply.

2.2.3 Staff development

Each School and ECS will support staff to be aware of:

- The value of complaints and the importance of them being dealt with effectively
- The complaints management system, including escalation pathways
- Their roles, responsibilities and authorities in respect to complaints
- What process/procedures to follow
- How to be proactive in responding promptly and appropriately to expressions of dissatisfaction, in accordance with policy and procedures, including:
 - How to recognise complaints
 - How to identify people who may need additional assistance to make a complaint, and assistance options available
 - Providing initial acknowledgement of the complaint
 - What information to give to potential/ or actual complainants or their representative
 - Process for accepting complaints from complainant's authorised representative
 - Acquiring sufficient information from the complainant, or their representative, including preferred contact method and particular needs for communication.

2.2.4 Responsive complaints management system

2.2.4.1 Proactive communication

Provide people who make complaints with clear, timely, firm, culturally and personally appropriate communication, that recognises their needs and concerns. If people who have made a complaint are not kept informed about the progress of their complaint, they are more likely to reach negative assumptions about how they are being dealt with. This often leads to reduced opportunities to resolve the matter or satisfactorily move forward and can result in increased demand on resources as the matter is prolonged or escalates.

Where allowed by law and where reasonable, people involved in the complaint's management will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the matter. This includes the complainant, their authorised representative, those responding to or involved in the management of the complaint; or other persons identified as necessary to support the safety of persons, or the successful operations of the School or ECS.

2.2.4.2 Timeframes associated with complaints management system

The Policy requires complaints to *be responded to within reasonable timeframes and in keeping with any legislated requirements*. Complaints are assessed and priority given in accordance with the urgency of the issues raised. Complainants are advised of the complaints process; expected timeframes for actions; and their likely involvement in the process.

Acknowledgement of the receipt of a complaint should be as soon as practicable and in keeping with any legal requirements. Where at all possible, this should occur within three business days.

2.2.5 Fairness is embedded in the complaints management system

The Policy requires complaints to *be managed in a manner than is equitable, impartial, and unbiased*. It is also important that the complaints management system can be reasonably perceived in this manner.

When developing strategies for embedding fairness, at minimum:

- This commitment is communicated when sharing information about the Policy, or the School/Service's behavioural expectations of staff
- How people who are both raising and responding to complaints will be supported and how this will be monitored when a matter is being managed if proactively considered
- Systems are in place to address any behaviour that could be perceived as creating adverse effects towards the person who raised a concern.

To do so, consideration is given to the following key issues:

- Openness: The process is clearly communicated
- Impartial: When assessing an appropriate response to the complaint, consideration will be given to any bias or conflict of interest that would be reasonable to perceive and, where identified, steps taken to manage
- Confidential: Where it is reasonably possible, the process protects individual complainants' identity; and where a complaint relates to the conduct of a staff member, the details are limited to those who need to know for the complaint to be effectively managed (also see 2.2.7.3 below).
- Adverse effects: Action is taken to minimise adverse impacts on those who make a complaint or support a complainant
- Completeness: The relevant facts are sought to be determined through information gathering from relevant people or sources, and explanations verified whenever possible.

2.2.5.1 Complaints about staff

Complaints about staff are treated objectively. This implies, where practicable:

- Informing staff completely about complaints regarding their performance (noting commitment, where reasonably possible, to protect complainant's identity and seek to prevent adverse effects to complainants)
- Staff will be given the opportunity to explain the circumstances of the matter. Where possible, full details of the complaint will be provided to staff before they are interviewed or otherwise asked to respond
- Staff are allowed support through the process and work will be done to reassure them of this
- Staff are kept informed of the progress of investigations into and outcomes of the complaint.

Where possible the complaints management process will be seen as a learning experience and an opportunity to develop better understanding of the perspectives of complainants. In addition to the complaint management process, it is recognised that other processes, such as those related to performance management or child protection may also apply. These processes may impact on actions taken with staff.

2.2.6 Risk management is embedded in the complaints management system

A risk management approach that aims to act in a preventative manner and reduces the likelihood of harm is applied.

Local processes prompt and enable any information received to be assessed, and all appropriate actions taken to reduce a reasonably foreseeable danger to any persons.

This commonly occurs in consideration of other policies, such as the Protecting Children and Young People in Anglican Education Policy.

2.2.7 People focused complaints management system

The Policy requires that *people's right to complain is fostered*. In doing so, local processes have specific strategies in place, so as for each complaint:

- The complainant's needs and expectations are acknowledged
- The complainant has opportunity to be involved in the process, as far as practicable and appropriate
- All reasonable steps to be taken to prevent adverse effects to the complainant
- All reasonable steps are taken for early resolution of the complaint.

The Policy also requires that *all people are treated with courtesy, dignity and respect; and the needs of all people involved in the complaints process are recognised*. In doing so:

- the conduct expectations of complainants, their representatives or support, and those responding to the complaint, are communicated, and
- their support needs, where reasonably practicable, are met.

2.2.7.1 Conduct Expectations

Unreasonable conduct of complainants, or their authorised representative, is behaviour which, because of its nature or frequency, raises substantial health, safety, resource or equity issues for the people involved in the complaint process. Examples include unreasonable persistence, demands, lack of cooperation, arguments and behaviour.

Conduct or behavioural expectations of staff are described in relevant Code of Conduct or other approved documents, such as role descriptions, and are in keeping with the principles outlined in the Policy. Notably, they include remaining calm, showing respect, demonstrating impartiality and being professional.

Prevention

The following strategies are implemented to seek and encourage appropriate conduct:

- Management of expectations from the start. Provide communication about the complaints process as early as possible to avoid the development of unrealistic or unreasonable expectations
- Provide effective communication about conduct expectations. Recognise and respond to cultural differences. Use the understanding that cultural differences can affect perceptions of conduct as being reasonable or unreasonable, to proactively reduce or avoid conflict and confusion
- Insist on respect and cooperation. Insist that people show respect for and cooperate with staff, with the dual expectation that staff will consistently show the same behaviours towards complainants and their representatives.

- Implement local processes for managing unreasonable conduct, including this information in communication about the complaints management system, with all stakeholders and provide support for staff to effectively implement these processes.

Response

Where unreasonable conduct is identified, it is to be actively managed and strategies for dealing with the conduct are to be guided by the following objectives:

- Being reasonable and fair. The conduct does not preclude valid issues identified by the complaint being addressed. Review management of the complaint, to be assured it is being dealt with in a reasonable and fair manner. Responses are to be based on the merit of the complaint.
- Improvements to effectiveness and efficiency. Allocate sufficient time and resources to deal with unreasonable conduct, recognising that leaving unmanaged is likely to lead to a greater strain on resources.
- Protection of health and safety. Identify the potential risks posed by unreasonable conduct, to the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, and other persons (especially children in our care) and implement measures to sufficiently control these risks.

Avoid labelling a person by focusing on the problematic behaviour and respond to the behaviour openly and transparently.

Communicate effectively by providing clear, timely, firm and culturally or personally appropriate communication, including regularly informing them of the status of their complaint, even if there has been no progress.

2.2.7.2 Support

Appropriate support and practical assistance should be offered to all parties involved in a complaint management process. For example:

- Any complainant, witness, or person responding to concerns, can have a support person present during meetings regarding the complaint. A support person is different to an 'authorised representative' and this support person is to act only in the capacity of providing support and does not speak on the person's behalf. Examples of support activities include encouraging the person by providing emotional care or suggesting a rest period if a person appears visibly tired.
- Staff and volunteers may be referred to the Employee Assistance Service or like supports.
- Children and parents may be referred to local counselling and support services, including but not limited to, the School Counsellor or Chaplain or other supports offered by the School.

2.2.7.3 Privacy and confidentiality

Where possible, people's personal information, including identity, is kept confidential and privacy maintained. Of note, information may need to be shared where allowed to by law and necessary, for example, to effectively manage the complaint, or support the safety of persons or the successful operations of the School or ECS.

All information disclosed or recorded as part of a complaints management process must be managed in accordance with privacy legislation and principles. Prior to the sharing of information, consider whether consent is required from any party, or whether the sharing is otherwise allowed by law.

2.2.8 Continuous Improvement is embedded into the complaints management system

The policy requires *complaints management practices and outcomes to be reviewed for their effectiveness*.

With a focus on continuous improvement, complaints and their outcomes are recorded in a manner that allows for analysis, evaluation, and audit of the effectiveness of complaints management practices (also refer to section 2.4).

2.2.8.1 Analysis and Reporting Framework

With a focus on continuous improvement, an analysis and reporting framework is in place to facilitate review. The application of such framework is focused on seeking assurance:

- the monitoring of the complaints management system is undertaken and recorded
- complaints are recorded and corrective actions taken to prevent recurrence
- complaints management data is available for review.

Quarterly reporting

As per the Policy, on at least a quarterly basis, each School and ECS will report on:

- a) Numbers of complaints, from stage 2 on, that have been received
- b) The concerns associated with the complaints
- c) The actions taken by the School or ECS to respond to the concerns raised, including response timeframes.

This will occur through a written report to:

- a) In Schools, the School Council, or in the absence of a Council, their governing body (Board)
- b) In ECS, the delegate/s of their Approved Provider. For ECS, where ACSQ is the Approved Provider, this is both the Executive Director (ASC), and the Nominated Supervisor's line Manager.
- c) Note: This written report may form part of a larger report.

Annual Reporting

As per the Policy, on an annual basis an analysis will be made by each School and each ECS of complaints, from stage 2 on, that have been managed in the preceding twelve months.

At minimum, consideration will be given to:

- a) Effectiveness of the management of the complaints
- b) Trends or themes associated with the complaints, or their management
- c) Identification and rectification of systemic issues
- d) The identification of risks to the School or ECS and associated actions to mitigate such risks.

Suggested data analysis includes:

- a) Number of complaints and complainants
- b) Nature, severity and causes of complaints
- c) Average time taken to acknowledge and respond to complainants
- d) Time taken to handle complaints (from receipt to closure)
- e) Resource analysis, including staff time, external supports accessed and types of activities undertaken
- f) Trend analysis, including demographic analysis related to issues identified
- g) Actions taken to resolve, including remedies, determinations, and results
- h) Complainant satisfaction or otherwise with outcomes from complaint management.

This analysis will be provided as a written report to:

- a) In Schools, the School Council, or in the absence of a Council, their governing body (Board)
- b) In ECS, the delegate/s of their Approved Provider. For ECS, where ACSQ is the Approved Provider, this is both the Executive Director (ASC), and the Nominated Supervisor's line Manager.

2.3 Reinforcing Policy requirements

2.3.1 Applying a staged approach

Local operating procedures are consistent with the staged approach described in the Policy, and repeated here:

Schools and ECS operate a staged approach to the management of complaints. In most circumstances, complainants are encouraged to progress their complaint by starting with stage one, with any exclusions that apply detailed below (5.1.2). Stage two is an optional stage for each school or ECS' local operating procedures, due to varying organisational structures.

Stage	Who complaint is provided to (the receiver)	
	Schools	ECS
One	Seek resolution with the staff member whose conduct is in question.	
Two	Complain to an Appropriate Authority	
Three	Complain to the Principal	Complain to the Nominated Supervisor
Four	Complain to the school's Council Chair	Complain to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal (co-located ECS), or • Chair of the ECS Management Committee (if present)
Five	Complain to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director, ASC (where a school is owned or the ACSQ is the Approved Provider of the ECS), or • Chair of the governing body (Board) (other schools or ECS) 	

2.3.2 Responsibilities of staff who receive a complaint

Any staff member, where it could be perceived that they are receiving a complaint, must take the following actions. *If there is doubt, the matter is to be managed as a complaint and any relevant escalation to occur.*

- a) Respond to the potential complainant, or their representative by:
 - Being respectful and courteous
 - Clarifying whether the intention of the person providing feedback, or general concern, is for the matter to be handled as a complaint
 - Providing initial acknowledgement of the complaint received and assistance to make a complaint if necessary.
- b) Escalate a complaint to a later stage if required (see 2.3.3 below), e.g.
 - Complainant's discretion
 - Complaints related to the safety of a child or young person
 - Complaints related to an alleged breach of law (including regulations)
 - Escalate a complaint to, at least stage 3, where:
 - it is reasonable to identify a strategic risk to the School or ECS, or
 - the complaint relates to Licensed Clergy or lay person.
- c) Follow other relevant requirements related to the information provided, such as applying the Protecting Children and Young People in Anglican Education Policy
- d) Follow any procedures (local, or those detailed in this document), that implement this Policy into practice.

2.3.3 Stage Exclusions and Considerations

2.3.3.1 *Complainant's Discretion*

As per the Policy, a complaint can proceed to a further stage where a complainant, or their authorised representative, determines:

- the stage is not appropriate, or
- the complaint has not been addressed to their satisfaction.

2.3.3.2 *Complaints related to the conduct of any person at the school who is not a staff member*

Stage one is not to be used for complaints related to the conduct of any person at the school who is not a staff member, for example, a child, volunteer or visitor.

In these circumstances, the complainant or their authorised representative is to escalate the complaint to stage two or further.

Complaints in relation to visitors to the School

When a complaint is about a visitor to the School, the complainant is asked to, where known, provide the name of the visitor, the organisation that the visitor works for, the names of any children involved, if relevant, and any dates and times of particular incidents related to their complaint.

The person managing the complaint will:

- a) Consider the risk posed by the information provided in the complaint and follow other relevant requirements related to the information provided, such as following the Protecting Children and Young People in Anglican Education Policy
- b) Document the concerns and, unless the matter involves a criminal investigation, forward the complaint to the organisation that employs the visitor who has been named in the complaint. If the matter does relate to a criminal investigation, direction will be sought from the Police
- c) Consider the nature of the complaint and determine whether this may impact any future visits to the School, ECS, or associated business, by the person named in the complaint
- d) If the matter is being managed by another member of the leadership team, as soon as practicable, this member will brief the Principal or Nominated Supervisor.

2.3.3.3 *Complaints related to concerns for the safety of a child or young person*

Stage one is not to be used for complaints related to concerns for the safety of a child or young person.

In these circumstances, the complainant or their authorised representative is to escalate the complaint to stage two or further.

The person receiving the complaint must consider whether the Protecting Children and Young People in Anglican Education Policy applies, and if so, this is to occur in tandem with the management of the complaint.

For ECS' the person receiving the complaint must apply the following:

Relevant reporting requirements for ECS

Consistent with the Protecting Children and Young People in Anglican Education Policy, all complaints must be notified by the Approved Provider to the Regulatory Authority when they allege:

- physical or sexual abuse of a child or children has occurred or is occurring while a child is being educated and cared for by the ECS
- a Serious Incident, as defined by regulation 12 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*.

For ECS which the ACSQ is the Approved Provider, advice is to be made by attaching a [Protection Form](#) to an email addressed to the Executive Director of the ASC, at ecs@anglicanchurchsq.org.au, who, for those services, is delegated to meet the responsibilities of the Approved Provider.

The Approved Provider must provide this information to the Regulatory Authority in the timeframe detailed in the Regulation.

Topic of complaint	Timeframe for Approved Provider to notify
Physical or sexual abuse of a child while being educated and cared for by an ECS, that is not otherwise defined as a Serious Incident	Within 7 days of the relevant event or within 7 days of the approved provider becoming aware of the relevant information.
The death of a child while being educated and cared for by an ECS or following an incident while being educated and cared for by an ECS (one type of Serious Incident)	As soon as practicable but within 24 hours of the death, or the time that the person becomes aware of the death.
Any other Serious Incident (see below)	Within 24 hours of the incident or the time that the person becomes aware of the incident.

A Serious Incident, as defined by regulation 12 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* means:

(a) *the death of a child—*

(i) while that child is being educated and cared for by an ECS; or

(ii) following an incident occurring while that child was being educated and cared for by an ECS;

(b) *any incident involving serious injury or trauma to a child occurring while that child is being educated and cared for by an ECS –*

(i) which a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner; or

(ii) for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital;

Example - A broken limb.

(c) *any incident involving serious illness of a child occurring while that child is being educated and cared for by an ECS for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital;*

Example - Severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis reaction.

(d) *any emergency for which emergency services attended;*

(e) *any circumstance where a child being educated and cared for by an ECS -*

(i) appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for; or

(ii) appears to have been taken or removed from the ECS premises in a manner that contravenes these Regulations; or

(iii) is mistakenly locked in or locked out of the ECS premises or any part of the premises.

2.3.3.4 *Complaints related to an alleged breach of law (including Regulations)*

Stage one is not to be used for complaints related to an alleged breach of law (including Regulations).

In these circumstances, the complainant or their authorised representative is to escalate the complaint to stage two or further.

The person receiving the complaint must consider whether the Protecting Children and Young People in Anglican Education Policy applies; and if so, this is to occur in tandem with the management of the complaint.

Note, if the complaint relates to non-compliance with the Protecting Children and Young People in Anglican Education Policy, refer to 2.3.3.5 below.

For ECS' the person receiving the complaint must also apply the following:

Relevant reporting requirements for ECS

All complaints alleging any non-compliance with the *Education and Care Service National Law or Regulations* must be provided to the Approved Provider for determination regarding the need to notify the Regulatory Authority.

Examples include, but are not limited to, not taking reasonable precaution to protect children from harm or hazard, use of inappropriate discipline or insufficient supervision.

For ECS which the ACSQ is the Approved Provider, advice is to be made in an email addressed to the Executive Director of the ASC, at ecs@anglicanchurchsq.org.au, who, for those services, is delegated to meet the responsibilities of the Approved Provider.

Where applicable, the Approved Provider must provide this information to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of receiving the complaint, as detailed in the *Regulation*.

2.3.3.5 Complaint relates to non-compliance with the Protecting Children and Young People in Anglican Education Policy

Schools owned or controlled by the ACSQ, or where either the ACSQ or an owned or controlled School is the Approved Provider of the ECS, a complaint is to be made, in writing, to the Executive Director, ASC. This can occur through:

- Email to the Executive Director: asc@anglicanchurchsq.org.au
- Mail to the Executive Director: GPO Box 421, Brisbane, Qld, 4001.
- Contact details can also be obtained through the Anglican Schools Commission website: <https://www.ascqld.org/>

If the complaint relates to child sexual abuse, consistent with the Protocol for Responding to Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct, the Executive Director will report the matter to the Director of Professional Standards, ACSQ.

For other Anglican Schools, a complaint is to be made, in writing, to the Chair of the School's governing body (the Board). Local procedures include relevant contact details.

2.3.3.6 Where it is reasonable to identify a strategic risk

Complaints where it is reasonable to identify a strategic risk to the School, ECS or related business, are to be managed by stage 3 or further.

When being managed by Stage 3, Principals and Nominated Supervisors are to, as soon as practicable, brief stage 4 and 5 delegates.

2.3.3.7 Where the complaint relates to Licensed Clergy or lay person

Licensed Clergy or lay person is a person holding the Archbishop's licence to any special charge or cure or to the performance of any spiritual duty or service within the Diocese. Note, for other Queensland Dioceses (outside of ACSQ) this would be a Bishop's licence.

Complaints related to Licensed Clergy or lay person are to be managed by stage 3 or further.

Details of the complaint are to be provided to the relevant regional Bishop by the person responsible for managing the complaint.

When being managed by Stage 3, Principals and Nominated Supervisors are to, as soon as practicable, brief stage 4 and 5 delegates.

2.4 Response Management requirements

2.4.1 Record Keeping

2.4.1.1 Complaints Register

A Complaints Register is to be kept by each School, ECS or associated business. The Register is to keep a log of complaints and summarises the key information about each complaint, including, at minimum:

- Complainant/s
- Authorised representative/s (if applicable)
- Any relevant identifying numbers, e.g. enrolment or account number
- Person responsible for managing complaint
- Date complaint received
- Date complaint closed
- Location of detailed documentation.

2.4.1.2 Information to collect regarding a complaint

Where possible, the following information is to be collected from a complainant or their authorised representative:

- a) Date complaint received
- b) Complainant's personal details
- c) Who should be contacted regarding the complaint and their preferred contact details, e.g. the complainant or their authorised representative
- d) Any relevant identifying number, e.g. enrolment or account number
- e) Any special assistance or support needed by the complainant to properly interact about the complaint
- f) Whether the issue has been raised previously and any response, e.g. through an earlier stage
- g) Details/reasons for the complaint
- h) Details of outcome sought.

2.4.1.3 Minimal information to be recorded about handling a complaint

In addition to the information provided in 2.12.1.1 record:

- a) Details of person responsible for managing the complaint
- b) Evidence of acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint
- c) Review to identify any need for escalation
- d) Review to identify any application of other relevant requirements related to the information provided, such as following the Protecting Children and Young People in Anglican Education Policy
- e) Assessment of complaint and associated decision as to the method for handling the complaint
- f) Any new relevant information obtained that influences the complaint's management
- g) Relevant information from the method used to handle the complaint, including, where relevant, analysis and conclusions
- h) Updates provided to the complainant or their authorised representative
- i) Outcomes of the complaint, including, where relevant, recommendations
- j) Other relevant actions taken
- k) Date complaint closed.

2.4.1.4 Further comments on record keeping

When recording information in relation to a complaints management process, ensure all records are accurate and filed in a manner that is retrievable and in keeping with any privacy and record retention requirements.

2.4.2 Allocating a complaint manager

Local processes are to clearly articulate how a complaint is allocated to a person for their management. This allocation is to be consistent to the staged process and any applicable exclusions or considerations.

The person managing the complaint is responsible for the following, consulting with other relevant staff or leaders where of benefit to the effective management of the complaint:

- Deciding method for complaint handling and if so, by whom
- How quickly it will be dealt with, the priority and resources it will be given
- The appropriateness of the outcome achieved.

Persons responsible for managing complaints must:

- Be able to identify and respond to people's support and communication needs
- Treat complainants, their representatives in a respectful and courteous manner
- Follow policy, guidelines and procedures.

2.4.3 Acknowledge complaint and advise of intended method for complaint handling.

In a timely way, meeting any legal requirements and where at all practicable within a maximum of three business days, acknowledge receipt of complaint to the complainant or their authorised representative.

At this time, or as soon as practicable afterwards, advise the complainant, or their authorised representative, of:

- confirmation of person who is responsible for managing the complaint
- intended method for handling the complaint
- likely process to be followed, included any expected steps to provide an update or outcome.

2.4.4 Methods for handling complaints

The complaint will be assessed by the person managing the complaint and a decision made as to the appropriate method for handling the complaint. This decision may be revisited during the response management, for example, when new information is being considered.

Information, usually provided by the complainant, will be used to determine if and how the complaint can be dealt with. Issues usually considered include:

- Nature, complexity, seriousness and urgency of the matters alleged
- The complainants desired outcome
- Whether there is any utility in taking the matter further
- The adequacy of the information provided
- The options available to address the complainant's concerns
- The appropriate level at which the matters alleged or complained about, can be addressed.

2.4.4.1 Internal options

- a) Internally facilitated resolution. Where the person managing the complaint talks with the complainant, or their authorised representative, to see if a mutually acceptable resolution can be achieved. Where appropriate, this process may include facilitating a discussion between staff and the complainant.
- b) Internal investigation. Investigating allegations that raise significant issues for the complainant or for the operations of the School, ECS or associated business. Depending on the circumstances, such investigations may be undertaken by another appropriate staff member.
- c) Internal review. People who receive complaints in stages 2 to 5, or a senior member of staff with whom they have delegated, may review the decisions made and make recommendations for previous decisions to be changed or other remedies applied.

2.4.4.2 External Options

- a) Externally facilitated Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). An independent third party, such as a professional mediator, may be engaged to help resolve an escalating dispute. The mediator, through a formal face to face process of discussion, helps the parties to clarify the issues and reach mutually acceptable solutions.
- b) External investigation. Investigating allegations that raise significant issues for the complainant or for the operations of the School, ECS or associated business. Depending on the circumstances, such investigations may be undertaken by an external investigator, under contact.

2.4.5 Complaint Analysis

In seeking to identify the reasons why a complaint has been made, and in seeking to prevent a problem reoccurring, problems should be analysed. To do so, the following process is suggested:

- a) Use the information from the complaint to define the problem/s
- b) Identify the goal/s that have been impacted
- c) Collect information that is reasonably able to be obtained and relevant to informing the analysis
- d) Identify possible causal factors for the problem
- e) Seek to identify the root causes of the problem

In seeking to identify the root cause, each possible causal factor should be analysed separately, asking why it occurred, until the root cause is identified (arbitrarily this is estimated to be asking why five times to determine the origin of the problem).

The identification of root causes are of most benefit when they are within control or influence of the school, ECS or associated business, to change or remedy.

Recommendations for change or remedy should be focused on causes, including root causes, of problems identified.

2.4.6 Outcomes

2.4.6.1 Informing complainants of outcomes

When the person managing the complaint is of the view that the complaint has been addressed, inform the complainant of the outcome. If the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, explain the reasons for the decision and offer possible alternatives to the complainant, such as escalation to a further stage or appeal.

2.4.6.2 Recognition of wrongdoing

When things go wrong, many complainants want to be listened to, understood, respected and where appropriate, provided with an explanation or apology. A prompt and sincere apology may avoid an escalation of a dispute.

Effective apologies describe and recognise the wrongdoing and acknowledge the impact to the complainant.

Where appropriate, the complainant should be also provided with:

- An explanation of the cause or reasons for the problem, or a commitment for these causes to be further explored or investigated.
- An appropriate and sincere expression of regret (apology).
- Provision of redress, such as the action taken or intended to be taken to address the problem, mitigate the impact and/or avoid future occurrences.

2.4.7 Appeals and other actions

In addition to progressing through the stages of complaints (see section 2.3.1), complainants can also seek appeal.

- For Schools or ECS within the ACSQ catchment, any person who has made a complaint in accordance with this Policy and is dissatisfied with the complaint management, may make an appeal to the Archbishop of the Diocese of Brisbane (ACSQ). See section 4 for further information.
- For other Queensland Anglican Schools or ECS, an appeal can be made with the respective Bishop (e.g. the Bishop for North Queensland).

Complaints and appeals do not limit the complainant's ability to take actions they consider appropriate in the circumstances, such as contact with an appropriate statutory authority; contact with a legal practitioner to obtain advice; or other action required or authorised by law.

3. Procedures for Stage 5, where complaint is provided to the Executive Director, ASC

This occurs when:

- ACSQ is the Approved Provider of the Education & Care Service (ECS), or
- a School is owned or controlled by the ACSQ.

Consistent with and mindful of the Complaints Management in Anglican Education Policy, the Executive Director, ASC will:

- a) Publish communication about the complaints management process on the ASC website
- b) Receive complaints either verbally, or in writing (including electronically). Complainants, or their authorised representatives are asked to provide the following information:
 - i. Complainant's personal details
 - ii. Who should be contacted regarding the complaint and their preferred contact details, e.g. the complainant or their authorised representative
 - iii. Any relevant identifying number, e.g. enrolment or account number
 - iv. Any special assistance or support needed by the complainant to properly interact about the complaint
 - v. Whether the issue has been raised previously and any response, e.g. through an earlier stage
 - vi. Details/reasons for the complaint
 - vii. Details of outcome sought
- c) The Executive Director will acknowledge the complaint, using the preferred contact details of the complainant or their representative, in a timely manner and in keeping with any legislative requirements. At minimum this is expected to be within three business days of receipt of the complaint.

In doing so, the Executive Director may seek to clarify aspects of the complaint, including whether it is intended to be handled as a complaint or as feedback/ expression of general concern.

The Executive Director will also seek to engage regarding identified assistance or support needs, especially related to the ability to provide necessary information to inform the complaint's management.

- d) The Executive Director will review the complaint and, at their discretion, seek assistance of internal and external resources, to undertake the following:
 - i. Application of other requirements that may apply, such as:
 - Reporting relevant matters to the Regulatory Authority, as per the *Education and Care Service National Law and Regulations* (see sections 2.3.3.3 and 2.3.3.4 of preceding guidelines)
 - Following the Protecting Children and Young People in Anglican Education Policy
 - Reporting allegations of non-compliance with the Protecting Children and Young People in Anglican Education Policy and related to child sexual abuse, to the Director of Professional Standards, ACSQ
 - Reporting concerns about a Licensed Person or Clergy to the relevant regional Bishop.

- ii. Undertake an assessment of the concerns to decide how the complaint will be handled, with what priority and resources. This will likely include contact with School or ECS representatives and gathering of information from these sources. This assessment will be undertaken with reference to sections 2.4.4 and 2.4.5 of the preceding guidelines on methods for handling complaints and complaints analysis
- iii. Inform the complainant, or their authorised representative, of:
 - confirmation of the intention to manage their complaint
 - the intended method for handling the complaint
 - the likely process to be followed, including expected participation and timeframes to provide updates and the outcome.
- iv. Arrange for complaints handling method to be applied
- v. Provide updates and outcomes as appropriate
- vi. Ensure complaint information is recorded as per section 2.4.1 of the preceding guidelines
- vii. Provide information on complaint management to assist the school, ECS or associated business in assurance reporting, as per section 2.2.8 of the preceding guidelines.

4. Appeal of a complaint process or outcome

Any person who has made a complaint in accordance with the Complaints Management in Anglican Education Policy and who is dissatisfied with the complaint management, may make an appeal to the Archbishop. The appeal is to be made in writing, clearly stating the grounds on which it is believed the complaint has not been properly dealt with and contain full details of all relevant information regarding the original complaint. If the Archbishop considers it necessary, assistance may be offered to the person to put the complaint in writing.

Contact details for the Archbishop can be found on the [ACSQ website](#).

For the purposes of the appeal, the Archbishop will liaise with:

- the Executive Director or Chair of the ASC (for Schools owned or controlled by ACSQ, or for ECS where ACSQ is the Approved Provider), or
- the Chair of the School's governing body or the Approved Provider of the ECS (for controlled or other Anglican Schools and ECS within the ACSQ catchment).

Referred to as the Executive Director, Chair, or Approved Provider.

The Archbishop will refuse to consider the appeal until the Executive Director, Chair, or Approved Provider has had a reasonable opportunity to review the original decision or action through its internal process, unless the complaint is about a decision or action of the Chair or Approved Provider.

The Archbishop or delegate may make preliminary inquiries to the Executive Director, Chair, or Approved Provider, to decide whether a matter should be reviewed without a formal investigation process or dismissed. If a matter does not lead to a formal investigation, it may be dealt with at a later date if additional information is provided.

4.1 Outcome

If the Archbishop considers that the action to which the matter relates was appropriate in the circumstances, they will advise this in writing to both the complainant and Executive Director, Chair, or Approved Provider.

If the Archbishop considers that the action to which the matter relates -

- a) was taken contrary to law; or
- b) was contrary to any Church Canon; or
- c) was unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, or improperly discriminatory; or
- d) was in accordance with a practice that is or may be unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, or improperly discriminatory in the particular circumstance; or
- e) was taken for an improper purpose; or on irrelevant grounds; or having regard to irrelevant considerations; or was an action for which reasons should have been given, but were not given; or was based wholly or partly on a mistake of law or fact; or was wrong; or was pastorally inadequate.

the Archbishop may recommend:

- a) that the action be referred to the Executive Director, Chair, or Approved Provider for further consideration; or
- b) that action can be, and should be, taken to rectify, mitigate or alter the effects of, the action; or

- c) that any practice in accordance with which the action was taken should be varied; or
- d) that reasons, or further reasons, should be given for the action; or
- e) that any other steps should be taken.

Without limiting possible recommendations, the Executive Director, Chair, or Approved Provider may be given an opportunity to respond in writing or attend a meeting with the Archbishop and the complainant, or separately, with a view to determining whether resolution of the complaint can be achieved by mediation. The meeting/s may be facilitated by a person who, in the opinion of the Archbishop, would by training or experience, be suitable.

The matter may be resolved through mediation with all parties in the spirit of openness and fairness. A support person may accompany all or any of the parties. Written notes will be signed confirming they represent an accurate summary of the discussion and of any consensus reached.

Should mediation fail to result in resolution, the matter will be referred to the Archbishop, for consideration, who may then call a meeting of the parties either separately or together. The Archbishop may provide for further mediation which may include Executive Director, Chair, or Approved Provider, or make a recommendation as to steps to be taken.

The Archbishop may ask the Executive Director, Chair or Approved Provider to notify within a stated time of:

- a) the steps taken, or proposed to be taken, to give effect to the recommendations; or
- b) if no steps, or only some steps, have been or are proposed to be taken, to give effect to the recommendations, the reasons for not taking all the steps necessary to give effect to the recommendations.

If it appears to the Archbishop that no appropriate steps have been taken within a reasonable time, after giving the Executive Director, Chair or Approved Provider, the report; and within that time, the Archbishop has considered any comments made by or for the Executive Director, Chair, or Approved Provider; and the Archbishop considers it appropriate; the Archbishop may refer the matter to the Archbishop-in-Council for consideration.

4.2 Investigation Procedures

If the Archbishop decides that an investigation into a complaint is necessary, the Executive Director, Chair or Approved Provider, will be given written notice informing them of the investigation and providing in general terms, the nature and extent of the complaint.

The Archbishop may seek assistance from the Executive Director, Chair or Approved Provider, in the investigation of a complaint, including the production of;

- a) a particular document or other particular thing relevant to the investigation, or a copy of a particular document; or
- b) all documents of a particular type containing information relevant to the investigation, or copies of documents of the particular type.

The Archbishop, when responding to a complaint:

- a) will be satisfied that the matter is not being or likely to be dealt with in a criminal, civil or industrial court or before a tribunal; and
- b) will be satisfied that the matter is not one more properly dealt with under the provisions of the *Professional Standards Canon* as amended; and
- c) will conduct the investigation in a way that maintains confidentiality; and

- d) will not be constrained by the rules of evidence, but will observe the rules of natural justice; and
- e) is not required to hold a hearing for the investigation; and
- f) may obtain information from the persons, and in the way considered appropriate; and
- g) may make all inquiries considered appropriate.

The Archbishop may refuse to investigate a complaint or, having started to investigate a complaint, may refuse to continue the investigation if it is considered that:

- a) the complainant has not given the Executive Director, Chair or Approved Provider a reasonable opportunity to consider the matter of complaint; or
- b) the matter of complaint pertains to a civil, criminal or industrial issue, or is before or is likely to go before an appropriate adjudicative body; or
- c) the complaint does not have serious purpose, is vexatious or is not made in good faith; or
- d) the complainant does not have a sufficient interest in the action complained of; or
- e) the complainant has a right of appeal, reference or review, or another remedy, that the person has not exhausted, and it would be reasonable in the circumstances to require the person to exhaust the right or remedy before the Archbishop investigates, or continues to investigate, the complaint; or
- f) the complainant had a right of appeal, reference or review, or another remedy that is exhausted and, in the circumstances, the investigation, or the continuance of the investigation, of the action complained of is unnecessary or unjustifiable; or
- g) the complainant first had notice of the subject matter of the complaint more than 12 months earlier than the day on which complaint is made to the Archbishop. The Archbishop may accept a complaint outside the period referred to above if it is considered proper to accept the complaint because of the existence of special circumstances.

If the Archbishop cannot investigate a complaint; or refuses to investigate a complaint; or refuses to continue an investigation of a complaint; then the Archbishop will inform the complainant, in writing, of the decision and the reasons for the decision as soon as reasonably practicable.

If it appears to the Archbishop that irretrievable consequences could result from the exercise of particular action, the Archbishop may recommend to the Executive Director, Chair, or Approved Provider, that the particular action be held in abeyance until the investigation is concluded. Without being exhaustive, unauthorised expenditure or the deletion or destruction of records are situations which might require this recommendation.

4.3 Pastoral Support

If the Archbishop decides to conduct an investigation, the Archbishop may appoint one or more persons to make contact with and provide pastoral support to the complainant; Executive Director, Chair, or Approved Provider; and relevant School and ECS staff or volunteers.

4.4 Natural Justice

If the Archbishop proposes to make an adverse comment about a person in a report, the proposed adverse comment will not be made unless, before the report is prepared, the Archbishop gives the person an opportunity to make submissions about the proposed adverse comment. If the person makes submissions and the Archbishop still proposes to make the adverse comment, the person's defence will be fairly stated in the report.

If, during an investigation of a complaint, the Archbishop considers there may be grounds for making a report and recommendations on the investigation that may affect or concern the ASC, the School or ECS, the Archbishop before making a report, will give the Executive Director, Chair, or Approved Provider, an opportunity to comment on the proposed report and recommendations.

If, during or after the investigation, the Archbishop considers there is evidence of a breach of duty or misconduct on the part of an employee or member of the ASC or School, the Archbishop will give a report about the breach of duty or misconduct to the Executive Director, Chair, or Approved Provider; and may, if the Archbishop considers it appropriate in the circumstances, send a copy of the report to the Executive Director, Chair, or Approved Provider.

4.5 Delegations

The Archbishop may delegate to an officer of the Diocese or to an external person or agency, the Archbishop's powers to review a matter but not the power to make a report or recommendation to the Executive Director, Chair, or Approved Provider.

4.6 Confidentiality

The Archbishop, the delegate, the ASC, the School or ECS or an officer or employee thereof who obtains information in the course of a preliminary inquiry, or an investigation will not disclose the information other than as a part of:

- a) the performance of the function; or
- b) formulating a report about the performance of the function; or
- c) formulating a recommendation arising out of the performance of the function; or
- d) as otherwise allowed by law.

5. Definitions

Term	Definition
ACSQ catchment	The ACSQ catchment covers an area of more than a half a million square kilometres, from Bundaberg in north central Queensland to Coolangatta on the New South Wales border and west to the borders of South Australia and the Northern Territory.
Appropriate Authority	<p>An Appropriate Authority in a School refers to members of the senior or executive leadership team who include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal. • The Deputy Principal, Heads of ‘Schools’ (e.g. Junior, Middle, Senior), Assistant Heads, Deputy Heads, Deans and Directors. <p>An Appropriate Authority in an ECS refers to the Director/Coordinator or Nominated Supervisor of the Service.</p>
Approved Provider	<p>An Approved Provider holds provider approval for the Education and Care Service under the <i>Education and Care Service National Law Act 2010</i>.</p> <p>The ACSQ is the Approved Provider for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carey Lane Early Learning Centre (ELC) • Coomera Anglican College ELC and Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) • Fraser Coast Koala Kindy and Roos Care OSHC • Little Angels Salisbury ELC • Riverwalk Robina ELC • St Alban’s Wilston Early Childhood Centre • St Andrew’s Little Saints ELC and OSHC • St Luke’s ELC • St Hilda’s Pre-preparatory and OSHC • St Paul’s ELC • Sunnybank Anglican Parish OSHC • The Glennie Community Kindergarten and Pitstop OSHC • The Southport School Pre-preparatory and OSHC • Toowoomba Anglican School Kindergarten and OSHC
Complainant	A complainant is a person or organisation making the complaint, or having the complaint made on their behalf by an authorised representative.
Complaint	A complaint is the expression of dissatisfaction made to or about a School or ECS, related to its service, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. (ISO 10002)
Education & Care Services (ECS)	Commonly referred to as an Early Learning Centre, Kindergarten or Outside Hours School Care Service (including Vacation Care), an ECS is a service regulated by the <i>Education and Care Service National Law Act 2010</i> .

Licensed Clergy or lay person	<p>A person holding the Archbishop's licence to any special charge or cure or to the performance of any spiritual duty or service within the Diocese.</p> <p>Note, for other Queensland Dioceses (outside of ACSQ) this would be a Bishop's licence.</p>
Nominated Supervisor (ECS)	<p>Nominated Supervisor means an individual who is nominated by the Approved Provider of the ECS under the <i>Education and Care Service National Law Act 2010</i> to be a Nominated Supervisor of that ECS; and who has provided written consent to that nomination.</p>
Principal	<p>Consistent with the <i>Education (General Provisions) Act 2006</i>, a Principal is the person responsible for the entire school's day-to-day management. Also known as a Head of the School, Headmaster/mistress or other similar title.</p>
School	<p>A School is a non-state school administered by the <i>Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017</i>.</p>
School: controlled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannon Hill Anglican College • St John's Anglican College • The Springfield Anglican College
School: other	<p>Anglican Schools which are not owned or controlled by ACSQ and have adopted this Policy.</p>
School: owned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie) • Coomera Anglican College • Fraser Coast Anglican College • St Andrew's Anglican College • St Hilda's School • St Luke's Anglican School • St Paul's School • The Glennie School • The Southport School • Toowoomba Anglican School • West Moreton Anglican College
Strategic Risk	<p>Strategic risk is the risk that an internal or external event may prevent the School, ECS or ACSQ from executing or achieving its strategic objectives. For example, through financial or reputational impact.</p>
Whistleblowing	<p>Whistleblowing is the deliberate, voluntary disclosure of individual or organisational Wrongdoing by a person who has or had privileged access to data, events or information about an actual, suspected or anticipated Wrongdoing within or by an organisation that is within its ability to control. Wrongdoing is behaviour within or by an organisation that is within its ability to control that is not legal, ethical or moral; and is serious in nature.</p>