



TOWNSVILLE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

COMMUNICATIONS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

Purpose	The following policy and procedures have been developed by the School to assist parents in communicating with the School and to provide information about the principles and procedures pertaining to the making of and response to concerns and complaints from parties outside the School.		
Scope	Parents/carers, students, other members of the School community 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 at Townsville Grammar School.		
References	Child Protection Policy		
Reviewed	Annually	Next Review Date	January 2025
Policy Owner	Deputy Principal		

Policy

COMMUNICATIONS

All Staff are committed to assisting parents/carers in providing information or addressing issues related to students' schooling at Townsville Grammar School. Teaching staff will respond to parents' enquiries and requests as soon as availability around their teaching schedule allows them to do so. In addition to teaching commitments, teaching staff cannot always be available, due to circumstances such as Professional Development; student activities such as camps and excursions; other School commitments and personal absences.

For urgent matters, parents/carers are encouraged to speak with reception staff, who are to assist in locating appropriate staff members.

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

A concern is a verbal or written inquiry or question relating to School policies, procedure, practices or specific instances or occurrences requiring a response from a School employee. A complaint is a verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction relating to policies, procedures, practices, services, facilities or behaviour, where the complainant is seeking a response, conclusion or remedy.

A concern or complaint may be expressed by a:

- Parent/carer
- Student
- Member of the extended School community
- Member of the public
- External provider of educational or other services to the School
- Member of staff

A concern or complaint can include any matter related to:

- The education of a student
- The pastoral care of a student
- The delivery of education by a member of staff or external provider

- The pastoral care given by a member of staff
- School organisation and management
- The behavior of a student, member of staff or parent, volunteer or external provider when engaged in School-related activities

Communication of a Concern or Complaint

A concern or complaint may be communicated initially by a variety of means, including by phone, in person, letter or email. A complainant may be asked to express their concerns in writing for matters raised to be clarified and addressed. Complainants are encouraged to address the issue and not the person and should communicate with in a cooperative and collegial manner, along with the member of staff addressed in the complaint.

Specific Procedures: Handling of Complaints

1. A complaint is handled by the appropriate person

- In the first instance the resolution of a complaint may be attempted by the staff member initially contacted, but it is preferable for the matter to be quickly passed to the appropriate staff member.
- If a member of middle or senior management is approached first, they may ask the complainant to speak to the appropriate staff member.
- Where the complainant finds difficulty in speaking directly to the appropriate staff member, they may contact the next appropriate person in management. For example, a Head of Faculty is contacted about a subject-related matter; a Year Level Co-ordinator/Head of House is contacted about a pastoral care matter.
- Complaints made anonymously or from complainants requiring their identity to be concealed from a respondent will not be investigated.

2. Members of staff are informed of a complaint

- If a complaint is made about a member of staff to a member of middle or senior management, the member of staff is informed of the substance of the complaint and name(s) of the complainant as soon as possible.
- The member of middle management or senior management will discuss the appropriate response strategy with the staff member concerned.
- Information relating to the complaint is only given to those members of staff who are directly involved in resolving it.
- Staff members ensure that information gained as a result of either the complaint or staff disclosure, while a matter of record, remains confidential under the terms of Privacy Legislation.
- Where necessary the Principal or Deputy Principal/Head of School becomes directly involved with the complaint procedures.

3. A complaint is expressed and received in an appropriate manner

- A complainant may be asked to express their concerns in writing in order for matters raised to be clarified and addressed.
- Complainants should be encouraged to address the issue and not the person.
- Complainants and members of staff address the complaint in a cooperative and collegial manner.
- Complaints or concerns are addressed as soon as possible. Where parents/carers and community members lodge a complaint with a staff member, receipt of the complaint or concern is generally acknowledged within five working days.
- Staff and complainants recognize that immediate solutions are not always identifiable, applicable or possible.
- Staff respond to complaints in a professional manner.

4. Certain kinds of complaint are addressed by specific processes

- In resolution of a complaint, the appropriate School policy is used where it exists.
- Child Protection allegations are subject to legislation, the Child Protection Policy and are referred to the Principal.

5. Interviews are part of the resolution procedure

- Where appropriate an interview is arranged to address, investigate and/or resolve a complaint.
- An interview can have one or more purposes, for example:
 - To clarify or explain a complaint or response
 - To allow for mediation
 - To allow for an apology
- Interviews take place in a pre-arranged time and place.
- The people in attendance at an interview can include: the complainant, the respondent, a member of middle or senior management.

6. Procedures are in place when a resolution cannot be achieved

- Where resolution is not achieved, the member of middle or senior management may decide on one or more courses of action, for example:
 - Refer the matter to the Principal
 - Dismiss the complaint
 - Declare that a resolution is not possible
 - Uphold the complaint and implement specific action to address the concerns
 - Determine that both parties are at fault and address their behavior

7. Contact details of relevant staff

- Specific contact details for key staff are found in the School Handbook distributed each year by the School.

The general School telephone numbers are:

- North Ward Campus 07 4722 4900
- Annandale Campus 07 4412 4800
- North Shore Campus 07 4412 6600