

**Complaints Handling Procedure****QP.003**

<b>Purpose:</b>	The purpose of this document is to ensure the Complaints Handling process is followed consistently and efficiently. To ensure compliance and continuous improvement.	
<b>Scope:</b>	<p>This document provides detailed instructions in respect to the Complaints Handling Procedure and is based on the principles outlined in the Complaints Handling Policy P.05.</p> <p>This procedure applies to employees, students, parents, volunteers, contractors and those undertaking work experience or vocational placement.</p>	
<b>Status:</b>	Approved	<b>Supersedes: V1</b>
<b>Authorised by:</b>	Board Chair	<b>Date of Authorisation:</b> 14/5/2021
<b>References:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaint Form IF.009</li> <li>• Records to Archive Form IF.013</li> <li>• Complaints Register (admin drive)</li> <li>• Sinai College Complaints Handling Policy P.05</li> <li>• Sinai College Work Health and Safety Policy P.09</li> <li>• Sinai College Anti-discrimination Policy P.13</li> <li>• Sinai College Student Code of Conduct and Positive Behaviour Policy P.16</li> <li>• Sinai College Sexual Harassment Policy P.17</li> <li>• Sinai College Staff Code of Conduct P.18</li> <li>• Sinai College Student Bullying Policy P.19</li> <li>• Sinai College Workplace Bullying Policy P.20</li> </ul>	
<b>Review Date:</b>	Annually	<b>Next Review Date:</b> 20/7/2022
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	School Board	

**Definitions and Principles**

- AO Administration Officer

The following principles inform the content of this procedure:

- Commitment
  - Sinai College will investigate all complaints in accordance with this policy.
- Responsiveness
  - Complaints will be dealt with promptly, every endeavour will be made to ensure complaints are addressed within 2 business/working days from when the complaint is received by the School. The process and the time needed to resolve an issue will vary depending on the nature and complexity of the issue.



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- Accessibility and visibility
  - The existence of this complaint handling policy and procedures, its purpose and the method of accessing it will be promoted internally for staff and externally to the community, via the Sinai College website, and staff and parent handbooks.
- Procedural fairness
  - The principles of procedural fairness will be followed in all aspects of complaint handling. Procedural fairness includes:
    - giving you the opportunity to put your case
    - offering reasonable assistance to you to enable the complaint to be made and to know the complaint handling procedures
    - informing the respondent of the substance of the complaint and providing an opportunity to respond
    - providing the respondent with information about the complaint investigation process including outcomes
    - handling the complaint process confidentially
    - determining complaints as expeditiously as possible and advising you and the respondent of the outcome of the investigation;
    - assessing the facts and circumstances of the situation objectively and determining the complaint fairly and equitably;
    - providing you with details of the determination and reasons for the decision
    - informing you and the respondent of any avenue for review
- Confidentiality
  - Confidentiality is an obligation to the provider of information while privacy is an obligation to the subject of the information. In making a complaint you can feel secure that your complaint will remain confidential. Confidentiality will be respected at all times within the constraints of the need to fully investigate the complaint unless there are significant concerns about the wellbeing of an individual. The obligation to maintain confidentiality extends also to you as the complainant and to the respondent.
- Equity
  - The complaints handling process needs to be accessible and additional assistance may be available to you if you are from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, have a disability or are a young person.
- No victimisation
  - If you make a complaint in good faith you will be protected from detrimental action including victimisation or unfair treatment.
- Vexatious or malicious complaints
  - There is an underlying assumption that complaints are made in good faith (and with good will) and with an intention for resolution as opposed to retribution.



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- Anonymous complaints
  - Anonymous complaints do not reflect the principles outlined above. If you make an anonymous verbal complaint to Sinai College you will be encouraged to identify yourself in order for the procedures outlined in this policy to be implemented fully. If you choose to remain anonymous, then in the case of verbal complaints you will be informed that the complaint may not be acted upon.
- With respect to child protection matters (not covered by the Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures) concerns report to Community Services will require personal identification.
- What are the possible outcomes?
  - A complaint may be resolved in a variety of ways. This will depend on whether or not the complaint is substantiated, the seriousness of the matter, the wishes of the complainant and the nature of the working relationship of the persons involved. A complaint is said to be substantiated if the person investigating it believes that on the balance of probabilities the allegation did occur.
- If the complaint is upheld or sustained, the following are some possible outcomes depending on the nature of the complaint:
  - an agreement between you and other parties
  - a verbal or written apology
  - the review of a policy or procedure
  - mediation
  - targeted professional development opportunity or training
  - dissemination of information
  - referral to counselling
  - directions about further interaction between the you and other parties to the complaint
  - where a staff member is the subject of the complaint, disciplinary action may follow
  - where a student is the subject of the complaint, a range of sanctions as set out in Sinai College discipline policy may be invoked



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## Steps

### 1. Complaints Form IF.009 - LODGED

- Form should be completed by the complainant as soon as possible after the issue arises.
- Provide complete and factual information.
- Do not provide deliberately false or misleading information.
- Anonymous complaints will be treated on their merits.
- Form is provided to Principal, **marked Private and Confidential**.

### 2. Initial Discussion

- Where possible, the Principal will meet in person with the complainant in an attempt to resolve the complaint with as little formality and disruption as possible.
- A copy of the Complaints Handling Procedure QP.003 is made available to all parties involved.

### 3. Complaints Register

- Administration Officer will enter details on the Complaints Register.
- Complaints Form IF.009 will be updated to reflect this.
- Confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible.

### 4. Insured Risk

- If a complaint could be connected to an insured risk, the school's insurer Work Cover Queensland must be informed.
- Complaints Register is updated to reflect this.

### 5. Complaints Form IF.009 - FILED

- Administration Officer will scan a copy of the completed form into the relevant electronic file (CONFIDENTIAL Complaints Folder on m drive).
- Administration Officer will file the hard copy form in the Complaints File (in Principals Office)
- Complaints Register is updated to reflect this.

### 6. Appropriate Person Appointed

- If the complaint has not been resolved during the initial discussion, the Principal will appoint an appropriate person to deal with the complaint in the first instance.
- Complaints Register is updated to reflect this.



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### 7. Mediation / Negotiation / Discussion

- During mediation or discussions, the Principal will ensure appropriate support is provided to all parties to a complaint and will take appropriate action to prevent victimisation or action in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.
- All parties to a dispute will ensure they act in good faith, and in a calm, courteous and non-threatening manner. They must acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties.
- The **privacy and confidentiality of all parties must be maintained** and respected.
- Complaints Register is updated to reflect any outcome or resolution reached during the mediation, negotiation or discussions.

### 8. Review Pathway

- If warranted, the school will provide all parties to a complaint an opportunity for review.
- If you have been involved with a complaint matter and you have concerns regarding the complaints process or believe the outcome to be unfair, you may refer the matter to the Principal or if it involves the Principal, the Members of the Board, where the investigation process will be reviewed and a decision made as to whether these procedures have been followed and reasonably determined. Depending on the outcome of this investigation either no further action may follow or there may be further consideration of the matter.
- This procedure does not limit your right to use other available agencies and processes, such as the Privacy Commissioner, the Ombudsman, the workplace regulator or legal processes.
- Complaints are handled objectively and fairly with appropriate confidentiality, remedies are provided where complaints are upheld, and there is a system for review for finalised complaints.
- Complaints Register is updated to reflect this.

### 9. Reporting – Complaints Register

- The Principal must make the Complaints Register available to the Board of Directors for regular reviews.

### 10. Archiving

- In accordance with the Sinai College Records Retention Procedure QP.002, records relating to a complaint (Governance Records; Legal or Accountability) must be retained permanently.

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