



Concerns, Complaints, and Disputes Policy Statement

Kerry Street Community School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and guardians and takes seriously any complaints and concerns that may be raised. A full copy of the school's Concerns, Complaints, and Disputes policy and procedure is available for download at: kerrystreet.wa.edu.au/about/school-policies or a hardcopy can be obtained from the school Administration office. If you are unable to attend the school in person you are welcome to ring us on 08 9335 1471 and request a copy to be sent to you by mail.

Please see below for some brief information and some 'FAQs' about our complaints system.

A concern or complaint will be treated as a matter, or as an expression, of genuine dissatisfaction that needs a response.

We wish to ensure that:

- parents and guardians wishing to express a concern know how to do so;
- complainants realise that we listen and take complaints seriously;
- we respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way;
- matters raised are investigated according to the school's policy and procedure; and
- we take action where appropriate.

'How should I complain?'

Members of staff will be happy to help. It may be best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue – e.g., the classroom teacher, or subject teacher. They may be able to sort things out quickly, with the minimum of fuss. However, you may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff, for example the Deputy Principal or the Principal.

You can contact the school in person, by telephone on 08 9335 1471, at kerrystreet@kerrystreet.wa.edu.au, by submitting a message on the school's website, or by letter to PO Box 48, Hamilton Hill, WA 6963. Please ask if you require some assistance in expressing your concern.

When you contact the school, please ask to speak to the Principal or the Deputy Principal. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you.

‘I don’t want to complain as such, but there is something bothering me’

The school is here for you and your child, and we want to hear your views and your ideas. You can start by contacting a member of staff, as described above.

‘I am not sure whether to complain or not’

If you have a concern you are entitled to raise it. If in doubt, you should contact the school, as we are here to help.

‘What will happen next?’

If you raise something face-to-face or by telephone, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction.

If you have made a complaint or suggestion in writing, we will contact you within five (5) working days, to respond to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed.

In many circumstances, the person you contact will need to discuss the matter with a colleague and consider it further before responding. You will be given a date by which time you will receive a response. If a detailed exploration of the issue is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible. This will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

Please be aware that in some cases the school will not be able to discuss the details of action taken as it would be inappropriate. For example, if the action involved staff discipline. Under its legal obligation the school is also not able to divulge information on matters which require the involvement of a relevant government authority, without the permission of that government authority.

‘What happens about confidentiality?’

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Principal and those directly involved. The Chair of the School’s Board may also need to be informed. It is the school’s policy that complaints made by parents and guardians should not rebound adversely on their children. The school will not tolerate victimisation or adverse consequences shown towards a person who raises a concern and/or complaint.

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 be most likely to happen where, for example, a child’s safety was at risk, and it became necessary to refer matters to the Police or other external authority. Matters of this nature would include an allegation/complaint of grooming, child abuse and/or there was a breach of the Staff, Community or Student Code of Conduct. If information is passed to a third party, you will be informed, unless this is prevented by legal obligation.

‘Can I remain anonymous?’

We would prefer to know the identity of a person making a complaint as it can help in investigation and resolution. Anonymous complaints will be noted and dealt with in accordance with the circumstances, available information, and the action required.

'What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?'

We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered.

If you are not satisfied, the Principal will offer to refer the matter to the Chair of the School Board. Alternatively, you may wish to write directly to the Chair whose address is board@kerrystreet.wa.edu.au. The Chair will call for a full report from the Principal and will examine matters thoroughly before responding to ensure that the complaint has been handled in accordance with the school's policy and procedure as well as to give further consideration. When notified of the outcome of the Chair's review and consideration, if you remain concerned, the opportunity of a meeting with the Chair will be offered. You may wish to be supported by a friend, but legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage.

If the meeting does not bring about a resolution, the matter may be referred to a process of dispute resolution, e.g., conciliation, mediation, or external arbitration, and it is their task to look at the issues in an impartial and confidential manner. You would be invited to a meeting and asked if there any papers you would like to have circulated beforehand. As with the Chair's meeting, you will be offered the opportunity to bring a friend with you.

The school recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to complain, and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care.

Special note – Students' raising a concern or complaint:

This leaflet is specifically for parents and guardians in the school, the school also has a 'child-friendly' complaints process that is tailored to meet the needs of students who wish to express a concern or complaint. As well as a student dedicated leaflet, the school employs multiple methods of letting students know that they can express a concern and how they can go about it. Other methods of letting students know involve student meetings, in class discussions, through the protective behaviours curriculum taught in the school and through the display of posters around the school, designed to be age and developmentally appropriate to suit the differing needs of students.

'The Director General of the Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that the school observes the registration standards, including the standard about its complaints handling system. Any student, parent or community member is entitled to contact the Director General with concerns about how the school has dealt with a complaint. Information is available on the Department of Education website. While the Director General may consider whether the school has breached the registration standards, she does not have power to intervene in a complaint or override the school's decision.'