

Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures

Policy

Kambala is committed to the development and maintenance of positive relationships among all members of the community and to the timely resolution of any complaint which may arise. Complaints will be addressed professionally, competently and in a timely manner applying principles of natural justice, confidentiality and procedural fairness. To manage complaints effectively, we have established a Complaints Handling Program in line with both the international complaints handling standard (ISO 10002:2018 Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations), and the Australian/New Zealand complaints handling standard (AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations).

Scope and application

This policy applies to all circumstances except the following:

- Child protection issues (i.e. suspected risk of harm or risk of significant harm to a child which is addressed via legislated child protection processes). All such complaints should be made directly to the Principal as per the [Child Protection Policies](#)
- Performance and discipline of employees which are managed in accordance with the **Staff Code of Conduct**
- Workplace bullying and harassment allegations dealt with under the **Unlawful Discrimination Harassment and Bullying Policy**
- Matters reported under the [Whistleblower Protection Policy](#)
- Grievances brought by a student against another student will be dealt with under **Kambala's Code of Behaviour**
- Grievances brought by employees and contractors will be dealt with under the **Grievance Resolution Procedure**.

Principles

When managing a complaint, the school will:

- Provide information to the school community about how and where to complain and to make the complaints management process as simple and accessible as possible.
- Ensure that the complainant is informed as to the progress of their complaint and ensure that complaints are resolved as quickly as possible.
- Ensure that complaints are thoroughly investigated and that the school understands the complaint from the complainant's point of view.
- Make sure all complaints are addressed, on its merits, in an equitable, impartial, objective and unbiased manner.
- Keep complaints confidential and ensure that personal identifiable information about complainants and about any person that is the subject of the complaint is only available for the purpose of addressing the complaint. Staff members receiving complaints should not discuss these with other students or staff other than with the complaints officer.
- Keep records of complaints and the information collected in the complaints handling process.

Visibility, accessibility and promotion

The Principal will ensure this policy and procedures are readily accessible to all staff, parents/guardians, students and members of the community. Information about the Complaints Handling Process including access

to the online complaints form is available for parents and senior students through Sundial and reference is also made to the complaints handling process on the Kambala website.

Complaints may be received in person, on the telephone, in writing or electronically. If a member of the Kambala community requires assistance lodging a complaint, due to language or other barriers, assistance will be provided wherever possible.

Resource allocation and staff training

The Principal is responsible for encouraging an environment where complaints are handled seriously and thoroughly and ensuring an effective Complaint Management System is in place and resourced appropriately. All staff will be trained on how to identify a complaint, when a complaint can be managed informally and when it should be escalated to a more senior manager (see escalation process below).

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A 'concern' may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'. A 'complaint' is defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction made to Kambala, related to its services or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected'.

Informal complaints resolution

The vast majority of issues causing concern in schools can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. It is in everyone's interest that concerns are resolved at the earliest possible stage and many concerns can be resolved informally without the need to invoke formal procedures. We therefore ask that, where appropriate, you first raise your concern directly with the relevant staff member.

Kambala takes community concerns seriously and ideally, most concerns will be dealt with directly and quickly at the point where the concern arises.

There are occasions when the complainant/s would like to raise their concerns formally or where a concern cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the parent, student or community member and should be considered a complaint. In those instances, the school's formal procedures should be followed as outlined below.

Parents and senior students are encouraged to always raise any concern or complaint that they have with the school in the first instance and are reminded that it is not appropriate to communicate concerns or complaints regarding school matters via the media, group messaging or social media.

Complaints handling procedure

Receiving complaints

Complaints may be received by:

1. Using the Complaint form available via the Feedback link on the Sundial parents and senior students' homepage or by clicking on this [link](#)
2. Writing a letter to the school addressed to "The Complaints Officer"
3. In person
4. On the telephone

Some concerns may not fit squarely within existing channels. In those circumstances and to ensure matters are appropriately received and dealt with, the School is introducing a new, independent avenue to raise concerns through an external provider. Details to be confirmed.

Individuals wishing to lodge a complaint in person or on the telephone should be encouraged to put their complaints in writing but if they do not wish to do so, the staff member who receives the complaint should record the complaint in the Kambala Incident Management System (CompliSpace Assurance).

While parents and senior students are encouraged to first raise any concerns informally, they do have the option of lodging a concern or complaint formally at any time via any of the above stated methods.

Escalation process

Concerns or complaints which are raised with a frontline staff member, should be referred to a line manager if they:

- Remain unresolved
- Involve complex issues
- Involve a number of different staff
- Need action that is beyond the responsibility of the staff initially approached about the complaint

Escalation Protocol

Hampshire House	Junior School		Senior School			Boarding	Financial issues	Community/local Complaints
	<i>Academic concern</i>	<i>Pastoral concern</i>	<i>Academic concern</i>	<i>Academic concern (Years 11-12)</i>	<i>Pastoral concern</i>			
Director of Hampshire House	Classroom teacher		Subject teacher		Mentor	Director of Boarding	Business Manager	Head of School or Business Manager
Head of Junior School	Relevant Stage Coordinator		Head of Department		Head of Year	Principal	Principal	Principal
Principal	Director of Curriculum	Deputy Head of Junior School	Director of Curriculum	Years 11-12 Studies Coordinator	Director of Students			
	Head of Junior School		Head of Senior School					
	Principal		Principal					

Complaints regarding the Principal or the complaints handling process will be referred to the Chair of the School Council by [email](#)

Key responsibilities in the Kambala complaints handling process

Responsibilities of Assigned Manager

The Assigned Manager is responsible for investigating and responding to the complaint and is the primary point of contact for the complainant. The Assigned Manager can seek the assistance or advice of the Complaints Officer or their own line manager/Principal at any time if they are unsure how to proceed.

Responsibilities of Complaints Officer

The Complaints Officer must be notified of all formal complaints. It is the responsibility of the Complaints Officer to ensure that all details of the complaints management process are recorded on the Kambala Incident Management System (CompliSpace Assurance). If an appropriate manager is not already in receipt of the complaint, the Complaints Officer will assign the complaint to a manager (hereafter called the 'Assigned Manager'). The Complaints Officer will discuss with the assigned manager the expected timeframes for acknowledging and responding to a complaint and seek advice from the assigned manager about the progress of the complaint at various intervals. The Kambala Complaints Officer is currently the Risk & Compliance Officer.

Our internal complaints handling process

Step 1 - All formal complaints are logged through our online Incident Management System where they are screened by the Complaints Officer

Step 2 – All complaints will be acknowledged in writing, as soon as practicable, and allocated a status, priority and target resolution date. It is our policy, where possible, to resolve all disputes within 20 school days.

Step 3 – The Complaints Officer will assign the complaint to a manager (the Assigned Manager) to conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination. In the case of complaints against the Principal, the Complaints Officer will forward on the complaint to the Chair of the School Council by [email](#).

Step 4 - Following the investigation, if appropriate, the assigned manager will formulate a resolution and provide a written response to the complainant which advises of the finding and whether or not appropriate action has been taken. At this point the matter will be closed.

Step 5 - If the initial response is not acceptable, the matter will be reviewed internally by the Principal or the Principal's delegate, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Principal or their delegate seek to resolve all disputes within 20 school days from the date that the review process is initiated. The matter will be closed if the response of the Principal, or their delegate, is accepted.

Step 6 - All complaints received will be entered into our Complaints Register and, where appropriate, a corrective action request will be made to address any underlying processes which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.

Step 7 - If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives, such as via the Association of Independent Schools.

Complaint handling considerations

Anonymous complaints

Anonymous callers should be advised that an investigation is made more problematic if they do not divulge identities as this severely limits the school's ability to follow up on their concern. They should be informed of confidentiality, as applied to the complaint management process, to encourage them to reveal their own and/or the subject's identity.

However, the complainant's wishes should be respected, as an assurance of absolute confidentiality cannot be given. Further investigation of anonymous complaints may not be possible however if sufficient details are revealed a further investigation may be warranted, in particular if the complaint raises student safety or duty of care concerns. In such circumstances, it may not be possible to provide information back to the complainant if they have not provided name and contact details.

Some concerns may not fit squarely within existing channels. In those circumstances and to ensure matters are appropriately received and dealt with, the School is introducing a new, independent avenue to raise concerns through an external provider. This external provider can be used as an avenue for those wishing to make anonymous complaints.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be respected at all times within the constraints of the need to fully investigate the complaint. To maintain confidentiality, all participants in the process should restrict the information about the complaint to a "need to know" basis. The obligation to maintain confidentiality extends also to the complainant and to the respondent.

Objectivity and natural justice

Each complaint should be addressed in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner. The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness apply to all complaints. The more serious a complaint the more important it is to ensure procedural fairness. Procedural fairness requires that parties to a complaint are:

- Treated impartially – investigations are conducted impartially, and decisions are made without bias
- Informed of concerns or allegations being made – this means that the person about whom the complaint is made will be informed of the content of the complaint and, in most cases of the identity of the complainant at a point in time when it is clear what the issues are and who needs to respond to them
- Given the opportunity to respond – this means that where a concern is raised which may result in action being taken against a person, that person will normally be given an opportunity to respond
- Informed of the complaints process and review process
- Advised of the outcome of the investigation.

Complaint resolution and outcomes

A complaint may be resolved in a variety of ways. Some possible outcomes include an apology, a review of a policy or a procedure, targeted professional development or counselling for the parties involved. All complaints provide an opportunity for Kambala to reflect on our processes, identify potential weaknesses in our approach and take action to improve. If an opportunity for improvement is identified as a result of a complaint, the complainant will be advised of the changes to processes that Kambala will be implementing.

If it is determined through the School's investigation that staff misconduct has occurred, the School will notify the complainant of the finding and will advise that corrective action has been taken. If the circumstances of the

complaint require the school to maintain confidentiality in relation to the outcome of the complaint, the School will observe this requirement.

Record keeping

All formal complaints must be recorded in the Kambala Incident Management System (CompliSpace Assurance). The Assigned Manager will keep written records of the complaint resolution process and outcome. Complaint records will be filed and stored appropriately in a secure location. The Complaints Officer is responsible for ensuring the electronic record is updated and closed off once the complaint is resolved.

Timeliness

Kambala will endeavour to investigate and resolve complaints in a timely fashion. The Complaint Officer will ensure that investigation of a formal complaint will commence within five school days of receipt of the complaint and wherever possible be resolved within 20 school days of receipt of the complaint. If a resolution is not achieved within 20 school days, the complainant will be provided with an update on the status of their complaint. It is the responsibility of the Complaints Officer to ensure Assigned Managers work within these timeframes.

Support

All employees participating in the complaints process may access a confidential counselling service which is made available by contacting the Employee Assistance Program. The complainant may access the support services of EAP 1800 81 87 or (02) 8247 9191; email: info@accesseap.com.au or via their website www.accesseap.com.au.

Management reporting

All complaints will be entered into the Kambala Incident Management System and from there a de-identified complaints report can be extracted for the executive and school council. This information will be analysed to identify systemic, recurring and single incident problems and trends in order to identify key risk areas and eliminate the underlying causes of complaints through corrective actions. This is the responsibility of the Complaints Officer.

Overseas student complaints

For the purposes of this policy, an overseas student is a student who is not an Australian resident, requires a student visa to attend an Australian school and is a full fee-paying student of Kambala. An overseas student, their parent(s) or legal guardian can access this policy should they have a complaint. While it may not be possible for parents or legal guardians to come to the school and speak with the relevant member of staff, they are encouraged to try to resolve the complaint informally by first contacting the Overseas Student Coordinator. Should informal resolution not be possible, the complaint will be escalated to the Principal.

If an overseas student isn't satisfied with the outcome of Kambala's internal complaints handling process, they may lodge an external appeal through the Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO) which investigates complaints about problems that overseas students or intending overseas students may have with private education and training in Australia. The services of the OSO are free. The contact details for OSO are as follows:

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au (for overseas students only)

Call: 1300 362 072 within Australia or +61 2 6276 0111 outside Australia.

Enquiries: 9:00am to 5:00pm on weekdays (Monday to Friday), Australian Eastern Standard Time (Australian Eastern Daylight Time when daylight savings is in effect)



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Postal address: Commonwealth Ombudsman, GPO Box 442 Canberra ACT 2601.

Website: www.oso.gov.au

Kambala agrees to be bound to the OSO's recommendations, and will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within 30 days of receipt of the report.

Complaints and Allegations of Staff Misconduct or Reportable Conduct

Complaints and allegations of staff misconduct and/or reportable conduct are managed by Kambala in a different manner to other complaints. This is because Kambala has legal obligations to report certain staff conduct to external authorities. Staff misconduct is a broad term that could include breaches of professional boundaries, codes of conduct or standards of behaviour, whereas reportable conduct is a term defined in law as including:

- any sexual offence or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including child pornography offences, sexual touching or an offence involving child abuse material) including grooming behaviours
- any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child
- any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child (whether or not, in any case, with the consent of the child).

If a complaint relates to alleged staff misconduct or reportable conduct, then the complainant should use the Complaint form available by clicking on this [link](#) and indicate on the form that the allegation relates to staff misconduct or reportable conduct. Complaints regarding the Principal will be referred to the Chair of the School Council by [email](#).

For more information about how Kambala's complaints handling procedures regarding allegations of staff misconduct or reportable conduct, please refer to our [Procedures for Handling Allegations of Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct](#) document available on our public website.

Privacy complaints

Information about the way Kambala manages personal information is contained in the Privacy Policy. For any complaints regarding privacy, please contact Kambala's Risk & Compliance Officer. If Kambala receives a privacy complaint, it will investigate and aim to respond as soon as possible after the receipt of the complaint and to the complainant's satisfaction. However, if you are unhappy with the School's response or if you do not wish to send your complaint to the School, you are entitled to contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) on 1300 363 992 or other contact details on the OAIC's website: www.oaic.gov.au

Definitions

Assigned Manager is any Kambala manager who is assigned to investigate and respond to a complaint.

Complainant is any person who has a concern or grievance.

Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to Kambala, related to its services or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Complaints Officer is the Risk & Compliance Officer.

Community is any member of the Kambala community and includes students, parents, guardians/caregivers, staff members, council members and alumni.



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Concern is an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.

Respondent is the School or any person against whom a complaint or grievance is brought.

Staff includes casual, temporary and permanent staff of the School.

Implementation

Kambala has set up a series of compliance tasks on our Assurance System, to ensure that key policy obligations are managed effectively.