

Complaint Management Policy and Procedures

Values

The Small School fosters the wellbeing and safety of children and staff.

Commitment to relationship building within the school community and the community generally is highly valued at The Small School.

All adults at The Small School model respectful relationships and conflict resolution practices.

The Small School deeply values procedural fairness as a fundamental right in a democratic society.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out The Small School's approach to managing complaints about the school's operations received from members of the wider community.

Responsibilities

As a school operating within a mixed-use zone (commercial and residential) in close proximity to the central business district, it is the responsibility of school management to take all reasonable measures to ensure our operations do not unreasonably affect the operations of nearby businesses on King Street or the amenity of nearby residents on Prince Lane.

The Small School has a responsibility to ensure that complaints are managed and resolved fairly, efficiently and according to concepts of 'procedural fairness'.

The Small School has a number of internal policies and procedures, which require that the principles of procedural fairness are followed as staff and management carry out their duties.

It is the responsibility of the School Manager to ensure that principles of procedural fairness are similarly employed when responding to complaints made by members of the wider community. For nearby businesses and residents this includes:

- Knowing the process by which complaints can be raised and will be considered.
- Having a 'fair hearing' of their complaint.
- Knowing what action (if any) the school has taken to remedy their complaint.
- Knowing how to contact the School Board if they want the School Manager's response reviewed by the School Board.

The School Manager is responsible for the oversight of the complaint process, which is summarised in *Appendix A*.

The School Manager's responsibilities include:

- Ensuring nearby businesses and residents on King Street and Prince Lane are notified of The Small School's complaint's process. Notification of all businesses and residents on King Street and Prince Lane should occur in writing every 12 months. Written notification should include a copy of Appendix A.
- Ensuring information about how to make a complaint, including this policy, is readily available on the school website.
- Assessing and determining responses to complaints.
- Recording complaints on the External Complaints Form and filing it according to the school's record management procedures in the central computer system under 'External Complaints Register'.
- Reporting all external complaints received to the School Board. This will usually happen at the next Board meeting after the complaint was received. However, urgent or serious complaints should be reported immediately to the Chairperson of the Board. The report of the complaint will be part of the minutes of the Board meeting. Where there has been an urgent report to the Chairperson it will be noted and filed with the External Complaints Form.
- Responding in writing to the complainant about the assessment of the complaint, the outcome of the assessment and any action taken to remedy the complaint.
- Providing the complainant with the mechanism for seeking a review of the School Manager's response to the complaint. Where the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the School Manager they should advise the School Manager of such. The School Manager should reconsider the nature of the complaint, any further information received from the complainant and their response. If the School Manager is of the view no further action is warranted or the complainant is not satisfied with any further action that is taken, then contact details for the Chairperson of the School Board should be provided to the complainant if they wish for the matter to be reviewed by the School Board.

The Chairperson of the School Board is responsible for reviewing the actions of the School Manager taken in response to a complaint, where the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome.

The Chairperson's responsibilities include:

- Acting as the contact point for a complainant who wishes to have the response to their complaint reviewed.
- Reviewing the nature of the complaint, any supporting documentation and the response of and remedy proposed by the School Manager.
- Ensuring the complaint and response has been properly recorded in the school's records.
- Making contact with the complainant by phone or in person to discuss the complaint and seek and consider any additional information about the complaint.
- Where the School Manager's response is considered to be satisfactory by the Chairperson no further action will be taken. The Chairperson will write to the complainant advising them of their decision.
- Where the School Manager's response is considered inadequate the Chairperson will take the complaint to the School Board for their consideration. This meeting may be conducted in the absence of the School Manager.

Where the complainant is not satisfied with the response of The Small School they should contact Tweed Shire Council on (02) 6670 2400 or tsc@tweed.nsw.gov.au.

Contact with Tweed Shire Council is available to the complainants before or during their contact with The Small School.

Required Responses to Certain Types of Complaints

Car Parking

Where the complaint relates to car parking, the School Manager must immediately ensure that the school's Transport Policy is being enforced (see *Transport Policy and Procedures*).

If the complaint relates to a car associated with the school being parked on King Street during business hours in front of the medical or ancillary businesses, the School Manager must act immediately to arrange for the owner of the car to move the vehicle to the school's car parking facilities.

Noise Management

The Small School's responsibilities in relation to the acoustic management of the school are outlined in the *Operational Plan 2019*.

If the school receives a complaint about noise, it is the responsibility of all staff to act immediately to remedy the concern.

If the level of noise is the result of activity at the school which is not consistent with the *Operational Plan* then immediate action should be taken to bring activity into line with the *Operational Plan*.

If the *Operational Plan* is being followed but a complaint about noise still exists, it is the responsibility of the School Manager to discuss the concern with the complainant and make an assessment as to whether further noise management measures are necessary.

Appendix A: The Small School Complaints Process



Urgent complaints should be reported by phone directly to the School Manager on **Mobile: 0429 627 161**.

Ongoing concerns or detailed complaints should be made in writing to the School Manager by email on carla@thesmallschool.org.au or to 8 King Street, Murwillumbah, NSW, 2484.

The School Manager:

Where an urgent complaint is received by phone, discusses possible remedies and takes immediate action to remedy the problem if possible.

Writes to the complainant confirming the discussion and outcome and asks the complainant to contact again if they feel the problem has not been resolved.

If there is further contact, additional attempts should be made to try to resolve the problem. If the School Manager is unable to resolve the problem to the satisfaction of the complainant, contact details for the Chairperson of the Board should be provided so that a review of the School Manager's actions can be obtained.

Where the complaint is received in writing, assesses the complaint and takes action (if possible) and responds in writing about the action taken, or why no action was taken.

Phones/visits the complainant to find out whether the complaint has been resolved satisfactorily. If not, discusses other possible solutions and/or informs complainant how to contact the Chairperson of the School Board so that a review of the School Manager's actions can be obtained.

Keeps a record of the complaint, action taken and the outcome.

Appendix B: External Complaint Form



FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date

Received From

Address

Phone

Email

Explanation of complaint

TSS response to the complaint (including any remedies)

Has there been a previous complaint made of a similar nature by the same or another party? Yes/No.
If yes, provide explanation and date of previous complaint.

Has the complainant complained before? Yes/No If Yes, date of complaint

When will the complaint be reported to the School Board?

Has the complaint been adequately resolved? Yes/No. Provide comments ...

If not, has the complainant asked for the Chairperson to review the complaint and TSS's response?

Form completed by

Name

Position