



The Ethnic Schools Association
of South Australia Inc.

HUNGARIAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL, ADELAIDE INC.

Grievance and Complaints Policy May 2017

Summary

The information in this policy applies to all Ethnic Schools of South Australia.

Table 1: Document Details

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Related Policies	Child Safe Environments Policy Teacher Code of Conduct
Version	1
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Reviewed By	Executive Officer: Darryl Buchanan
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Table 2: Revision Record

Date	Version	Revision Description
February 2017	1	New policy developed



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Grievance and Complaints Policy

Introduction

Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc. is committed to maintaining an environment that encourages collaboration, communication and cooperation. Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc. recognises that, on occasions inappropriate behaviours, or inappropriate responses to a particular situation may occur and that a complaints and grievance processes may be necessary in order to resolve complaints or concerns.

Complaints are an important way for Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc. to be accountable to the public, as well as providing valuable prompts to review school performance and the conduct of people that work at the school. Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc. will promptly deal with all complaints and grievances.

This policy is based on information from the Australian and New Zealand Standards – Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organisations.

Definitions

Complaint is a statement either verbal or written about something that is unacceptable or unsatisfactory made to or about a teacher, Principal, or student.

Complainant is any person or persons who make a formal complaint.

Grievance is a real or imagined cause for complaint or an alleged wrong, hardship or unfair treatment suffered by an individual or individuals.

Vexatious Complaint is a complaint made without reasonable grounds, made to harass, annoy, disrupt or cause harm to an individual.

Policy

Dealing with complaints and concerns

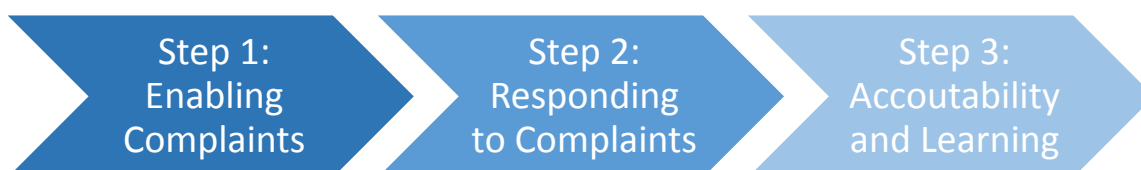
An effective complaint handling system resolves issues raised by a person who is dissatisfied in a timely and cost-effective way whilst providing information to the school that can lead to improvements in school practices. A good complaint handling system can improve the reputation of the school and strengthen public confidence in Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc. administrative processes.

Effective Complaint Handling System

Where possible, complaints are best handled by teachers or volunteers or the person directly. These people should be able to resolve complaints at first contact and should log complaint details for further analysis. More serious complaints, or complaints that cannot be resolved by teachers or volunteers, should be referred to Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc. Principal. The diagram summarises the effective complaint handling system that Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc. will use to resolve any grievance or complaint.



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<p>Arrangements for enabling people to make complaints are visible, accessible and valued and supported by management of the Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc.</p>	<p>Complaints are responded to promptly, handled objectively, fairly, and confidentially. Remedies are provided where complaints are upheld and there are procedures for review.</p>	<p>There are clear procedures for complaint handling and complaints are used for school improvement.</p>
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Figure 1: Complaint Handling Process

Responding to Complaints

Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc. will use the following principles to ensure all complaints are dealt with efficiently and effectively manner.

- All complaints are acknowledged in a timely manner.
- The complainant is kept informed throughout the process.
- All complaints are dealt with in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.
- All parties involved are given sufficient opportunities to present their position, to comment on adverse findings and are provided with reasons for decisions on the outcome of the complaint.
- Personal information relating to the complaint is kept private and confidential.
- Information pertaining to a complaint is only used for the purpose of addressing the complainant and any follow up actions.

Complaint investigation and resolution process

Complaints should be dealt with promptly, courteously and in accordance with their urgency. The essential steps in investigating and resolving a complaint used by Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc. are:

Step	Description
1. Assess the complaint	Clarify the issues of the complaint and what kind of resolution the complainant is seeking. If it is not a matter that can be handled by the complaints process or by the Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc. Principal refer the complaint to the Ethnic Schools Association
2. Seek Resolution	Where appropriate and possible seek to achieve resolution. Where resolution is reached, document the agreed action. In this event it may not be necessary to continue with the investigation unless there are systemic issues that require further examination outside the complaint process.



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3. Select the appropriate investigative approach	If the complaint is not resolved, determine what action is required, which may include options other than a formal investigation. This can depend on factors such as statutory requirements which may apply; the nature of the issue and the likely outcome of the investigation. Where possible, complaints should be resolved without the need for a formal investigation.
4. Plan the investigation	Define the issues to be investigated and develop an investigation plan.
5. Ensure proper powers of authority	Assess whether the Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc. Principal has the necessary powers to obtain evidence from relevant witnesses and to access relevant records. Ensure they have the authority to conduct the investigation, make a decision and resolve the complaint, or have access to a person who can make decisions and offer remedies.
6. Obtain Evidence	Carry out the investigation by gathering sufficient reliable information to enable the issue to be properly addressed by proving or disproving matters relevant to the issue being investigated, taking into account all relevant information and no irrelevant information. At this stage, it may be necessary to refer any matters that may be misconduct or corruption to the Corruption and Crime Commission.
7. Reconsider resolution	Consider whether resolution is now possible
8. Reporting and Recommendations	Prepare a document setting out the complaint, how the investigation was conducted, relevant facts, conclusions, findings and recommendations. Recommendations could include remedies for the complainant, action to improve the organisation's service delivery and action to address inappropriate conduct by an officer (e.g. through training, an appropriate disciplinary process or referral to an appropriate external authority).
9. Decide on the complaint and action to be taken	Refer the report to a person authorised to make a decision about the complaint and the action to be taken. After the decision is made arrange implementation of the agreed action and for follow up to confirm the action occurs.
10. Inform the parties	Upon completion of an investigation, the complainant (and, if applicable, the person who is the subject of the complaint) should be given: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate reasons for any decision made; • Any changes or action that have resulted from the complaint; • A remedy, where appropriate; and • Information on where to seek independent internal and external review

Possible Remedies that may be offered to complaints

Complaints received by Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc.

will be used to review and evaluate school process, policies and procedures. If an investigation of a complaint determines that the service provided by Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc. to an individual(s) is unsatisfactory and the school has in some way contributed to this, the school should provide redress to remedy the situation.

- Mistakes are admitted and put right.
- The process of complaint resolution is explained.
- A sincere and meaningful apology is offered.
- Reconsideration of a decision that is fair and reasonable.



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- Amending or retracting documentation e.g. publications such as emails or newsletters.
- Change to policies and procedures to prevent reoccurrence.
- If applicable, action to modify the behaviour of the teacher/volunteer/individual who the complaint was made.

Dealing with Unreasonable Behaviour

Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc. recognises that complaints can be stressful to raise and resolve. All complaints will follow the complaint investigation process. Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc. considers many factors when making decisions to resolve a complaint. Throughout the complaint investigation a person's behaviour may be considered unreasonable. In this case all further communication will be in writing to ensure the complaint is resolved.

Unresolved Complaints

It may not always be possible for Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc. to resolve a complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant. In this instant, the school can refer the complainant to The Ethnic Schools Association of South Australia.

Dealing with Vexatious Complaints

Vexatious complaints can be distressing, time consuming and unnecessarily divert attention and resources. It is important that vexatious or frivolous complaints are properly identified and managed. Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc. recognises that complainants may be aggrieved, frustrated or annoyed or may have other reasons for their behaviour and therefore, the complaint must be dealt with on the grounds of the complaint and not the person who is making the complaint. If someone has made a vexatious complaint in the past and is making a new complaint, the new complaint must follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

If a complainant keeps making complaints about different matters, each complaint must be dealt separately following the procedures outline in this policy. If the complaint is considered trivial, the person hearing the complaint can show the complainant the complaint investigation process and point out that there are no grounds for a complaint. In the event that a person is persistently and consistently making complaints without reasonable grounds, the person can be referred to The Ethnic Schools Association of South Australia. If a staff member is the person making the vexatious complaints disciplinary action may be taken against the person.

Grievance with the Principal

If a person or persons have a grievance or an ongoing concern regarding the Principal of Hungarian Community School, Adelaide Inc., the complaint must be referred to The Ethnic Schools Association of South Australia. The Executive Officer will determine a process to resolve the grievance in accordance to this policy.

Other Documentation

Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organizations