

Grievance Policy & Procedure

Overview

This **Grievance Policy & Procedure** outlines the principles and steps for addressing grievances within the Australian Science & Mathematics School (ASMS). It aims to create a supportive environment where students, parents, and staff feel empowered to voice concerns and seek resolutions in a respectful and constructive manner.

Policy Section:

- Establishes the commitment to a fair and transparent grievance handling process.
- Ensures compliance with relevant standards and obligations.

Procedure Section:

- Provides detailed instructions for raising and resolving grievances.
 - Describes roles, responsibilities, and timelines to ensure timely and effective resolution.
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Scope

This **Grievance Policy & Procedure** applies to all students, parents, and staff members of ASMS. It covers grievances related to:

- Student welfare and educational experiences
 - ASMS policies, rules, and regulations
 - Staff conduct and interactions
 - Bullying, discrimination, and harassment
 - Other issues impacting the ASMS community
 - employment decisions directly affecting the employee that are not excluded from review by legislation
 - interpersonal conflict between employees
 - suspected or alleged conduct of employees that a reasonable person would view as inappropriate or unreasonable
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Policy

The **Grievance Policy** sets out the principles that govern how grievances are handled at ASMS. It ensures that all parties are treated with respect, that grievances are addressed promptly, and that the process is transparent and accountable.

Key Principles

- **Respect and Fairness:** Treat all parties with dignity and impartiality.
- **Confidentiality:** Handle grievances with discretion to protect privacy.
- **Timeliness:** Address and resolve grievances promptly.
- **Transparency:** Communicate openly about the grievance process and outcomes.
- **Support:** Provide support to individuals involved in the grievance process.

Why Raise a Grievance?

Raising a grievance helps ensure that issues are addressed before they escalate, promotes a positive ASMS culture, and fosters trust and communication between students, parents, and staff.

Procedure

The **Grievance Procedure** provides step-by-step instructions for raising and resolving grievances. It outlines the process from initial complaint to resolution, ensuring that all grievances are handled consistently and fairly.

How to Raise a Grievance:

Steps to Raise a Grievance

1. Identify the Grievance:

- Clearly define the nature of the grievance.
- Gather relevant information and evidence.

2. Initial Discussion:

- Approach the person directly involved, if appropriate, to discuss the concern.
 - Students:
 - Discuss with a teacher, trusted staff member, Youth Worker or Senior Colour Leader.
 - Parents:
 - Contact the ASMS via email or phone to arrange a meeting with the relevant staff member.
 - Staff:
 - Speak with the relevant line manager, PAC member, Central Studies Leader, Senior Colour Leader, Curriculum Area Leader, or the ASMS principal.
- Seek to resolve the issue informally through dialogue.
- People are encouraged to attempt to resolve their concerns informally in the first instance, where appropriate. This means:
 - having direct conversations
 - being open to hearing the perspective of any other people involved
 - making reasonable adjustments to behaviours to support a positive and professional relationship.
- Taking up concerns directly with the people involved, as early as possible, provides the best opportunity to resolve the issue to move forward constructively. Personal resolution may not be an option for reasons of individual sensitivity, power imbalance or the nature or seriousness of the complaint.

3. Formal Grievance Submission:

- If unresolved, submit a formal grievance in writing to the next level of leadership (e.g. Central Studies Leader, Senior Colour Leader, Curriculum Area Leader, or the ASMS principal).
- If the line manager is involved in the complaint or otherwise conflicted in some way, the employee should send the complaint to the next level manager.
- A written complaint should:
 - describe the nature of the issues
 - give details of the circumstances
 - provide evidence
 - state the desired outcome.

4. **Acknowledgment and Investigation:**

- The ASMS recipient acknowledges receipt of the grievance within 24 hours.
- An investigation is conducted to consider the request, gather facts, hear all parties, seek advice and assess the situation. The investigator makes sure that procedural fairness is applied and they maintain proper records that are capable of review, securely stored and accessible only to authorized personnel. Actions taken and/or escalation details once the complaint is finalised must be recorded on the ASMS's complaint register.
- The ASMS recipient must take all reasonable steps to make sure that complainants acting in good faith do not experience any detrimental impact as a result of raising an issue, lodging a complaint or seeking information about lodging a complaint. The same considerations must be extended to respondents.
- If there's disagreement about events or circumstances, the complaint manager should consider whether there's other information available. To substantiate a complaint, the complaint manager should be satisfied that it's more probable than not that what is alleged to have happened occurred.
- Unreasonable complaints and complainant conduct may include:
 - taking actions that involve unreasonable persistence, demands or lack of cooperation
 - seeking outcomes that are unreasonable or incapable of happening
 - directing complaints at people to the extent that objectiveness has been lost
 - unreasonably using the complaint process during underperformance concerns, including as a first response to performance issues raised.

In these instances, seek advice from principal.

- A complaint will not proceed if it's:
 - malicious, frivolous or mischievous
 - without substance or foundation or misconceived
- Information about a grievance or related processes must be kept confidential and not made known to people who are not involved in the grievance, unless disclosure is required in connection with the grievance (such as to get advice, assess the complaint or otherwise manage and resolve the grievance). A person with a grievance may request their identity remain confidential when making a complaint. However, this may restrict the manager's ability to check the facts and circumstances of the complaint and resolve the concerns. A respondent is entitled to sufficient information about a complaint to respond and therefore a complainant's identity remaining confidential cannot be guaranteed. While every effort will be made to comply with a request to keep the complainant's identity confidential, Freedom of Information requirements may result in a complainant's identity becoming known and complaint documents being released.

5. **Resolution and Feedback:**

- A resolution may include, but is not limited to conciliation, mediation, an apology, a review of policy or procedure, commitment to changed behaviour, a reversal or amendment of a previous decision.
- A resolution or outcome with accompanying explanation is provided in writing based on the investigation findings to all parties involved. The amount of information that can be provided, particularly when action has been taken against another party, may in some cases be limited by confidentiality considerations.
- Conciliation and mediation are dispute resolution processes where 2 or more people attempt to reach an agreement with the help of a third person. The grievance manager should consider conciliation or mediation where they think the grievance can be resolved and all relevant parties agree to participate.
 - Conciliator – has an active role in the conciliation process, for example proposing a solution to end the conflict.
 - Mediator – assists the individuals through a process to help them find a solution to their dispute by themselves.

- Provide an opportunity for feedback or appeal if the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved.

6. Follow-up and Monitoring:

- Implement the resolution and monitor its effectiveness.
- Ensure any ongoing issues are addressed promptly.
- If a student or parent is not satisfied with the resolution of the grievance they should contact the principal or the Department for Education Customer Feedback Team. The details for the Customer Feedback Team can be found at: <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/department/feedback-and-complaints/make-complaint-about-school-or-preschool>

Roles and Responsibilities

ASMS Principal & School leadership staff responsibilities

It's expected that when leadership staff handle a complaint they will:

- Lead the grievance process and ensure it is conducted impartially.
- Communicate with all parties involved and provide support where needed.
- Implement and document resolutions and monitor their effectiveness.
- Maintain confidentiality and integrity throughout the process.
- wherever possible, make every reasonable effort to resolve parent concerns or complaints at the local level in a timely and effective manner
- ensure that staff are familiar with the department's complaints policy and that school or preschool websites have a link to the policy and associated information including the raising a complaint with the department process
- ensure staff understand the complaint process and are aware of and have access to appropriate training advise all relevant parties once a complaint has been received
- consider whether the parent may require a support person at a meeting, ensuring the complaint is documented and appropriate action determined
- recommend to the Education Director, any system improvements at a broader level that may reduce the likelihood of similar complaints
- seek advice and support from the Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division, phone 8226 1290, refer to the school and preschool complaints page and contact Customer Feedback as required
- advise the parent of their right to contact Customer Feedback, if a resolution at the school or preschool can't be found.

ASMS Staff

- Encourage open communication and early resolution of grievances.
- Support students and parents in understanding the grievance process.
- Comply with the grievance policy and procedure.
- Parents should raise any concerns or complaints about their child's education with their child's teacher. It is expected that teachers will:
 - acknowledge the complaint
 - make a time available (face-to-face, by phone) as soon as reasonably possible to discuss with the parent/s their complaint
 - consider relevant legislation, departmental policy and guidelines and school or preschool processes and/or seek advice from your site leader
 - identify and discuss with the parent possible courses of action that could be taken to resolve their complaint and the timeframe for this to occur
 - where practicable, follow up with the parents, after a reasonable period of time for any changes to take effect, to ensure that the parent is satisfied with the outcome. For example, at parent interview, telephone or email.

- if appropriate (depending on the nature of the concern or complaint) keep a written record of the complaint, its progress and outcomes (refer to the recording complaints section)
- if a parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint management process or decides that it is more appropriate to discuss their complaint directly with a member of the leadership team, then the person hearing the complaint must follow up by scheduling a meeting or phone call with the school leader (if applicable).
- The raising a complaint with the department brochure is mandated for use in all schools and preschools. This information must be easily accessible for parents:
 - on the department's website
 - on each school and preschool website
 - in the school or preschool administrative office.
 - Online staff training in complaints management and resolution for education sites is available on plink (login required).
- Concerns and complaints received by a staff member about another staff member or an issue outside their responsibility to resolve, must be reported to a member of their leadership team.
- Refer to resolving employee complaints and requesting reviews (staff login required) for more information about employee complaints.

The Incident Management Directorate (staff login required) receives and assesses cases of suspected or alleged serious misconduct against department employees.

Students and Parents

- Raise grievances promptly and respectfully.
- Provide accurate information and cooperate with investigations.
- Engage constructively in the resolution process.

Supporting Information

- <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/department/feedback-and-complaints/make-complaint-about-school-or-preschool>
- <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/docs/ce-office/complaints-and-feedback/raising-a-complaint-with-department-for-education.pdf>
- <https://edi.sa.edu.au/library/document-library/shared/complaint-management-procedure.pdf>
- <https://edi.sa.edu.au/hr/for-individuals/work-conditions/mywellbeing/employee-assistance-program-eap>

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