

*This guideline is to be read in conjunction with the [Complaints & Feedback Management Policy and Procedure](#).*

## 1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this guideline is to ensure complaints and disputes involving students, parents, carers, families and employees of Autism Queensland School (Autism Queensland Education and Therapy Centre – “the School”) are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, fair and effective manner.

## 2.0 COMMITMENT STATEMENT

The School is committed to ensuring student, parent, carer and employee complaints are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective and fair way.

The School views complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process. The School acknowledges the right of students, parents and employees to complain when dissatisfied with an action, inaction or decision of the School, and welcomes feedback.

The School recognises time spent handling complaints can be an investment in improving both the service provided to students and parents and the work environment created for employees.

## 3.0 SCHOOL COMPLAINTS

Autism Queensland (AQ) encourages students, parents and employees to lodge promptly any concerns regarding sexual harassment, discrimination, workplace bullying and privacy breaches as well as more general complaints that may include:

- The School, its employees or students having done something wrong
- The School, its employees or students having failed to do something they should have done
- The School, its employees or students having acted unfairly or impolitely
- Issues of student or employee behaviour contrary to their relevant Code of Conduct
- Issues related to learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- Issues related to communication with students or parents or carers or between employees
- Issues related to school fees and payments
- General administrative issues

Student complaints may be brought by students or by parents on behalf of their children, as appropriate in the circumstances.

## 4.0 OTHER COMPLAINTS

- **Child protection** concerns, allegations or risks of harm to children, will be dealt with in accordance with the law and the [Child Safeguarding Policy](#).
- **Student bullying** complaints, will be dealt with under the [School Behaviour Support Guideline](#).
- **Employee complaints** related to their employment, will be directed to their Manager or Human Resources.
- Student or employee **violence or criminal matters**, will be directed to the School Principal who will involve the Police as appropriate.

## 5.0 COMPLAINTS & FEEDBACK MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The School is committed to managing complaints in accordance with the *Complaints & Feedback Management Policy* and the following principles:

- Complaints will be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible.
- Complaints will be taken seriously.
- Anonymous complaints will be treated on their merits.
- Complaints will be dealt with fairly and objectively and in a timely manner.
- The School will determine the appropriate person to deal with the complaint in the first instance.
- Mediation, negotiation and informal resolution are optional alternatives.
- Procedural fairness will be ensured wherever practicable, including the right of interested parties to the complaint to be heard.
- Confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible.
- All parties to the complaints will be appropriately supported.
- The School will give reasonable progress updates.
- Appropriate remedies will be offered and implemented.
- A review pathway for parties to the complaint will be provided if warranted.
- Complainants, respondents and people associated with them will not be victimised as a result of lodging a complaint and they will not suffer any other reprisals.
- The School will keep records of complaints.
- The School's insurer will be informed if a complaint could be connected to an insured risk.

### 5.1 External Complaints

The School, in some cases, may require involvement from external bodies. Complaints about AQ may also be directed to other external bodies. Refer to 8.0 External Complaints in the *Complaints & Feedback Management Policy*.

## 6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

### 6.1 AQ School

The School has the following role and responsibilities:

- Develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the *Complaints & Feedback Management Policy* and the *School Complaints & Feedback Management Guidelines* (this guideline);
- Appropriately communicate this guideline and the *Complaints & Feedback Management Policy* to students, parents, carers and employees;
- Ensure this guideline are readily accessible by staff, students and parents;
- Upon receipt of a complaint, manage the complaint in accordance with the *Complaints & Feedback Management Procedures*;
- Ensure appropriate support is provided to all parties to a complaint;
- Take appropriate action to prevent victimisation or action in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them;
- Appropriately implement remedies;

- Appropriately train relevant employees;
- Keep records;
- Conduct a review/audit of the Complaints Register from time to time;
- Monitor and report to the governing body on complaints;
- Report to the School's insurer when relevant;
- Refer to the School's governing body immediately any claim for legal redress.

## 6.2 All Parties to a Dispute

The complainant and respondent both have the following role and responsibilities:

- Apply and comply with the *Complaints & Feedback Management Policy and Procedures* and this guideline;
- Lodge the complaint as soon as possible after the issue arises;
- Expect that the complaint will be dealt with fairly and objectively, in a timely manner, with procedural fairness, confidentiality and privacy maintained to the extent possible;
- Provide complete and factual information in a timely manner;
- Not provide deliberately false or misleading information;
- Not make frivolous or vexatious complaints;
- Act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner;
- Act in a non-threatening manner;
- To be appropriately supported;
- Acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties;
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced;
- Maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties;
- Not victimise or act in reprisal against any party to the dispute or any person associated with them.

## 6.3 Employees

All staff are trained in complaints & feedback management procedures.

Employees receiving complaints have the following role and responsibilities:

- Act in accordance with the *Complaints & Feedback Management Policy and Procedures*;
- Inform the party lodging the complaint of how complaints can be lodged, when they should be lodged and what information is required;
- Provide the complainant with information about any support or assistance available to assist them in lodging their complaint;
- Provide the complainant with a copy of the *Complaints & Feedback Management Information Easy Read* and this guideline;
- Maintain confidentiality;
- Keep appropriate records;
- Forward complaints to more senior employees, including the School Principal, as appropriate;
- Not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

## 7.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

### Legislation

*Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)*

*Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)*

*Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*

### Internal

Child Safeguarding Policy

Code of Conduct

Complaints & Feedback Management Policy and Procedure

Complaints & Feedback Management Information Easy Read

Privacy Policy

School Behaviour Support Guideline

Whistleblower Policy & Procedure

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