



Complaints Handling Policy

Status:	Current	Supersedes: All previous Rockhampton Girls Grammar School policies
Authorised by:	Board Chair	Date of Authorisation: May 2025
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2017 (Qld) • Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) • Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld) • Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) • Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld) • Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth) • Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) • Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth) • Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) • Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) • Standards Australia, Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2022, NEQ) • Rockhampton Girls Grammar School Enterprise Bargaining Agreement <u>2024</u> • RGGS-010-PRO-COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE • RGGS-026-POL-PRIVACY POLICY • RGGS-036-POL-ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY • RGGS-037-POL-STAFF, CONTRACTOR AND VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT • RGGS-043-POL-SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY • RGGS-044-POL-WORKPLACE BULLYING POLICY • RGGS-058-POL-CHILD PROTECTION POLICY • RGGS-061-POL-CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY (STUDENTS) • RGGS-062-POL-DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION • RGGS-067-POL-STUDENT BULLYING POLICY • RGGS-073-POL-WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY • RGGS-242-POL-BOARD CHARTER • RGGS-558-FRM-ENROLMENT CONTRACT 	
Review Date:	This policy will be reviewed every four (4) years, or as appropriate, to take account of new legislation or changes to school's operations and practices and to make sure it remains appropriate to the changing environment.	Next Review Date: May 2029
Policy Owner:	Board of Trustees of Rockhampton Girls Grammar School <i>trading as</i> Rockhampton Girls Grammar School CRICOS Provider No: 00508E	Access: Open access on School website rggs.qld.edu.au



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1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide written processes about receiving, assessing, investigating and otherwise dealing with complaints.¹

2. SCOPE

Any person directly affected by the subject of a complaint. Examples may include staff, students or a student's parent or guardian, contractors, or community members.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Rockhampton Girls Grammar School:

- is committed to ensuring that complaints received are handled in a responsive, efficient, consistent, effective, transparent and fair way.
- views complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process.
- acknowledges the right of students, parents/guardians, staff and others to complain when dissatisfied with the school's services, including an action, inaction or decision of the School and the School encourages constructive criticism and complaints.
- recognises that time spent on handling complaints can be an investment in better service to students and parents/guardians and a better culture for employees.
- Will ensure employees can recognise, receive, and appropriately refer complaints to the informal or formal complaints procedure.

4. DEFINITIONS

Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the school, related to the school's services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. ²
Informal Complaint	A complaint about a matter that is likely to be simple, straight forward, easily manageable, or minor, where a simple or quick resolution is appropriate such as discussion of the matter with a relevant staff member.
Formal Complaint	A complaint about a matter that is serious, complex or may pose a threat to the health and safety of any person. Examples include serious allegations or breaches of policy, complaints against a senior staff member, including the principal or an informal complaint that could not be resolved informally. Assessment of the complaint is required by the Principal or if the complaint relates to the Principal, the Board Chair.
Complainant	The person, organisation or their representative making a complaint. ³
Respondent	The person who is referred to in a complaint by a complainant as the person responsible for their concerns or who can best respond to their concern.

5. COMPLAINTS HANDLING PRINCIPLES

Rockhampton Girls Grammar School will manage complaints according to the following (which include principles of procedural fairness):

- complaints will be taken seriously, dealt with fairly and objectively, without judgement and addressed in a reasonable timeframe
- complaints should be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible, having regard to the nature of the complaint

¹ [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Regulations 2017, s.7](#)

² Standards Australia, Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2018, NEQ), s.4.3

³ Standards Australia, Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2018, NEQ), s.4.2



- interested parties to the complaint (for example, the complainant and any respondent) will be heard and/or may provide relevant information in relation to the complaint
- confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- the complainant and any respondent will be offered support as appropriate
- victimising behaviour towards a complainant, respondent or other people associated with the complaint, will not be tolerated
- complainants who lodge a complaint on reasonable grounds will not suffer any other reprisals on the basis of the lodging the complaint

6. COMPLAINTS THAT MAY BE RESOLVED UNDER THIS POLICY

Rockhampton Girls Grammar School encourages anyone who feels impacted by an issue involving the school to file a complaint. Complaints can address matters such as:

- 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 that are contrary to the relevant ***RGGS-061-POL-CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY (STUDENTS)*** or ***RGGS-037-POL-STAFF, CONTRACTOR AND VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT***, including inappropriate staff conduct as reported by a student.⁴
- issues related to learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- issues related to communication with students or parents or between employees
- issues related to school fees and payments
- general administrative issues.
- issues relating to non-compliance with a process outlined in school policies or procedures, for example the child protection policy, discrimination policy, or privacy policy.⁵

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

7. ISSUES OUTSIDE THIS POLICY

The following matters are outside the scope of this policy and should be managed as follows:

- Child protection concerns including allegations of sexual abuse, likely sexual abuse or harm to children should be dealt with in accordance with the School's ***RGGS-058-POL-CHILD PROTECTION POLICY***.
- Student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the ***RGGS-067-POL-STUDENT BULLYING POLICY*** or ***RGGS-061-POL-CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY (STUDENTS)***.
- Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the ***RGGS-061-POL-CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY (STUDENTS)***.
- Disputes relating to a staff member's employment should be directed to their line manager and dealt with under the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement and/or Employment Law. This does not include disputes about work health and safety matters, which may be dealt with under the School's Complaints Handling Policy.
- Student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to the Principal who will involve the police as appropriate.
- Formal legal proceedings should be managed as appropriate in the circumstances.
- Complaints relating to the education and training services provided by the school to an overseas student should be dealt with in accordance with the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* and National Code and the school's ***RGGS-427-PRO-INTERNATIONAL STUDENT'S COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE***.

⁴ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 s.16(2)(a)

⁵ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 s.16(5)



- Disputes between Board members should be dealt with in accordance with the **RGGS-242-POL-BOARD CHARTER**.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1. SCHOOL

The School has the following roles and responsibilities:

- develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the *School's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures*
- appropriately communicate the *School's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures* to students, parents and employees
- ensure that the *Complaints Handling procedures* are readily accessible by staff, students and parents
- upon receipt of a complaint, manage the complaint in accordance with the *Complaints Handling procedures*
- ensure that 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 at regular intervals.
- monitor and report to the Board of Trustees of Rockhampton Girls Grammar School regarding complaints when appropriate
- report to the School's insurer when that is relevant
- refer to the Board of Trustees of Rockhampton Girls Grammar School immediately any claim for legal redress.

8.2. ALL PARTIES TO A DISPUTE

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

- apply and comply with the school's *Complaints Handling Policy and procedures*
- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner
- not provide deliberately false or misleading information
- not make frivolous or vexatious complaints or retaliatory complaints
- act in good faith and maintain a mutually beneficial relationship of trust and cooperation
- act in a calm, courteous and non-threatening manner
- 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 the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

8.3. EMPLOYEES RECEIVING COMPLAINTS

Employees receiving and/or managing complaints have the following roles and responsibilities:

- act in accordance with the School's *Complaints Handling Policy and procedures*
- refer the complainant to the School's *Complaints Handling Policy and procedures* and provide additional information as necessary
- maintain confidentiality as far as possible
- keep appropriate records



- forward complaints to more senior employees, including the Principal, if the complaint cannot be resolved at the initial level or if it involves serious issues that require the involvement of more senior employees
- not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

9. IMPLEMENTATION

Rockhampton Girls Grammar School is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints at the School, including by the development and implementation of this policy and related procedures, and via the clear support and promotion of the policy and procedures.

Both the **RGGS-009-POL-COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY** and **RGGS-010-PRO-COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE** are available on the school website. In addition, staff training and acknowledgement in relation to these policies and procedures is completed on an annual basis.

Rockhampton Girls Grammar School is also committed to appropriately training relevant employees (especially senior staff) on how to resolve complaints in line with this policy and the related procedures. Such training is completed during induction for new staff and annually thereafter for all employees.

Rockhampton Girls Grammar School will keep appropriate records of complaints, will monitor complaints and their resolution and will report on a high-level basis to the Board on complaint handling at the School.

Rockhampton Girls Grammar School will act to encourage students, parents/guardians and employees to contribute to a healthy school culture where complaints are resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible.

9.1. COMPLAINT REGISTER

Rockhampton Girls Grammar School will maintain a complaint register with details such as the date, source and description of complaints, the employee managing the complaint, the actions taken, outcome and the date the complaint was closed.

The complaint register will be stored securely by the Board Secretary

All complaints shall be entered onto the complaint register as soon as practicable after the complaint is received. The complaint register will not contain complaints about the Principal. Records of complaints about the Principal will be maintained by the Board with access restricted to the Board and the Board Secretary.

To safeguard confidentiality and maintain the integrity of the complaint process, access to the entire complaint register will be limited to the Principal and Board Secretary with a separate register maintained by the Business Manager for any complaints relating to the Principal.

The Principal may authorise the sharing of specific, relevant entries from the complaint register with other designated staff members (such as the Executive Team), provided measures are taken to protect the confidentiality of all parties involved, particularly ensuring that respondents to a complaint do not gain inappropriate access to information about the allegations against them.

10. COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE

Rockhampton Girls Grammar School has a **RGGS-010-PRO-COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE** which can be located on the school website.