



Complaints Handling Policy & Procedure

Authorised by	Board Chair
Review Date	2 years
Next Review Date:	19 November 2026
Policy Owner	Islamic College of Brisbane Board

Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is to Provide written process about receiving, assessing, investigating and otherwise dealing with complaints ¹ .
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.
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 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)• <i>Islamic College of Brisbane Collective Enterprise Agreement</i>• <i>Islamic College of Brisbane Child Protection Policy</i>• <i>Islamic College of Brisbane Work Health and Safety Policy</i>• <i>Islamic College of Brisbane Parent Code of Conduct</i>• <i>Islamic College of Brisbane Staff Code of Conduct</i>• <i>Islamic College of Brisbane Disability Discrimination Policy</i>• <i>Islamic College of Brisbane Privacy Policy</i>• <i>Islamic College of Brisbane Board Charter</i>

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

Policy Statement

Islamic College of Brisbane acknowledges the right of students, parents/ guardians, staff and others to complain when dissatisfied with the school's services, including action, inaction or decision of the college.

The legislative and regulatory obligation to provide effective complaints handling stems from a number of sources:

- Regulation 7 of the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017* requires the College to have, and implement, written processes about receiving, assessing, investigating and otherwise dealing with complaints made by its staff, students or a student's parent or guardian.
- Section 16(5) of the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State) Schools Regulation 2017* (the Regulation) requires the College to have a written complaints procedure to address allegations of non-compliance with child protection written reporting processes.

Islamic College of Brisbane 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 and views complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process.

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 CEO or an informal complaint that could not be resolved informally. Assessment of the complaint is required by senior leadership team.
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.

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

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

Complaints Handling Principles

Islamic College of Brisbane 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.
- 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 that lodge a complaint on reasonable grounds will not suffer any other reprisals on the basis of the lodging the complaint.

Procedural Fairness

It is critically important that throughout the entire complaints handling process, procedural fairness is accorded to the complainant and the person/s who are the subject of the complaint.

Procedural fairness in complaints handling requires:

- both the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is made to have the opportunity to be heard, in person or in writing as appropriate, and to respond to the allegations and/or evidence offered by the other.
- An objective investigation of issues of facts which are in dispute.
- That the investigator is free from bias, or the perception of bias, and is not 'judge in his or her own cause'.
- That any complaint outcome is supported by the evidence, necessitating a finding on the balance of probabilities in the event of a dispute of fact.
- That the complaint outcome is finalised by an adjudicator, who may also be the investigator, who is free from bias or the perception of bias.
- That the outcome is consistent with the College's established policies and/or procedures relevant to the complaint.

While it is the College's policy that these elements of procedural fairness are to be applied to each complaint received by the College, procedural fairness should not otherwise dictate the outcome of a complaint.

Maintaining Confidentiality

Maintenance of confidentiality of information throughout the complaints management process is critical.

Confidentiality applies with respect to both information relating to the person making the complaint, and, if relevant, to the person against whom a complaint is made. Personally identifiable information about a complainant should only be made available for the purpose of addressing the complaint and (unless the complainant consents) be actively protected from disclosure.

Where a staff member receives a complaint, and has logged the complaint through the Complaint Form, they should not discuss the complaint with students, other parents/carers or any person who does not have authority to investigate or manage complaints on behalf of the College. In addition, the details of the complaint should not be discussed with other staff members who are not authorised to manage the complaint.

Complaints that may be Resolved under this Policy

Complaints can be generally classified as either frontline complaints or formal complaints.

A frontline complaint is a complaint that can be resolved either at the time the complaint is made and received, or very shortly after it's received. The majority of complaints are frontline complaints – addressed by frontline or first point of contact staff.

A formal complaint is a complaint that requires further investigation and/or a written acknowledgement and response.

Islamic College of Brisbane encourages anyone who feels impacted by an issue involving the school to file a complaints. Complaints can address matters such as: :

- the college, its employees or students having done something wrong
- the college, its employees or students having failed to do something that they should have done
- the college, its employees or students having acted unfairly or impolitely
- issues of student or employee behaviour that are contrary to their relevant code of conduct, including inappropriate staff conducts as reorted 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 college fees and payments
- general administrative issues

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

- 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.

If the nature of a complaint pertains to the Chief Executive Officer, that complaint will be referred to the Board Chair. If the complaint pertains to the board or an individual board member, then, after the initial complaint has been made in accordance with this policy, that complaint will be referred to the Independent Assessor for determination.

For the purposes of this policy, the “Independent Assessor” will be a suitably qualified independent third party appointed from time to time by the board for the purposes of this policy. The implementation requirements referred to in this policy will apply to the Independent Assessor.

Issues Outside of this Policy

The following matters are outside of 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 in accordance with the college’s Child Protection Policy.
- Student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the ADAB and Character Development Framework.
- Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the ADAB and Character Development Framework.
- Disputes relating to a staff member’s employment should be directed to their manager and dealt with under the enterprise 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 Complaint Handling Policy. Disputes between board members, between Islamic College of Brisbane members and board members or between Islamic College of Brisbane members should be dealt with in accordance with the Constitution.
- 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.

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

Responsibilities

College

The College has the following role and responsibilities:

- Develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the college's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures
- Appropriately communicate the college'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 dispute, manage the complaint in accordance with the Complaint Handling procedures
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided to all parties to a complaint
- Take appropriate action to prevent the 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 that is relevant
- Refer to the school's governing body immediately any claim for legal redress.

Complaints Handling Officers

The Senior Leadership Team have been appointed to act as Complaint Handling Officers. These individuals are authorised to investigate and manage Formal Complaints once they have been lodged.

Complaint Handling Officers have the following role and responsibilities:

- Ensure that all staff are educated about the College's Complaints Handling procedures
- Investigate and, where necessary, escalating complaints when requested by the complainant.
- Liaise with complainants.
- Maintain accurate records in the appropriate secure section of Microsoft 365 SharePoint.
- Ensure systemic complaints are identified and rectified.
- Monitor the effectiveness of, and continually improve, the College's Complaints Handling Procedures.

All Parties to a Dispute

The complainant and respondent have the following role and responsibilities:

- comply with the college's Complaint 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
- Act in good faith and maintain a mutually beneficial relationship of trust and cooperation
- Act in calm, courteous manners and non-threatening manner
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- 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.

Employees Receiving Complaints

Employees receiving disputes have the following role and responsibilities:

- Act in accordance with the college's Complaint Handling Policy and procedures
- refer the complainant to the College's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures and provide additional information as necessary
- Maintain confidentiality as far as possible.
- Keep appropriate records.
- forward complaints to a relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team, including the CEO, if the complaint cannot be resolved at the initial level or if it involves serious issues that require the involvement of Senior Leadership Team.
- Not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

Implementation

Islamic College of Brisbane is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints at the college, including by the development and implementation of this policy and related procedures (prescribed below), and via the clear support and promotion of the policy and procedures.

The College implements the following steps to encourage feedback, and to make it easy for people to lodge a complaint.

- The College's Complaints Handling Policy with information on how to make a complaint is available on the College website.
- All staff are made aware of the importance of capturing and recording critical feedback. Many complaints are received via telephone, in person, or via email, and the ability for College staff to recognise a complaint, and to capture it effectively, is a central feature of the complaint handling procedures.
- Complaints or disputes do not need to be in writing. Insisting that complaints are in writing can be disincentive for the complainant.
- Where it is identified that a complainant has limited literacy skills, College staff will give them help in expressing their complaints or dispute more clearly.
- Where complainants have special needs, the availability of interpreters and staff who are cross-culturally trained or trained to cater for special needs is ensured.
- The College provides the option to make an anonymous complaint, or make a complaint using a pseudonym, in accordance with Australian Privacy Principle 2.

Islamic College of Brisbane 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.

Islamic College of Brisbane will keep appropriate records of complaints, will monitor complaints and their resolution and will report on a high-level basis to the College Board on complaint handling at the college.

Islamic College of Brisbane will act to encourage students, parents and employees to contribute to a healthy college culture where complaints are resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible.

Complaint Handling Procedure

Stage 1: Submission of Complaint

- **Options for Submission:** Complaints may be submitted verbally or through the complaints form available on the ICB website.
- **Encouragement to Use Form:** While verbal complaints are accepted, the College encourages community members to use the online complaints form for efficient tracking and documentation.
- **Anonymous Complaints:** Anonymous complaints are accepted and will be managed following standard procedures, with confidentiality maintained as appropriate.

Stage 2: Logging of Verbal Complaints

- **Requirement for Staff:** If a complaint is received verbally, the staff member receiving the complaint must document it by logging the details through an email summary or by completing the complaints form on the ICB website. This ensures proper record-keeping and tracking.

Stage 3: Initial Receipt, Acknowledgment, and Forwarding of Complaint

- **Complaints Officer's Role:** Upon receipt of a complaint (whether submitted through the form or logged by email), the Complaints Officer logs the complaint in the College's system.
- **Acknowledgment to Complainant:** The Complaints Officer sends an email acknowledgment to the complainant, explaining the next steps in the process and providing an estimated timeline for handling the complaint. This ensures transparency and sets clear expectations for the complainant.
- **Forwarding to Relevant Supervisor:** The Complaints Officer forwards the complaint to the relevant supervisor if the complaint recipient is not the direct supervisor of the staff member involved.

Stage 4: Complaint Forwarding to Staff Member

- **Supervisor's Responsibility: Within 24 hours of receiving the complaint,** the supervisor reviews the details and forwards it via email to the staff member involved. **The email must include details of the complaint without the name of the complainant.** This can be found in the complaint email sent to you. Under no circumstances must the staff member engage with the complainant or the child.
- **Draft Email Template (SCHEDULE 2)**
- **Compliance:** The supervisor must ensure that this communication aligns with college policies and legislative requirements concerning Human Resources (HR), Workplace Health and Safety (WHS), and the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA).

Stage 5: Acknowledgment by Staff Member

- **Staff Acknowledgment Requirement:** The staff member who is the subject of the complaint must acknowledge receipt and respond to the supervisor's email within 1 working day.
- **Staff on Leave:** If the staff member is on leave, the supervisor must inform the complainant about the delay and provide an anticipated timeframe for follow-up.

Stage 6: Meeting with Staff Member

- **Scheduling a Meeting:** The supervisor arranges a meeting with the staff member within 1 working day to discuss the complaint.
- **Purpose of Meeting:** The meeting aims to explore potential resolutions, with special consideration given to the complainant's expectations as specified in the complaint.

Stage 7: Drafting and Approval of Resolution

- **Drafting the Resolution:** In consultation with the staff member, the supervisor drafts a proposed resolution to address the complaint.
- **Approval Process:** The proposed resolution is submitted to the CEO for review and approval before it is forwarded to the complainant for consideration.

Stage 8: Complainant's Review of Resolution

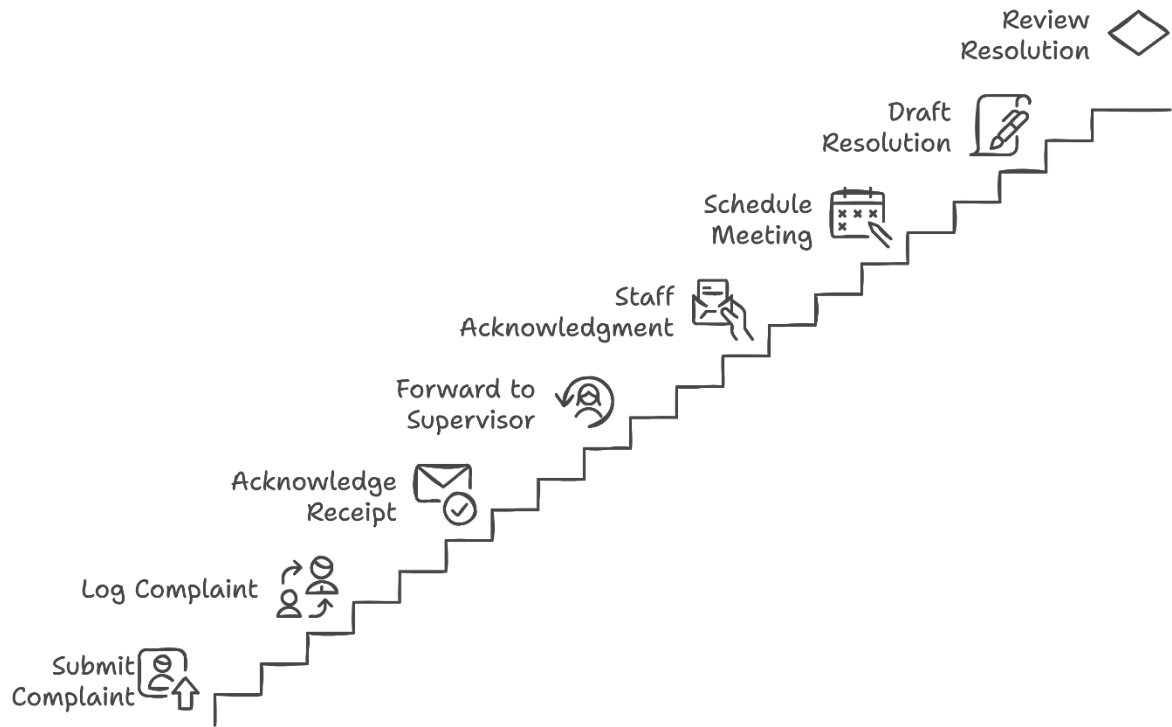
- **Resolution Review by Complainant:** Upon receiving the proposed resolution, the complainant reviews and decides whether to accept or reject it:
 - **Acceptance:** If the complainant accepts the proposed resolution, the complaint is considered resolved, and the case is closed.
 - **Rejection:** If the complainant rejects the resolution, the complaint is escalated to the CEO and/or Chief Learning Officer (CLO) for further review.

Stage 9: Escalated Complaint Handling

- **CEO/CLO Review:** The CEO and/or CLO will review the escalated complaint, addressing it in accordance with relevant policies, legislative requirements, and any other applicable documentation.
- **Final Resolution:** The CEO/CLO will ensure compliance and a thorough resolution, considering all aspects to meet procedural standards.

SCHEDULE 1 – COMPLAINT RESOLUTION STEPS

Complaint Resolution Process



SCHEDULE 2 – DRAFT EMAIL TEMPLATE (PLEASE FILL IN WITH RELEVANT DETAILS)

Dear [Employee's Name],

I am writing to inform you of a formal complaint that has been raised concerning [**text from the email forwarded to you by the complaints officer (CEO, CLO etc)**]. This email is intended to ensure you are aware of the process and understand the opportunity to respond within a reasonable timeframe, as outlined in our Employee Agreement (EBA) and policies.

Details of the Complaint

- **Nature of the Complaint:** [**COPY THE DETAILS OF THE COMPLAINT HERE**]
- **Date of Incident:** [Provide relevant date(s) if applicable]

Your Right to Respond

In line with our commitment to a transparent and fair process, you have the right to provide a response to this complaint. We encourage you to reply within **one working day** of receiving this email. If additional time is required due to any complexity, please notify us as soon as possible.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, you may also request a meeting. Per the EBA, you are entitled to bring a support person to any related discussions, which may include a union representative if desired.

Next Steps

Upon receiving your response, a meeting will be scheduled within one working day to discuss the matter and seek a constructive resolution that considers all parties' expectations and concerns.

After reviewing the details, a resolution will be determined and documented. This resolution will be shared with the CEO and communicated back to the complainant. If you have any questions or require clarification, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Best regards,
[Supervisor's Full Name]
[Position]
[Contact Information]