

Complaints Resolution Policy

Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is to provide written processes about receiving, assessing, investigating and otherwise dealing with complaints. ¹	
Scope:	Students, parents and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements.	
Status:	Approved	Supersedes: March 2024
Authorised by:	Board Chair	Date of Authorisation: July 2025
Review Date:	Biannually	Next Review Date: July 2027
Policy Owner:	School Governing Body	

Policy Statement

Samford Valley Steiner School 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. The school encourages constructive criticism and complaints. Samford Valley Steiner School is committed to ensuring that complaints received are handled in a responsive, efficient, consistent, effective, transparent and fair way.

Samford Valley Steiner School will ensure employees can recognise, receive, and appropriately refer complaints to the informal or formal complaints procedure.

Samford Valley Steiner School 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.

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

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 School Director.
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.

Complaints Handling Principles

SVSS 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 complainant (for example, the complaint 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

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

Complaints that may be Resolved under this Policy

SVSS 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 policy such as the Student Bullying Policy, Social Health and Wellbeing Policy, Employee 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.

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 in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy.
- Student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the Student Bullying Policy
- Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the Social Health and Wellbeing Policy.
- Student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to the School Director who will involve the Police as appropriate.
- 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 Complaints Resolution Policy
- Disputes between board members, between RSEGB members and board members or between RSEGB 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*

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)

for Overseas Students Act 2000 and National Code and the school's Overseas Student's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Process.

Responsibilities

School

The school has the following role and responsibilities:

- develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the school's Complaints Resolution Policy and System
- appropriately communicate the school's Complaints Resolution Policy and procedures to students, parents and employees
- ensure that the Complaints Resolution System are readily accessible by staff, students and parents
- upon receipt of a complaint, manage the complaint in accordance with the Complaints Resolution System
- 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 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.

All Parties to a Dispute

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

- comply with the school's Complaints Resolution Policy and Complaints Resolution System
- 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 manner 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 any party to the dispute or any person associated with them.

Employees Receiving Complaints

Employees receiving complaints have the following role and responsibilities:

- act in accordance with the school's Complaints Resolution Policy and System
- refer the complainant to the school's Complaints Resolution Policy and provide additional information as necessary
- maintain confidentiality as far as possible
- keep appropriate records
- forward complaints to more senior employees, including the School Director 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.

Implementation

SVSS is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints at the school, including the development and implementation of this policy and related procedures, and via the clear support and promotion of the policy and procedures.

SVSS is also committed to appropriately training relevant employees (especially those on the Senior Leadership Team) on how to resolve complaints in line with this policy and the related procedures.

Complaint Register

- SVSS 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 formal and informal complaint register will be stored securely in the Leadership files on the School Portal.
- 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 School Director. Records of complaints about the School Director will be maintained by the Board with access restricted to the Board.
- To safeguard confidentiality and maintain the integrity of the complaint process, access to the entire complaint register will be limited to the School Director and the Economic Development Director.
- The School Director may authorise the sharing of specific, relevant entries from the complaint register with other designated staff members (such as the senior leadership 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.

References

- [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 \(ISO 10002:2022, NEQ\)](#)
- SVSS Enterprise Agreement
- [SVSS Enrolment Contract](#)
- [SVSS Child Protection Policy](#)
- SVSS Employee Code of Conduct
- SVSS Constitution
- SVSS Complaints Resolution System
- SVSS Work Health and Safety Policy
- SVSS Anti-Discrimination Policy
- SVSS Sexual Harassment Policy
- SVSS Workplace Bullying Policy
- SVSS Student Bullying Policy
- SVSS Privacy Policy
- SVSS Disability Discrimination Policy