



ELOUERA ASSOCIATION LTD

Making a Difference in Peoples Lives

**Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures
for Elouera Association Services
Parents, Students and Service Users**

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope

This procedure applies to all Elouera Association services including the Elouera Special School in handling complaints made in respect of services provided by the service or school or against staff members, which includes employees, contractors and volunteers.

This procedure does not extend to personal grievances between parents, guardians or other members of the community.

1.2 Whistle blowing complaints

This procedure does not extend to complaints which are whistle blowing disclosures. The procedure for processing whistle blowing complaints are dealt with in the organisations whistle blowing policy.

In summary a whistle blowing disclosure is a disclosure which:

- is made by a board member, staff member, a person who supplies goods or services to the organisation or school, including a volunteer, an employer of a supplier or a relative of any of these people;
- involves alleged misconduct, an improper state of affairs or circumstances, or illegal activity, and
- is made to a senior staff member, or officer of the organisation or school, the school's auditor or a person who the school has authorised to collect such disclosures.

1.3 Related policies

Complaints about reportable conduct will be addressed in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy.

Complaints regarding a grievance between staff members about work matters, including work relationships and decision made by other staff members which impact on their work, are addressed in accordance with the organisations Staff Grievance Policy.

Complaints regarding unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying between staff are generally addressed in accordance with the organisations Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Statement.

1.4 Confidentiality

All parties involved in complaints handling are required to maintain appropriate confidentiality, including in relation to handling and storing records.

2. Complaints

A complaint or grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the Service or school about an educational and/or operational matter relating to services provided by the organisation or school or the behaviour or decisions of a staff member, contractor or volunteer, including misconduct.

If a parent/carer or service recipient/student has a concern about the conduct of a staff member, they should raise their concern with the service or school in accordance with section 3. If a complaint that concerns the behaviour of a school staff member may constitute reportable conduct, the matter will be addressed in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy in accordance with section 1.2. Please refer to the school's Child Protection Policy for information about reportable conduct. Complainants are not required to assess whether their concern meets the threshold of reportable conduct before making a complaint. Any concern about a child's wellbeing may be reported under this policy.

Complaints may be made by a service recipient/student or parent/carer.

The organisation will seek to resolve complaints informally where possible but acknowledges that in some cases a person may wish to make a formal complaint.

3. Raising a complaint

3.1 The complainant

Informal complaints may be raised by a complainant directly with the person involved. However, if the complainant does not feel comfortable doing so or the matter is one where it may not be appropriate to do so a complaint can be made to the area Supervisor, Head Teacher or any Senior Staff Member. Any complaint about the conduct of a school staff member should be raised directly with the Head Teacher or Chief Executive Officer in the first instance.

Should the matter not be resolved through informal processes, the complainant may raise the matter formally with the organisation or school. A formal complaint can be made in writing to the Chief Executive Officer, via email allan@elouera-association.com

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint concerning the Chief Executive Officer the complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of the Board, via mail to PO Box 271, Cootamundra NSW 2590. In this situation, the references in this policy relating to the role of the Chief Executive Officer should be read as references to the Chair of the Board.

3.2 The school and other Elouera Services

The Chief Executive Officer will generally acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing as soon as practicable.

4. Handling complaints

4.1 Assessing a complaint

The Chief Executive Officer generally will assess the complaint and determine:

- whether the complaint is one to be addressed under this policy or is a staff grievance or reportable conduct matter which are dealt with by the relevant policies, see section 1.2; and
- the priority of the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised; and
- whether the school may be required to report the matter to the Ombudsman, Police, Family and Community Services or other relevant authorities should the complaint relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

4.2 Managing a formal complaint

The Chief Executive Officer generally will manage a formal complaint by:

- a) advising the complainant of the likely steps that will be undertaken by the organisation or School in relation to the complaint;
- b) if appropriate, advising the relevant parties of the complaint at the relevant time and providing them with an opportunity to respond;
- c) collecting any additional information the organisation or School considers necessary to assess the complaint;
- d) making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved (“resolution decision”); and
- e) advising the complainant in writing, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution decision of the Chief Executive Officer and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

There may be circumstances where some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the organisation will determine, on a case by case basis the most appropriate method of handling the complaint.

A complainant and the relevant parties that the complaint is about may choose to have an appropriate support person present at any meeting with representatives of the organisation or School about the complaint. However, the organisation maintains the right to determine whether the person’s preferred support person is appropriate and may not approve the attendance of a support person where they are determined by the organisation to be inappropriate.

5. Contact

If you have any queries about this procedure, you should contact Chief Executive Officer for advice.