



ETASC Complaints and Grievances Policy & Procedure

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Policy Statement

This policy outlines the procedures for handling complaints made in respect of services provided by ET Australia Secondary College (ETASC) or against staff members, including employees, contractors and volunteers. It ensures complaints are addressed promptly and appropriately, with both informal and formal procedures available to meet the legal obligations of NSW independent schools under the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) registration requirements.

ETASC is committed to providing a fair, accessible and equitable complaints process for all members of the ETASC community.

Scope

This policy applies to all members of the ETASC community, including students, parents, guardians, staff, contractors, stakeholders and volunteers. It covers complaints related to educational or operational matters within ETASC, as well as grievances regarding the behaviour of staff members, contractors, or volunteers. However, it does not extend to personal grievances between parents, guardians, or other members of the ETASC community unless these relate to ETASC's services or staff conduct.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and transparent process for handling complaints and grievances within ETASC. It aims to encourage the resolution of complaints informally, and at the lowest level wherever possible, and to ensure that complaints are resolved fairly, promptly, and in accordance with relevant legal requirements. The policy also emphasises the importance of confidentiality and the protection of individuals who raise complaints.

- To provide effective responses and appropriate redress
- To maintain good working relationships between all people involved with ETASC
- To maintain records of complaints and the determination made in each case
- To manage communication issues concerning complaints within, and outside of, ETASC

Complaints and grievances are regarded as opportunities to improve the ETASC's services, systems and relationships. Complaint information may be reviewed to identify trends, reduce organisational risk and support continuous improvement.

Definitions

A complaint or grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction related to educational or operational matters within ETASC, or the behaviour of a staff member, contractor, or volunteer. Complaints may be made by any member of the ETASC community.

Principles

Complaints should be addressed promptly and appropriately, with the aim of resolving issues informally where possible. Formal complaints are documented and handled according to the procedures outlined below.

ETASC is committed to providing a complaints process that is accessible, culturally safe and responsive to children and young people. Students are encouraged and supported to raise concerns, complaints or allegations without fear of disadvantage or victimisation.

A person who raises a complaint or participates in a complaint process in good faith must not be subjected to victimisation, reprisal or unfair treatment as a result.

Confidentiality and Media Communication

All parties involved in the complaints process are required to maintain confidentiality, including the handling and storing of records. Complainants have the right to know what use will be made of personal information and, accordingly, personal information will only be shared between staff on a 'need to know' basis. Only the Principal is authorised to speak to the media on ETASC-related issues.

Roles and Responsibilities

A complaint may be made by anyone who has a concern or complaint about any aspect of ETASC. 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 Principal or Deputy Principal. Any complaint about the conduct of a staff member should be raised directly with the Principal in the first instance.

Where a person wishes to make a complaint concerning the Principal, the complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of the Board, via email etasc@etaustralia.com. In this situation, the references in this policy relating to the role of the Principal should be read as references to the Chair of the Board.

Complaint Management Procedure

Step 1 - Raise a Complaint	A complaint may be made by anyone who has a concern or complaint about any aspect of ETASC. • A complaint can be made in writing to the Principal or Deputy Principal, via email etasc@etaustralia.com. • A complaint concerning the Principal must be made in writing to the Chair of the Board via etasc@etaustralia.com.
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Step 2 - Assess the Complaint	The Deputy Principal/Principal 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, or another matter to be dealt with under the relevant policies; and • the priority of the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised; and • whether ETASC may be required to report the matter to the Office of the Children’s Guardian, Police, Department of Communities and Justice or other relevant authorities should the complaint relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.
Step 3 - Manage the Complaint	Complaints made may be resolved: • Informally - Discussion and resolution by parties involved • Formally - Investigation by the Principal or representative • Externally - Investigation by an external body
Step 4 - Outcome	In formal or external investigations, all parties must be advised in writing of the outcome. • A complaint may be upheld (in part or in full) or not upheld. In each case, reasons for this are clearly given.
Step 5 - Record and Close	The complaint will be formally closed once the outcome has been communicated and all required actions and records have been completed. At all formal stages of the complaint’s procedure, information should be recorded in writing and stored securely on Teams.

Raising a Complaint

Should the matter not be resolved between the parties directly in the first instance, the complainant may raise the matter with ETASC. A complaint can be made in writing to the Principal or Deputy Principal, via email etasc@etaustralia.com.

The Deputy Principal/Principal will generally acknowledge receipt of a complaint raised with ETASC in writing as soon as practicable.

Complaints submitted in writing should include:

- a description of complaint
- previous steps taken
- the desired outcome
- dates/times
- witnesses
- previous complaints made

Assessing a Complaint

The Deputy Principal/Principal 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, or another matter to be dealt with under the relevant policies; and
- the priority of the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised; and
- whether ETASC may be required to report the matter to the Office of the Children's Guardian, Police, Department of Communities and Justice or other relevant authorities should the complaint relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

Managing a Complaint

Most complaints should be resolved informally where appropriate. However, where informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, the complaint may proceed to the next stage.

A complaint made to the Principal may be referred to the parties for informal resolution.

Time must be allowed to interview parties, examine documents and review the evidence. Any person who is the subject of a complaint will be advised of the relevant allegations and provided with a reasonable opportunity to respond before findings are made.

A complainant or respondent may request to have a support person present at meetings relating to the complaint, subject to the school's determination that the support person is appropriate to the circumstances.

For formal or external investigations, all parties must be advised in writing of the outcome.

A complaint may be upheld (in part or in full) or not upheld. In each case reasons for this are clearly given. In the first instance, conciliation may be possible following:

- An apology
- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again
- An undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint

Issues related to child protection, criminal investigations and employee grievances must be handled separately from this policy

The Principal may refuse to reconsider a complaint where there are reasonable grounds to determine that it has already been adequately considered, is frivolous, or has been formally closed. The complainant will be advised in writing of the decision and the reasons for it.

Where a decision or course of action arising from a complaint affects another individual, that individual may appeal if they consider the decision to be unfounded, unjustified or incorrect. ETASC will manage the appeal under its established appeal procedures.

Where appropriate, the school may engage an independent mediator to assist in resolving unresolved complaints.

This complaints policy is distinct from formal staff disciplinary proceedings. Where a complaint gives rise to disciplinary proceedings, the complaints process may be placed on hold. The complainant will be informed if this occurs. Any non-disciplinary aspects of the complaint may continue to be addressed under this procedure.

Whistleblowing Complaints

Complaints that qualify as whistleblowing disclosures are handled under ETASC's Whistleblowing Policy. These involve serious misconduct, improper conduct, or illegal activity, and must be reported to a senior staff member, ETASC auditor, or authorised person.

Related Policies

Complaints about specific issues will be handled in accordance with the relevant policies:

- Child Protection Policy for reportable conduct.
- Student Code of Conduct, Behaviour Management Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, or Student Wellbeing Procedures for student grievances.

- Staff Complaints and Grievance Policy for work-related grievances between staff members.
- Employee Code of Conduct.
- Teacher Accreditation Procedures for grievances regarding teacher accreditation.

If the complaint concerns staff behaviour that may constitute reportable conduct, it will be addressed in accordance with the ETASC Child Protection Policy.

Record Keeping

At all formal stages of the complaint's procedure, the following information should be recorded in writing and stored securely on Teams:

- The name of the complainant
- The date and time at which complaint was made
- The details of the complaint (including staff members and witnesses)
- The desired outcome of the complainant
- How the complaint is investigated (including written records of interviews held)
- Results and conclusions of investigations
- Any action taken
- The complainant's response (satisfaction or further pursuit of complaint)

Formal complaints will be recorded in the Complaints Register and maintained securely and confidentially and retained in accordance with recordkeeping requirements.

Compliance and Legal Obligations

ETASC will ensure compliance with NESA registration requirements and other relevant legal obligations. This includes making the complaints policy publicly available on the ETASC website and including relevant information in the school's Annual Report.

ETASC Complaints and Grievances Policy & Procedure			
Version	Summary of change or review outcome	Document Creator/Reviewer/ Approver	Date
0.1	Policy reviewed and updated with new version control policy.	Jessica Pitscheider	6 July 2021
1.0	Reviewed / Approved – Current Document	Tony Mylan	6 July 2021
1.1	Updating the website hyperlink, fixed some grammatical and formatting errors	Jessica Pitscheider	27 July 2021
1.2	Policy Reviewed – No updates	Lachlan Scott	31 May 2024
2.0	Reviewed / Approved	Tony Mylan	27 June 2024
2.1	Updated to align with the AIS' sample policy and procedure	Jessica Pitscheider	15 August 2024
3.0	Approved	Tony Mylan	20 August 2024
3.1	Update formatting and version control; reorganised content to align with internal policy. No substantive policy changes.	Sandi Spierings	27 August 2026
4.0	Approved	Tony Mylan	21 September 2026