
Complaints Handling Policy

7th June 2024

Introduction

Sydney Science College is built on the foundations of valuing & protecting each individual that interacts with the school. Our community is tight-knit with an emphasis on small classes & individual attention for students, and a culture of collaboration between teachers.

With open communication between members of the school being key to the school's operation, potential problems are minimised, however, if anything does slip through the cracks and issues arise, the school has the following procedures to handle complaints.

General Procedure

The following procedures will be adhered to by the school when dealing with general complaints or grievances that have been reported by parents or students. This provides parents and students with an opportunity to report and have the complaint or grievance addressed.

The school will endeavour to have any complaints or grievances resolved in a timely manner while recognising that a reasonable period of time is allowed for investigation of the complaint or grievance reported.

Step 1

Complaints and grievances will initially be settled by discussion between the parents or student and staff member concerned.

Step 2

In the situation which the staff member cannot be approached, then the parent and student should approach the Principal on Duty.

- Minor Incidences: the Principal on Duty will pursue the matter and will either organise a meeting between the staff member and the parent / student involved to resolve issues, or will resolve the issue with the staff member and verbally report the result to the parent / student.
- Significant breaches of staff conduct: refer to the Guidelines for Reporting Serious Staff Misconduct & Reportable Conduct

If the complaint or grievance is in regards to the Principal on Duty, this should be communicated in writing to a director other than the Principal on Duty.

Principal on Duty: shaun.balnave@sydneysciencecollege.nsw.edu.au

Director (Co-Principal): joey.tsao@sydneysciencecollege.nsw.edu.au

Guidelines for Reporting Serious Staff Misconduct & Reportable Conduct

Legally required processes for the management of complaints that fall within the definitions of Child Protection legislation is administered by the Principal on Duty and is accountable to the NSW Ombudsman's Office and/or the Department of Community Services.

Where a teacher receives a complaint of this nature, he/she is required to inform the Principal on Duty. If a complaint involving potential criminal activities is received by the Principal on Duty, he/she will be obliged to report it to the Local Area Command of the NSW Police.

For reporting of any serious staff misconduct, including Reportable Conduct as defined in child protection laws, the Principal on Duty is the designated contact.

What is Reportable Conduct?

Section 25A(1) of the Ombudsman Act defines 'reportable conduct' as:

- any sexual offence or sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child - including a child pornography offence
- any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child
- any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child – even if the child consented to the behaviour.

Some examples of conduct that would not constitute reportable conduct include touching a child to attract their attention, guide them or comfort them, a school teacher raising their voice to attract attention or restore order in the classroom, or conduct that is established to be accidental.

Reporting Steps

1. The situation should be communicated to the Principal on Duty verbally and in writing.
2. If you wish to remain anonymous, you can request this to the Principal on Duty - this will be honoured as long as there is no legal obligation for the school to disclose your identity.
3. The Principal on Duty will investigate the matter, which typically includes interviewing any witnesses.
4. Parents will be advised of the findings in writing. A copy of this letter will also be forwarded to the board of directors.

For any reports that concern the Principal on Duty, a director that is not the the Principal on Duty is to be contacted.

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