

B8.2 Complaints Handling

PART 1: COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

Policy Statement

MUSEC School (Macquarie University Special Education Centre) welcomes feedback and is committed to managing complaints from students and parent/carer(s) fairly, promptly and confidentially. Raising a concern will not disadvantage a student or their family. This policy sets out how a person can raise a concern and how the School responds. MUSEC School makes this Complaints Handling Policy publicly available on its website.

What Is a Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the School about an educational or operational matter relating to the services it provides, or about the behaviour or decisions of a staff member, contractor or volunteer. The School seeks to resolve concerns informally where possible, while recognising that a person may wish to make a formal complaint.

Who May Make a Complaint

A complaint may be made by a student, a parent/carer, or any member of the school community. A complainant is not required to decide whether their concern meets any particular threshold before raising it, any concern about a child's wellbeing or the conduct of a staff member, volunteer or contractor may be reported under this policy.

Scope

This policy applies to complaints about the services provided by MUSEC School and about staff members, contractors and volunteers. It does not extend to personal grievances between members of the school community. Some matters are handled under other policies, as set out below.

Confidentiality

All parties involved in handling a complaint must maintain appropriate confidentiality, including in the handling and storage of records. Some matters, such as reportable conduct allegations, are subject to privacy and other legal requirements that may limit the information the School can share about an outcome.

Related Policies

Some complaints are managed under other MUSEC School policies rather than this one:

- Reportable conduct or child protection concerns — *B8.1 Child Protection Policy and Procedures*.
- Concerns relating to discipline, suspension, exclusion or expulsion — *B9 Discipline Policy and Procedure*.
- Bullying concerns — *B8.2 Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure*.

A complainant does not need to identify which policy applies. If a concern is more appropriately dealt with under another policy, the School will redirect it and tell the complainant.

PART 2: PROCEDURES

How to Raise a Concern

A concern can often be resolved quickly by raising it directly with the person involved. Where a complainant does not feel comfortable doing so, or it would not be appropriate, the concern can be raised with the School as follows:

If the concern is about...	Raise it with...	How
A general school matter or service	The Leader of Staff or Leader of Pedagogy or Principal	In person, by phone, or in writing (email)
The conduct or a decision of a staff member	The Principal, in the first instance	In writing (email) to the Principal
The Principal	The Chair of the MUSEC School Management Committee	In writing (email) to the Chair

Where a complaint is about the Principal, references to the Principal in these procedures are read as references to the Chair of the MUSEC School Management Committee, who acts as the delegate.

So that the School can respond effectively, a complainant is encouraged to describe the concern, what has happened, and the outcome they are seeking. A complainant, and any person a complaint is about, may bring a support person to any meeting about the complaint; the School may decline a particular support person it considers inappropriate.

How the School Responds

Acknowledge. The Principal acknowledges receipt of a complaint made to the School, in writing, as soon as practicable.

Assess. The Principal assesses the complaint to determine:

- whether it is to be handled under this policy or under another policy (for example child protection, discipline or a staff grievance);
- the priority of the complaint, according to the urgency and seriousness of the matter; and
- whether the matter must be reported to an external authority, such as the Office of the Children's Guardian, NSW Police, or the Department of Communities and Justice, where it may relate to unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

Manage and resolve. The Principal generally manages a complaint by:

- advising the complainant of the likely steps the School will take;
- where appropriate, informing any person the complaint is about and giving them an opportunity to respond;
- gathering any further information the School considers necessary;
- making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved; and
- where appropriate, advising the complainant in writing of the resolution decision and any proposed action.

Not every step will suit every complaint. The School determines the most appropriate way to handle each matter on a case-by-case basis, guided by fairness to all parties.

Reportable Conduct

If a complaint may involve reportable conduct by a staff member, it is dealt with under the *B8.1 Child Protection Policy and Procedures*. Such a matter may be current or historical, timeframes depend on the individual case, and privacy and confidentiality requirements may limit what can be shared about the outcome. Complainants do not need to assess whether a concern amounts to reportable conduct before raising it.

Records

Complaint records are kept confidential and stored securely in SENTRAL and/or the password protected, restricted-access file 'MUSEC Executive Files' on the MUSEC School Common 'S' drive, and retained in line with the School's records requirements.

Contact

Making a complaint or asking a question

General enquiries about this policy can be directed to the School Principal by phone on **(02) 9850 8691**.

Complaints to the School should be made in writing to the Principal by email. Please address the email to the attention of the Principal and send to, musec.operations@mq.edu.au

A complaint about the Principal should be made in writing to the Chair of the MUSEC School Management Committee by email. Please address the email to the attention of the MUSEC School Management Chair and send to, controlledentities@mq.edu.au