

Complaints Handling

Policy



Complaints Handling Policy 3.0

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Purpose:** | The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students, parents and employees of the **Carbrook Animal Assisted Learning Centre (Carbrook Centre)** have their complaints and disputes are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective and fair way. |
| **Scope:** | Students, parents, guardians 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:** Version 2.0 |
| **Authorised by:** | Transformed Futures Ltd | **Date of Authorisation:** 18 January 2021 |
| **References:** | * [Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2017](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/whole/html/asmade/act-2017-024)
* [*Australian Education Regulations 2013*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2013L01476)
* [*Fair Work Act 2009*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2014C00031/Html/Volume_1#_Toc377043680)
* [*Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)*](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/W/WorkHSA11.pdf)
* [*Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2014C00076)
* [*Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/A/AntiDiscrimA91.pdf)
* [*Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2004A03366)
* [*Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2004A02868)
* [*Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2004A01302)
* [*Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2004A04426)
* [*Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2004A00274)
* Carbrook Work Health and Safety Policy
* Carbrook Anti-Discrimination Policy
* Carbrook Sexual Harassment Policy
* Carbrook Disability Policy
* Carbrook Workplace Bullying Policy
* Carbrook Student Bullying Policy
* Carbrook Staff Code of Conduct
* Carbrook Child Protection Policy
 |
| **Review Date:** | December 2020 | **Next Review Date:** December 2021 |
| **Policy Owner:** | Transformed Futures Ltd |

Carbrook Animal Assisted Learning Centre (the Centre/the school)is committed to ensuring that the Centre operates with an open and transparent school culture whereby all staff, student, parents and guardians are provided with clear information and processes to have their complaints heard in a fair and supportive way. The Centre recognise that value of feedback (including complaints) to address concerns and ultimately services and support for all members of the school community.

This *Complaints Handling Policy* outlines the processes to be followed to ensure that student, parent and employee complaints and disputes are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective and fair way.

Information about how to access the complaints policy, and ongoing opportunities to provide feedback will be communicated to staff, students, parents and guardians through the student handbook, school newsletters and the website. Students, parents and guardians will also be made aware of the school’s approach to open and honest communication at all student interviews and made aware of the process for complaints.

# **Policy Statement**

Through the implementation of this policy, the Centre is committed to;

* ensuring that student, parent and employee complaints are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, and effective and fair way.
* viewing complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process.
* acknowledging the right of students, parents, guardians and employees to complain when dissatisfied with an action, inaction or decision of the school and the school encourages constructive criticism and complaints.
* recognising that time spent on handling complaints can be an investment in better service to students, parents, guardian and employees.

## Complaints that may be Resolved under this Policy

The Centre encourage students, parents, guardians and employees to lodge promptly any concerns regarding sexual harassment, child protection, discrimination, workplace bullying and privacy breaches as well as more general complaints that include areas 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 Staff Code of Conduct
* issues related to learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
* issues related to communication with students or parents, guardians or between employees
* issues related to school fees and payments
* general administrative issues.

Student complaints may be brought by students or by parents/ guardians 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 or risks of harm to children should be dealt with in accordance with the law and school’s *Child Protection Policy*.
* Bullying complaints should be dealt with under the school’s *Workplace Bullying Policy,* *Student Bullying Policy* or *Positive Behaviour Policy*.
* Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the *Positive Behaviour Policy*.
* Employee complaints related to their employment should be directed to their supervisor.
* Student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to the Principal who will involve the Police as appropriate.
* Formal legal proceedings should be managed through the appropriate legal process.

## Complaints Handling Principles

The Centre is committed to managing complaints according to the following principles:

* complaints will be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible
* complaints will be taken seriously
* anonymous complaints will be treated on their merits
* complaints will be dealt with fairly and objectively and in a timely manner
* the Board/Principal will determine the appropriate person to deal with the complaint in the first instance.
* mediation, negotiation and informal resolution are optional alternatives
* procedural fairness will be ensured wherever practicable, including the right of interested parties to have their complaint heard
* confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
* all parties to the complaints will be appropriately supported
* all parties will be provided with reasonable progress updates
* appropriate remedies will be offered and implemented
* the provision of a review pathway for parties to the complaint if warranted
* complainants, respondents and people associated with them will not be victimised because of lodging the complaints and they will not suffer any other reprisals
* the school will keep records of complaints
* the school's insurer will be informed if a complaint could be connected to an insured risk.

## Responsibilities

### The Centre

The Centre (school) has the following role and responsibilities in relation to the Carbrook Centre *Complaints Handling Policy*, and will;

* develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with policy
* appropriately communicate the policy to students, parents, guardians and employees
* ensure that the policy is readily accessible by staff, students and parents and guardians
* upon receipt of a complaint, manage the complaint in accordance with the policy
* 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 roles and responsibilities in relation to the Carbrook Centre*Complaints Handling Policy* and will;

* apply and comply with the policy and procedures
* lodge the complaint as soon as possible after the issue arises
* expect that the complaint will be dealt with fairly and objectively; in a timely manner; with procedural fairness wherever practicable; that confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
* provide complete and factual information in a timely manner
* not provide deliberately false or misleading information
* not make frivolous or vexatious complaints
* act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner
* act in a non-threatening manner
* expect to be appropriately supported
* 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 roles and responsibilities in relation to the Carbrook Centre *Complaints Handling Policy* and will;

* act in accordance with the policy
* inform the party lodging the complaint of how complaints can be lodged, when they should be lodged and what information is required
* provide the complainant with information about any support or assistance available to assist them in lodging their complaint
* provide the complainant with a copy of the policy
* maintain confidentiality
* keep appropriate records
* to forward complaints to more senior employees, including the Principal, as appropriate
* not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

## Implementation

The Carbrook Centre is committed to;

* raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints at the Centre, including by the development and implementation of this policy, and by the clear support and promotion of the policy and related procedures.
* appropriately training relevant employees (especially senior staff) on how to resolve complaints in line with this policy and the related procedures.
* maintaining appropriate records of complaints, monitoring complaints and their resolution and reporting on a high-level basis to the school Board on complaint handling at the school.
* encouraging students, parents, guardians and employees to contribute to a healthy school culture where complaints are resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible.

## How to Lodge a Complaint

Complaints can be lodged by students, parent, guardians and employees. Complaints can be made in-person, over the phone or via letter or email. The flowchart below shows the order of complaint escalation.

Executive Director/ Principal

Anna Borneman

anna.borneman@carbrookcentre.qld.edu.au

All complaints covered in this policy

Complainant is unsatisfied with the Principal’s response

OR

Complain is about the Principal

OR

Complaint is escalated by the Principal

Board Chair

Wendy Mungomery wendy.montgomery@transformed.org.au

Company Secretary

Andrew Borneman

andrew.borneman@transformed.org.au

Complain is about the Chair

OR

Complaint is escalated by the Chair

## Complaints Register

The Principal will keep a record of all complaints and these will be presented as one part of the Principals Report to the Board. For complaints made to the Chair or Board, the Company Secretary will maintain the register.

