SILVER TREE
STEINER SCHOOL

# Complaints Resolution Policy

## 2026

This policy applies to: everyone

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| AUTHORISED BY: | The Board of Governors |
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# Complaints Resolution Policy

## Objective

To resolve complaints in the best interests of the safety and wellbeing of students in the School community to inform continuous improvement in a manner consistent with the Codes of Conduct.

## Rationale

Silver Tree Steiner School provides a quality early childhood and primary education and care for children. We value Respect, Love of Learning, Connection, and Creativity. Living these Values requires all members of our community to be open to learning from decisions, welcome respectful feedback from people affected by our decisions, and collaborate to resolve our differences in ways that prioritise the safety and wellbeing of our students.

A complaint is also an opportunity for all those involved in its resolution to model our Values and the behaviours in our Code of Conduct. The goal of addressing every complaint is to inform continuous improvement.

Resolution at the lowest appropriate level at the earliest appropriate opportunity allows a decision maker to address and resolve a complaint about their decision. This means that any misunderstandings, unclear communication or other incidents should be firstly communicated to the person involved, whether a teacher, another staff member or someone else in the school community.

## Sources of Authority

- Registration Standards for Non-Government Schools
- AS 10002:2022 Guidelines for complaint management in organisations
- National Child Safe Organisation Principles

## Definitions

- ***Address*** means the complaint process from its submission by the complaint until its resolution by the School.
- ***Complaint*** is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the School, whether verbal, in writing, or anonymous, about School services, decisions, or actions, including the complaint management process.
- ***Complainant*** is the person or organisation making a complaint.
- ***Decision maker*** is the person addressing and resolving a complaint on behalf of the Head of School.
- ***Head of School*** means the Head of School or the Head of School's nominee.
- ***Resolution*** means the outcome of the complaint in accordance with this Policy.
- ***Respondent*** is the Head of School, regardless of any person named in the complaint.

## Scope

This policy applies to all complaints, regardless of the complainant or their anonymity.

## Policy Statements

The safety and wellbeing of students must be prioritised in addressing and resolving complaints.

A decision maker must vary or suspend the application of this Policy to prevent or respond to a risk to student or staff safety or wellbeing.

The Head of School must suspend addressing a complaint if a law enforcement agency or government regulator is assessing any element of the complaint, and resume when authorised to do so by the external agency or regulator.

A complaint is resolved when the decision maker notifies the complainant of the outcome of assessing the reasonably available information against all applicable standards, processes, and policies, including this policy.

The decision maker must refer the complaint to the next decision maker at the request of the complainant.

All parties must address and resolve a complaint in a manner of behaviour described in the School Codes of Conduct.

A decision maker must resolve a complaint in the best interests of the School community.

All parties must observe Cultural safety when addressing and resolving a complaint.

## Procedural Fairness

A decision maker must address complaints in accordance with the rules of procedural fairness that require:

- Any person who is likely to be adversely affected by the outcome of a complaint must be given a reasonable opportunity to present their case to the decision maker before a final decision is made.
- A fair-minded observer would believe the decision maker brings a mind open to persuasion by information before them.
- A decision is logically supported by information available to the decision maker.

Resolution at the lowest appropriate level at the earliest appropriate opportunity allows a decision maker to address and resolve a complaint about their decision. They should do so, provided they can comply with procedural fairness.

A complainant notified of the resolution of their complaint who believes they were denied procedural fairness should ask for the decision to be reviewed by the next decision maker.

## Culturally Safe Complaints Management

Complaints will be addressed and resolved in a manner that:

- Recognises and respects a person's cultural identity
- Listens and responds to expressions of feeling unsafe
- Assists a person to engage with this Policy
- Acknowledges the significance of fear of retaliation and collective shame

## Student Complaints

Students are welcome and encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable, whether it is the class teacher, a member of the support staff, the Education Coordinator or the Head of School.

Complaints by students and ex-students must be addressed and resolved in accordance with this Policy.

Decision makers and staff must ensure that a student is not disadvantaged due to their age, maturity, or disability from awareness of this Policy, making a complaint, or participating in the complaint resolution process.

Decision makers and staff must give students' opinions about complaints due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the student.

## Complaint Register

The Head of School must maintain a Complaints Register recording:

- date of complaint
- name of complainant (if known) and relationship to the School
- subject matter of the complaint, including the name of any person complained about and his or her relationship to the School
- decision maker and position or role at the School
- date complaint resolved
- whether complaint upheld
- resolution agreed with or notified to complainant
- date of referral for review to next decision maker
- complaint reviewer and relationship to the School
- date review finalised
- review resolution agreed with or notified to the complainant

## Complaint Handling Process

A complaint must be addressed and resolved at the lowest appropriate level at the earliest appropriate time.

A staff member receiving a complaint who has the authority to address and resolve it should seek to do so with minimal formality.

The staff member who resolved the complaint should refer a complainant dissatisfied with the resolution to this Policy as to their options for review.

Complaints submitted in writing must be under 500 words. We reserve the right to return complaints that are over 500 words and ask that the complaint be summarised if this is the case.

The following are complaint decision makers:

- Member of staff who made the decision, which is the subject of the complaint
- Head of School
- The Board Chair

A decision maker must acknowledge in writing receipt of a complaint within three school days, with a response timeline provided depending on the nature of the complaint.

A decision maker must record the complaint in the Complaints Register.

A decision maker may seek such information as they see fit to address and resolve the complaint.

The decision maker must notify the complainant in writing of:

- The resolution of their complaint
- The reasons for the resolution
- The option for them to ask the Head of School to review the resolution.

The decision maker should notify any staff member named or involved in addressing the complaint of the resolution.

The decision maker should not disclose any adverse action against another person.

A complainant dissatisfied with the resolution should ask the decision maker to refer their complaint and any additional submissions by them to the Head of School.

A complainant dissatisfied with the resolution of their complaint by the Head of School should ask the Head of School to refer their complaint and any additional submissions by them to the Board Chair.

A decision-maker, including the Head of School, must refer any complaint to the next decision maker if a reasonable person might believe they cannot address the matter with an open and impartial mind.

A decision maker reviewing the resolution should confine their review to the information and process used by the original decision maker. If the complainant made further submissions raising new issues, the decision maker may inquire into those submissions as they see fit, including consulting with the original decision maker.

No person should be subject to any adverse consequences for making a complaint, supporting a complaint, or participating in the complaint process — unless their behaviour breaches a School policy, and the response relates to that breach.

To support the written process outlined above, a visual overview is provided overleaf in the Complaints Resolution Flowchart, illustrating the key steps and decision points involved in resolving complaints.

## Complaints Resolution Flow Chart

### Complainant seeks to make a complaint

A complaint should initially always be taken to the person involved directly. Parents should take any complaint related to their child to the teacher involved. All members of staff are encouraged to deal with parental concerns that lie within their area of responsibility.

### Complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution

| | |
|---|---|
| Refer complainant to *Complaints Resolution Policy* as to their options for review. | Highlight complaint decision makers:<br>• Member of staff who made the decision<br>• Head of School (HOS)<br>• The Board Chair |

### Decision maker receives a complaint

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Provide a written acknowledgement of receipt. | Investigate, address and resolve the complaint. | Notify the complainant in writing of:<br>• The resolution of their complaint.<br>• The reasons for the resolution. |

### Complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution of their complaint

Complainant should ask the decision maker to refer their complaint and any additional submissions by them to the Head of School.

### Complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution of their complaint by the Head of School

Complainant should ask the Head of School to refer their complaint and any additional submissions by them to the Board Chair.

## The School Board

The Head of School must table the Complaints Register with the School Board at least once per semester.

The Head of School must report on any trends, or changes to policies, processes or systems arising from a complaint.

## Resolution

A complaint is resolved when the relevant decision maker is satisfied that all applicable policies, including this Policy, have been applied to the decision maker's satisfaction.

A decision maker is not limited in their resolution by the outcomes sought by the complainant.

## The Director General

The Director General of the Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that the School observes the registration standards, including the standard about its complaints handling system. Any student, parent or community member is entitled to contact the Director General with concerns about how the School has dealt with a complaint. Information is available on the Department of Education website.

While the Director General may consider whether the School has breached the registration standards, he or she does not have power to intervene in a complaint or override the School's decision.

## Training

The Head of School must provide regular training to staff appropriate to their level of involvement in this Policy.

The Head of School must take reasonable steps to ensure that all students are aware of their rights under the Policy and how to exercise them.

## Continuous Improvement

A decision maker must identify information arising from the process of addressing and resolving the complaint that may inform improvements to School policies, processes, and decision making. The decision maker must notify relevant staff members of the information for their consideration.

Any change arising from a complaint must be implemented within a working school term following resolution of the complaint.

## Appendix A – Contact Details for Complaints

**CONTACT DETAILS FOR COMPLAINTS**

**Listening Circle**

The Listening Circle is held every Tuesday during term from 8:30am – 9am in the School Gazebo with either the Head of School or a member of the Leadership Team. This is an informal time set aside for parents to raise any feedback, questions or concerns.

**School Staff**

You can arrange an appointment with a staff member by phoning Reception on (08) 9295 4787.

Alternatively, you can email a staff member directly to organise an appointment. Most email addresses are in the following format:

firstname.surname@silvertree.wa.edu.au
**please note there are some exceptions to this email format. If you are having difficulty emailing a staff member, please contact reception for assistance on welcome@silvertree.wa.edu.au or (08) 9295 4787.

When emailing staff at Silver Tree Steiner School, please refer to the 'Email Guidelines for Staff and Parents' available on the school website or from Reception.

**Education Coordinator**

Education Coordinator: Kristy Brookes
Phone: (08) 9295 4787
Email kristy.brookes@silvertree.wa.edu.au
Post: Silver Tree Steiner School
695 Roland Road
Parkerville WA 6081

**Head of School**

Head of School: Anna Brindal
Phone: (08) 9295 4787
Email: anna.brindal@silvertree.wa.edu.au
Post: Silver Tree Steiner School
695 Roland Road
Parkerville WA 6081

**The School Board**

Chairperson: Paul Adams
Email: paul.adams@silvertree.wa.edu.au
Post: c/o Silver Tree Steiner School
695 Roland Road
Parkerville WA 6081

**Appendix B – Complaint Form**

# Complaint form

Please provide a detailed statement of your complaint, including:

- Dates and times of events
- Names of any people you have approached in relation to your complaint
- Copies of any documents relating to this complaint
- Please contain information to a maximum of 500 words or 2 pages

Once completed, return to the Head of School, marked **'Complaints Officer (Private & Confidential)'**

Date: _____

Name of person filling in this form: _____

Contact phone number: _____

Email: _____

Person filling in this form is a (please tick):

☐ Teacher ☐ Parent/ Guardian

☐ Education Assistant ☐ Other (specify) _____

**Statement** (Please contain information to a maximum of 500 words or 2 pages)

_____

_____

_____

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_____

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_____

*Thank you for filling out this form. The Complaints Officer will let you know how your complaint is being addressed.*

## Appendix C - Are You Listening – Complaints Guidelines for Children

# Top tips for making a complaint

## 1 Get support

Talk to a parent, carer, friend or someone you trust and ask them to help you. They can even be with you when you complain. You can also use an interpreter if you need to.

## 2 Find out how

Sometimes it is tricky to know how to make a complaint. It is usually best to talk to the organisation you are dealing with first.

a. Talk to someone in the organisation you feel comfortable with or check out the website to find out about their complaints system.

b. Find out who is the person responsible for complaints. This will save you from having to tell lots of people your full story.

c. What are the different ways you can make a complaint (face-to-face, by phone, in writing - letter, email, any others)?

If you are not safe or do not want to talk to someone in the organisation there are other agencies that can help you. Check out our website **ccyp.wa.gov.au**

## 3 Plan what you want to say

Write down what you are not happy about and how this has affected you. Also decide what you think should be done.

This will help you when you have to talk about it. You may need to tell a couple of people in the process, so it will also help you remember what you've said before.

Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia

# 4 Be calm and ask questions

When you make your complaint, try to be calm and polite even if you feel upset. Staff of the organisation should also treat you with respect.

Ask as many questions as you like. You may want to know:

- How they will keep your complaint private?
- What will happen next?
- Who will get back to you and your support person?
- When will they get back to you?
- If you're not happy about the result of your complaint what is the next step - who will review your complaint then?

# 5 Keep notes

Write down who you speak or write to, the dates, anything they promise they will do and the date they say they will get back to you. This will help you keep track of things. You can also write down how you feel about the complaint process, this may be useful later.

# 6 Keep at it

Don't be afraid to complain further if you are still not safe or feel the matter has not been resolved fairly.

From the Commissioner for Children and Young People WA

Ground Floor, 1 Alvan Street, Subiaco WA 6008 | Telephone 08 6213 2297 | Facsimile 08 6213 2220
Freecall 1800 072 444 | www.ccyp.wa.gov.au

## Appendix D – Student Complaints

*(From the STSS Code of Conduct for Students)*

**What if I have a problem or want to make a complaint?**

If you have a problem with something that happened, or is happening, at school, *you have a right to ask for help or complain about it.*

If you don't feel safe or are being hurt, *you have a right to ask for help or complain about it*.

If you're unhappy with the way you, or another person, are being treated, *you have a right to ask for help or complain about it.*

**Remember your student rights, be brave and tell us your concerns. They will be taken seriously.**

**Step 1: Find support**

- This could be an older student or your teacher, the Duty Teacher or anyone at school you trust or feel safe to speak to.
- Go to Reception and ask to see Kristy Brookes (Education Coordinator) or Anna Brindal (Head of School)
- A parent, carer or friend can also help you make a complaint

**Step 2: Tell your support person or write it down**

- Tell them why you're not happy, how the problem has made you feel, what would help to fix it.
- Sometimes it is easier to write things than say them out loud. You can write a letter or draw a picture if you want to.
- You can fill in a Student Complaint and Concerns Form available from Reception if you want to. Someone in Reception can help with this and give your complaint to Kristy Brookes (Education Coordinator) or Anna Brindal (Head of School).

**Making your complaint**

- Be brave and try your best
- It's okay to ask for help
- It's okay to ask questions
- You will not be in trouble for speaking up
- Remember you are trying to do the right thing to help yourself or someone else, or to fix a problem

**Will you keep what I have told you private?**

We will keep information about you private. Private means we will keep your details safe. Sometimes we may need to share certain information with other adults who can help sort out the problem.

**What will happen next?**

We will listen, write down what you tell us, and try to fix it. After we talk to you, we may need to find out more about what happened. We will tell you how long this will take and what will happen next.

We will let you know when we have finished looking into your complaint and explain what we're going to do.

**Adults will always listen, answer your questions and treat you with respect.**