

Grievance, Complaints & Disputes Procedures

The Haberfield Public School P&C Association ('P&C Association') is committed to providing an environment where all concerns held by P&C Association members, volunteers to the P&C Association, staff of the Department of Education and Communities and students enrolled at Haberfield Public School are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.

A grievance or complaint may be received by the P&C Association in relation to a fellow member or volunteer. Where a complaint relates to a Department of Education and Communities employee or student, the complaint should be lodged directly with the Principal in accordance with the policies of the Department of Education and Communities.

A grievance is a complaint about any situation, which is considered by the complainant to be wrong, mistaken, unjust or discriminatory.

Principles

- This policy aims to produce an appropriate, timely and just resolution of a grievance received by the P&C Association.
- Complainants must not instigate grievances that are frivolous, vexatious or malicious.
- Grievances and information arising from the handling of the grievance must be treated confidentially by the parties involved.
- Concerns should be raised as early as possible after the incident relating to complaints has occurred.
- The principles of natural justice must be observed throughout. This means that, before a decision is made, the person against whom a grievance has been lodged has the right to be informed about the nature and content of the grievance, have the right to be heard by an independent decision maker, and have the right to have a witness present.

Procedures

- Complainants should endeavour to resolve the issue themselves with the relevant parties prior to raising the matter with the P&C Executive.
- If the grievance cannot be resolved by the parties, the complainant should provide written details of their grievance to the P&C Association President (or the Vice-President where the complaint is about the President). The complaint will be handled by 3 of the Executive Office Bearers. This written statement should suggest a process for trying to resolve the grievance and a solution.
- Where the complaint is about the P&C Executive, it must be raised with the President first in an effort to resolve the issue. If it cannot be resolved in this way, it may be raised with the P&C Federation, along with a copy of these procedures and all relevant policies.
- The Executive Office Bearers handling the complaint will provide written acknowledgement of the grievance being lodged.
- The Executive Office Bearers will initiate a meeting with the complainant to discuss the grievance and the resolution process. The Executive Office Bearers may request further information, which the complainant must provide in writing.

- If the matter pertains to another P&C Association member or volunteer, that person (the respondent) will also be informed in writing. A copy of the complainant's written grievance will be included in this notification, and the respondent will have the right to respond in writing.
- Following the meeting with the complainant and receipt of any further information, the Executive Office Bearers will initiate a meeting with the respondent to discuss the grievance, the resolution process, the response and any suggested solution.
- In all meetings, all parties (including the Executive Office Bearers) may be accompanied by an independent witness/support person. This person is a support person only and is not to act as an advocate for, or to speak on behalf of, the person they are supporting.
- The Executive Office Bearers, with a majority vote, will aim to resolve the grievance no later than six weeks after the complaint is lodged. If it is not resolved within that timeframe, the Executive Office Bearers will provide a schedule for resolving the complaint to all parties.
- At the conclusion of the grievance process, all parties will receive written notice of the resolution from the Executive Office Bearers.

Outcomes:

- The outcomes of a formal grievance process may include, but are not limited to:
 - recommendation to amend policies;
 - recommendation to alter practices;
 - agreement by parties regarding interactions;
 - access to training and development; or
 - disciplinary action, including a restriction on membership or formal employment review as allowed in employment agreements and as permitted by the relevant Employment Award.
- Where a person disagrees with an outcome of a complaint they may lodge an appeal or further grievance with any relevant government agency or to the P&C Federation where the matters involve volunteers.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

- Where a member has been found to have breached the Code of Conduct, remedial or disciplinary action may be taken.
- Remedial action may include the issuing of a formal apology to a relevant person or relevant persons or to the P&C Association as a whole.
- Disciplinary action may include:
 - suspension from the P&C Association for a period to be determined by the Office Bearers;
 - cancellation of membership for a period to be determined by the Office Bearers; or
 - for serious breaches of the Code of Conduct, permanent cancellation of membership.
- A person found to have breached the Code of Conduct will be notified in writing by the Office Bearers of the action to be taken.
- Any action taken will take place from the date of the notice of membership cancellation in writing.
- Such action shall be reported to the next general meeting of the P&C.

The follow is a guide for disciplinary action resulting from breaches of the Code of Conduct and Prescribed Constitution as adopted by the Haberfield Public School P&C. Breaches accumulate over the entire term of your membership.

Minor Breaches:

Minor breaches may include but are not limited to:

- Disrespect towards members and school staff
- Engaging in or inciting irrational debate

1 breach = warning

2 breaches = 1 meeting suspension

3 breaches = 6 meeting suspension

4 breaches = ban from HPS P&C

Major breaches:

Major breaches may include but are not limited to:

- Engaging in behavior that might reasonably be perceived as harassment, bullying or intimidation
- Misuse of confidential information obtained in the course of P&C duties
- Obstructing agreed P&C strategy, direction or initiatives by working in the background different to that stated or agreed stated direction
- Discrimination on grounds such as gender, sexual orientation, race, ability, cultural background, religious status, marital status, age or political conviction

1 breach = 2 meeting suspension

2 breaches = ban from HPS P&C

Any violence will not be tolerated and will result in immediate banning.

Breaches deemed serious enough may result in the banning of an individual with a majority vote from the P&C Office Bearers.

Appeals

- Where a member disagrees with a decision of the Office-bearers that they have breached the Code of Conduct by way of their actions, they may appeal the matter to the General Manager P&C Federation.
- All appeals must be received in writing to mail@pandc.org.au / Locked Bag 40 Granville NSW 2142.
- An appeal must be lodged within 14 (fourteen) days of receiving notice of the breach from the Office Bearers.

This grievance, complaints and disputes procedures policy is as adopted by the Haberfield Public School P&C Association general meeting on 8 March 2017.