

OUR COMMITMENT

We are committed to continual improvement. Therefore we value feedback from school families and members of the wider Orange community. The aims of our complaints handling policy and procedures are:

- to build a safe and supportive learning environment for all our students
- to build respectful relationships with all our partners
- to maintain a safe and satisfying working environment for staff
- as far as possible, to achieve an outcome to complaints and concerns, which is acceptable to all parties
- to uphold the name of Jesus; and the reputation of Christian education and Orange Christian School

If a child is in immediate danger call the Police 000 or the Helpline 133 627

LET US KNOW

When you have a concern, please tell us – the sooner, the better.

- Inform the Principal, or Deputy Principal, immediately if your concern is related to child abuse, or the safety of a child. If a child is in immediate danger, phone the Police 000; or the Helpline 133 627.
- Most problems can be solved when you talk first to the staff member directly involved.
- If the concern involves another student of the school, speak with the class teacher or Section Coordinator.
- If the matter is one about which you wanted to inform the school, but do not need to meet with a staff member, your comment will be noted and passed to the appropriate person as feedback.

TO CONTACT US

- Phone the Front Office (6362 7258) to make an appointment to speak to the staff member OR
- Complete the Complaints Form, online or at the Front Office OR
- Send an email to: ocs@ocs.nsw.edu.au

WHO TO TALK TO

The Front Office staff can assist you to direct your complaint to the most appropriate person.

- First, speak to the staff member directly involved with the matter you are raising e.g. the classroom teacher, homeroom or subject teacher, or a member of the administration team.
- Each subject or Key Learning Area in secondary school has a team leader e.g. English, VET, Science.
- Section Coordinators look after year groups – Junior (yrs K-4), Middle (yrs 5-8), and Senior (yrs 9-12).
- The Deputy Principal oversees student discipline.
- The Business Manager oversees safety issues on the school campus, and financial matters.
- The Principal handles serious allegations such as child protection matters, or gross misconduct. The Principal also conducts appeals of decisions made by the school.
- The Board Chair will review complaints made about the Principal.
- The school Chaplain is available to all members of the school community for pastoral care.

EXPLAIN YOUR CONCERN

It helps to plan what you want to say. Make a few notes to take with you.

- Be clear about the topic or issue you want to discuss.
- Focus on the things that are genuinely affecting you or your child.
- Always remain calm; and remember you may not have all the facts relating to the issue.
- Think about what would be an acceptable outcome for you and your child.
- Be informed; check the school's policies where relevant – enquire at Front Office.
- Check the school's complaints policy on the website. (www.ocs.nsw.edu.au)
- Please respect the confidentiality of all parties. Only address your concern to the right person.

AT THE MEETING

The staff member will be seeking to understand your concern, and the events leading up to it. He or she will take some notes to help them resolve the matter.

- Use your notes so you don't forget anything.
- Speak clearly and calmly; and focus on the issue, not the personality. Staff understand when matters are distressing, but it is important that both parties are respectful of each other.
- Listen to any explanation or further information.
- State the outcome you are seeking.
- Discuss what the next step will be, and a timeframe for any action to be taken.
- If your concern is resolved, the staff member will note your discussion and arrange whatever action is decided, or appropriate.

SUPPORT PERSON

Any person providing information about a complaint may bring a support person who can support and observe, but not interrupt the meeting. They should not answer questions on your behalf; and are expected to maintain confidentiality about all matters discussed at the meeting.

FURTHER INVESTIGATION

If the matter is more complex, or concerns a third party, staff will conduct an investigation based on principles of procedural fairness to address the complaint.

- If the complaint is about another person, they will be told of your concern so that they may respond.
- Any other people involved in the event will be interviewed.
- Further meetings may be called to resolve the complaint.
- The staff member will let you know what will happen, and the expected timeframe. He or she will also advise you if there will be a significant delay in handling the matter.
- When all information has been considered a conclusion will be reached based on reasonable evidence provided. The school shall advise you, and any person to whom the complaint relates, of the outcome of the investigation.
- If the school considers that the matter should be investigated, it will be pursued with or without the active involvement of the complainant.

UNRESOLVED COMPLAINTS

It may not always be possible to resolve an issue to your complete satisfaction, but if an initial meeting does not bring resolution, the staff member will refer your concern to the appropriate senior staff member.

- If you are unhappy with the outcome of the process, you may request a meeting with the Junior, Middle, or Senior School Coordinators; the Deputy Principal; Principal; or the Business Manager.
- If you have concerns regarding the complaints process, or believe the outcome to be unfair, you may ask the Principal to review the matter. The Principal will review the investigation and decide whether these procedures have been followed and reasonably determined.
- The Principal will either make a new decision; or uphold the original decision.
- This procedure does not limit your right to appeal to other agencies e.g. BOSTES.
- Vexatious, trivial or previously finalised issues shall not be pursued.

The school reviews all feedback, comments and complaints to monitor our processes and performance.

Thank you that you care enough to partner with us in our vision and mission!
