



## POLICY TITLE: SCHOOL COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

### DEVELOPED/REVIEWED BY

Chief Operating Officer  
Human Resources Manager  
Senior Leadership Team

### REVIEW SUMMARY

The King David School is committed to building a community that features positive and respectful relationships. Such relationships support the learning and development of students and value the innate dignity of each person. It is important that each member of the community, including staff, parents, and students, are contributors to the building of the school community. A timely and professional response to complaints is an effective means of encouraging communication, building trust, and resolving issues for the betterment of all concerned.

### DOCUMENT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

This document was first developed by Chief Operating Officer, Rod Kenning, and Human Resources Manager, Sarah Egan, in May 2024 to support the revised Child Safe Standards that came into effect on 1 July 2022.

### RATIONALE

The King David School understands that from time-to-time complaints arise regarding aspects of our School operational programs and activities and that it is important that all members of the community have the opportunity to have complaints considered and appropriately actioned. The King David School commits to ensuring procedural fairness is observed when dealing with complaints.

Positive, clear, and effective procedures and processes for resolving grievances between the School and community members can assist in building strong relationships, dispelling anxiety and ultimately providing students with a settled and happy learning environment.

The King David School Codes of Conduct for parents/guardians/carers and students outlines the expectations of behaviour for members of our community. The following procedures relate to any serious complaints that members of the community may have.

### DEFINITIONS

<b>complaint</b>	A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with an action taken, decision made, service provided or handling of an issue
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### PRINCIPLES/GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In receiving and responding to complaints, the following guiding principles will inform and direct The King David School actions:

- Complaints regarding the operation of the School are best received and managed at the School level, with the parties involved expected to act in good faith and work together with respect and openness to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties. Complaints that are unable to be

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resolved at the School level may be escalated to the School Council. Complaints are received and managed in a way that is culturally safe and sensitive to the diverse circumstances of children and students, as well as providing support to vulnerable children and students.

- Complainants can expect their complaint to be taken seriously and to be acknowledged in a respectful and thorough manner within two business days.
- Staff members and volunteers will be informed of complaints that are made about them.
- Complainants and the person/s against whom the complaint is made have the right to be heard and to expect that procedural fairness will be observed.
- Confidentiality, protection of privacy, respect, access, dignity and impartiality will form the basis of the complaints resolution process.
- The complaints resolution process will seek to achieve the restoration of good and respectful relationships.
- The best interests of the School community together with the interests of the individual will be considered.

Record keeping, reporting, privacy, and employment law obligations will be complied with when receiving and handling complaints.

## PROCEDURES

### Providing Complaints to The King David School

The King David School has procedures and processes in place by which parents/guardians/carers and the broader School community can confidently raise complaints in the knowledge that they will be listened to, and their complaint will be professionally managed in a timely, confidential and appropriate manner.

Relationships with the School community are important to us. The School takes complaints raised by parents/guardians/carers and the broader School community seriously. There are many avenues to provide complaints to School staff. These include:

- Formal parent/guardian/carer surveys
- Emails to [contact@kds.vic.edu.au](mailto:contact@kds.vic.edu.au)
- Meetings/calls/emails with the Principal or other staff members to express concerns

### Expectations of and Information for Parents/Guardians/Carers

In making a complaint, The King David School requests and expects that the complainant will:

- raise the complaint as soon as possible after the issue has arisen
- communicate and respond in ways that are constructive, fair, and respectful
- provide complete and factual information about the complaint
- observe confidentiality and a respect for sensitive issues
- act in good faith to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- have realistic and reasonable expectations about possible outcomes/remedies

If the complaint relates to treatment of an individual or their child's treatment by another student, students, or family member while at The King David School, we expect that the complainant will refer their complaint directly to the School, via the appropriate channels. Under no circumstances should they approach another student in the care of the school to discuss the issue or chastise them. Direct contact with parents to resolve the matter is also discouraged if the complaint pertains to issues or incidents that have arisen at the School.

### Who to Contact to Make a Complaint to?

The nature of the complaint will determine who is the most appropriate person or body to manage the concerns raised. Complaints should be directed to either the subject teacher/keshar teacher/Year Level Coordinator in the first instance. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of this conversation they should contact the Head of School.

For complaints of a serious nature involving School staff, the following additional information is provided.

## **Misconduct or Serious Misconduct**

All complaints of alleged misconduct or serious misconduct by a teacher, staff member or volunteers should be reported to the Principal of The King David School.

Complaints about teachers can also be reported to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) – the regulator in relation to the registration and investigation of serious misconduct (including conduct which is of a physical or emotional nature) of all teachers in the state of Victoria. If unsure whether the complaint constitutes serious misconduct by a teacher, contact the VIT on 1300 888 067 or [vit@vit.vic.edu.au](mailto:vit@vit.vic.edu.au)

In some cases, certain actions which involve physical or emotional misconduct, such as unlawful assault or threats to the person, may constitute a criminal offence. These types of offences should be immediately reported to both the police and Principal. If unsure, consultation with the Principal of The King David School may help to determine the appropriate course of action in these circumstances.

## **Child Abuse (Including Sexual Offences)**

Child abuse includes any instances of physical or sexual abuse (including grooming), emotional or psychological harm, serious or significant neglect and family violence involving a child.

Complaints of alleged child abuse (including sexual offences) of children or School students should be reported to the Principal of The King David School.

There are legal obligations on all adults to report child abuse to the police once a reasonable belief is formed that a sexual offence may have been committed against a child.

Failure to disclose a sexual offence against a child is a criminal offence under section 327 of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) (Crimes Act) and applies to all adults (18 years of age and over) in Victoria.

Communication with children under 16 years of age by teachers, staff, or any other person to prepare or groom a child for future sexual activity is a criminal offence under section 49M (1) of the Crimes Act and must be reported to the police and the Principal. The offence of grooming applies to any person aged 18 years or over and does not apply to communication between people who are both under 18 years of age.

Students impacted by a child abuse or child safety matter will be provided with support to assist them feel safe at school and develop protective strategies. Supports will be tailored to each individual student and circumstance. Supports provided to students at the School may include:

- Regularly communicating with the student or students and their parents/guardians/carers where appropriate
- Convening a Student Support Group of School wellbeing staff and teachers to plan, support and monitor affected students
- Developing Student Support Plans for students impacted by the incident to ensure appropriate levels of care and support are provided
- Access to counselling
- Referrals to external services such as family violence services, Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASA) or Headspace

Where external authorities are investigating a report of abuse or risk of abuse, it is the role of the Principal to ensure students are supported throughout interviews at the School.

## **Complaints against the Principal of The King David School**

In the case of a serious complaint involving the Principal of The King David School, the Company Secretary in conjunction with the President of the School Council can be contacted through [contact@kds.vic.edu.au](mailto:contact@kds.vic.edu.au)

## **Anonymous Complaints**

The King David School endeavours to address and respond to all complaints. In some situations, we may not be able to fully address complaints that are made anonymously or without sufficient detail being provided to enable an inquiry or resolution of the matter. To ensure procedural fairness, respondents have a right to know the particulars of the allegations being made against them and be given an opportunity to respond to them. Where possible, complainants are encouraged to give their names and to be reassured that we will deal with complaints professionally and in accordance with procedural fairness and confidentiality. If the complainant wishes to remain anonymous, it is at the Principal's discretion what, if any, action will be taken. Anonymous complaints will be recorded in the same manner that all other complaints are recorded.

## **Complaints in Relation to Information Sharing Schemes**

The King David School is a prescribed Information Sharing Entity (ISE) that may share information under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS).

The School, as an ISE, may receive complaints from individuals in relation to its conduct as an ISE under the CISS or FVISS. It may also receive a complaint from another ISE.

The following information is recorded where a complaint is received under the CISS or FVISS:

- The date the complaint was made and received
- The nature of the complaint
- The action taken to resolve the complaint
- The action taken to lessen or prevent the issue from recurring
- The time taken to resolve the complaint
- Further action taken if the complaint was not resolved

## **Complaints Relating to Reportable Conduct**

As of 1 July 2017, the Victorian Government legislated for the introduction of a Reportable Conduct Scheme (RCS) to improve how organisations respond to allegations of child abuse and child-related misconduct by employees, volunteers, and contractors.

Legal obligations are imposed on the School Principal to report to the Commission for Child and Young People (CCYP), and investigate allegations of reportable conduct, where those allegations are based on a person's reasonable belief that reportable conduct or misconduct involving reportable conduct has occurred. Reportable conduct includes the following:

- Sexual offences against, with or in the presence of a child
- Sexual misconduct against, with or in the presence of a child
- Physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child
- Behaviour that causes significant psychological or emotional harm
- Significant neglect

Complaints relating to a reportable conduct allegation which meets the requisite threshold, and which involves a King David School employee (which amongst others, can include a teacher, Principal, volunteer or contractor) must be reported.

Complaints of reportable conduct in relation to an employee (other than a Principal) at The King David School should be reported to the Principal. In the case of a serious complaint involving the Principal of The King David School, the President of the School Council may be contacted. The King David School Council can be contacted through the Company Secretary, [contact@kds.vic.edu.au](mailto:contact@kds.vic.edu.au)

Further information can be found in the School's Reportable Conduct Policy [here](#).

## **Procedures for Complaints about Issues at The King David School**

The King David School has developed and maintains a fair, effective and efficient complaints-handling procedure so that complaints about events or decisions at the School can be addressed. The following steps can guide the procedure in making a complaint about issues arising at The King David School.

### **Clarify the issue**

- Be clear about the topic or issue to be discussed
- Be mindful of the need to ascertain all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue.
- Think about what an acceptable outcome would be
- Check and observe the King David School Complaints Handling Policy

### **Making the complaint**

- Write an appropriate note or email to the relevant person (e.g. classroom teacher/keshet teacher/Year Level Coordinator) outlining your complaint
- Make an appointment to speak via phone or in person with the relevant person/s
- Arrange meeting times or phone calls through the King David School office
- Ensure the relevant person/s is given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address the concerns

### **Contact the Principal or a Vice Principal:**

- If the complaint remains unresolved after discussion with the relevant person/s at the School, request an appointment, through School Reception, to discuss the concern with the Principal or a Vice Principal.
- The Principal may be represented by another senior staff member. If the relevant staff member is going to be present at the meeting, the meeting time is more likely to occur outside classroom hours.

### **Complaint escalation**

If the matter cannot be resolved at the School level, or if the complaint is about the Principal of the School, complainants may contact the School Council through the Company Secretary:

[contact@kds.vic.edu.au](mailto:contact@kds.vic.edu.au)

### **Actions to be taken following receipt of a complaint**

Following receipt of a complaint, the School may take some or all of the following actions:

- Acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within two business days, ensuring the complainant is aware of the School's complaints handling procedures
- Record the complaint in the School's database to ensure the complaint can be tracked
- Advise the complainant that a record of the complaint is being maintained
- Contact the complainant for more information to help assess the issues or allegations
- Assess the complaint, which may result in undertaking one or more of the following processes to help resolve it:
  - Allow more time for resolution
  - Provide assistance to reach a resolution through leadership team support
  - Arrange for an independent investigation
- Where necessary, seek advice from appropriate sources and/or external agencies to determine how a complaint may be reviewed and whether other avenues of appeal/redress already exist
- Advise the complainant of any delays that may occur in the School's ability to respond within a set timeframe
- Where necessary, actively support the complainant in a manner that ensures cultural safety of students and parents/guardians/carers and is sensitive to those that are vulnerable through the complaint process

- Record the outcome of the complaint in School's database
- Communicate the outcome of the complaint investigation to the complainant

### **Possible outcomes of a complaint to The King David School**

The School's assessment may result in the complaint being upheld or not upheld. If the complaint is upheld, suggested actions could include providing the complainant with:

- A restorative outcome
- Formal communication of a change of decision, policy, procedure, or practice
- The provision of counselling or other support

If the complaint is not upheld the suggested actions could include providing the complainant with:

- An explanation of:
  - How the decision taken is consistent with School policy
  - How the decision taken is supported by an external agency that specialises in the area under consideration
- How School policies and guidelines are reflected in and supportive of the decision
- The provision of counselling or other support

Complainants should note that privacy laws may prohibit information being provided to the complainant of any specific action that has been taken in relation to individuals about whom the complaint has been raised. This is also consistent with the School's commitment to uphold the dignity of each person involved during the complaint process.

### **Lodging Complaints with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority**

A complaint can be referred to the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority via email or telephone as per contact details below.

**Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority**

Phone: (03) 9637 2806

Email: [vrqa@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:vrqa@education.vic.gov.au)

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

- Principal
- Senior Leadership Team

## **RELATED LEGISLATION**

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
- Education and Training reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic.)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth.)
- Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012 (Cth.)
- Privacy Act (Notifiable Data Breaches) Act 2017 (Cth.)
- Privacy Act (Data Protection Act) Act 2014 (Vic.)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)
- Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic.)

## **RELATED POLICIES**

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy 2024
- Mandatory Reporting Policy 2024
- Respectful Workplace Policy 2023
- Privacy Policy 2024

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Student Code of Conduct
- Standards of Behaviour
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Victorian Teachers Code of Conduct
- The King David School Staff Manuals

## NEXT REVIEW

May 2026