

HOW WE HANDLE A COMPLAINT OF MISCONDUCT AGAINST A STAFF MEMBER (WEBSITE DOC)

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By: Geoff Brisby

This document explains how the school will handle complaints or allegations from students, parents or others concerning the behaviour of a staff member with a student.

OUR COMMITMENT

The safety and welfare of students is our priority. We take all complaints or allegations of staff misconduct or reportable conduct seriously. We follow due process and take prompt action to ensure outcomes with integrity.

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

LET US KNOW

Inform the Principal, or Deputy Principal, immediately regarding all complaints or allegations concerning the behaviour of a staff member with a student which may represent misconduct or reportable conduct.

‘Reportable conduct’ is:

- any sexual offence or sexual misconduct involving a child
- any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child
- any behaviour causing psychological harm to a child

It excludes conduct reasonable for the purposes of discipline, management, care or safety of a child – as relevant to the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the child

TO CONTACT THE SCHOOL

Phone the Front Office: 02 65838277 and ask to speak to the Principal, *Geoff Brisby*, or the relevant Deputy Principal, Primary: Sarah Strahorn and High School: Matt Cohen.

MEETING WITH THE PRINCIPAL OR DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

You are welcome to bring a support person with you to meetings. Their role is to support you and to 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.

THE SCHOOL’S ACTION FOLLOWING A COMPLAINT OR ALLEGATION

1. The Principal will treat your complaint with respect, sensitivity and confidentiality; and ask you to maintain confidentiality also.
2. The Principal will tell you what is likely to happen next and the expected timeframe.
3. The Principal has a duty to report a complaint or allegation of misconduct or reportable conduct against a staff member to one or more of the following agencies:
 - The Police – if criminal activity may have occurred
 - NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian – all matters of reportable conduct or misconduct involving staff; monitors school investigations
 - monitors the suitability of people for child-related employment (Working With Children Check clearance or bar)
 - NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) – monitors teacher accreditation, including Working With Children Check clearance

4. The Principal shall conduct a risk assessment to determine action to minimise the likelihood of further harm to the child, and other students, within the school environment. This may include:
 - Removing the staff member who is the subject of the complaint or allegation from duty, following advice from the relevant agency, pending the result of an investigation
 - Removing the staff member who is the subject of the complaint or allegation from face-to-face contact with the student, or some other re-structuring, pending the result of an investigation
 - Arranging appropriate support for the child within the school
 - Ensure confidentiality of information to protect the child, their family and the staff member

5. The Principal shall initiate an internal investigation into the complaint or allegation, unless legally prevented because of the investigation by another agency.
 - The school investigation will be conducted according to the procedures of its Child Protection Policy.
 - The school shall retain records of all information, actions taken, advice from external agencies, communications sent and received, files relating to investigations, findings and notifications relevant to the matter.

ROLES OF OTHER STAFF MEMBERS

- The Deputy Principal oversees student welfare and discipline matters.
- The Business Manager oversees safety issues on the school campus.
- The Principal oversees 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.
- Section coordinators have oversight for the pastoral care of students in their section.
- Teachers have day to day care and supervision of students in their classes or duty roster.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Check the school's policies on the website <https://heritage.nsw.edu.au/> or ask at the Front Office.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact the Principal or Deputy Principal if you have further questions.