Government of **Western Australia**
School Curriculum and Standards Authority

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

Acknowledgement of Country

Kaya. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) acknowledges that our offices are on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and that we deliver our services on the country of many traditional custodians and language groups throughout Western Australia. The Authority acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We offer our respect to Elders past and present.

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Procedure statement

All complaints about the products and operations of the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) will be addressed in a timely and effective manner in accordance with the procedures provided in this document.

These procedures address the actions and timelines to be followed in the event that a complaint, either informal or formal, is received by the Authority.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Authority's *Complaints Management Policy*.

1. Key Definitions

In the context of the operations of the Authority, the following terms have the associated definitions.

Term	Definition
Agent	A person or organisation authorised to act on behalf of an individual or school and/or recognised by the tertiary or training sector as such.
Complainant	An individual who makes a complaint.
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction made to the Authority by any person other than an Authority or Department of Education staff member unless the complaint relates to the staff member's child, which may be general in nature or relate to matters including but not limited to: • the provision of the Authority's functions, services or processes; • the behaviour or actions of an employee; • the application of an Authority policy; or • a decision made by a Statutory Committee or the Board. (Also see Formal and Informal Complaint below).
Content Manager	Content Manager (CM) is an electronic document and records management system that manages the Authority's documents and records throughout the document life cycle, from creation to destruction.
Corruption	Corruption has the meaning of the term 'misconduct' as defined under section 4 of the *Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003* (WA). Corruption occurs if a public officer corruptly acts or fails to act in the performance of their functions of employment; or corruptly takes advantage of their employment to obtain a benefit for themselves or another, or causes a detriment to another; or commits an offence connected to their official capacity. It also includes misconduct that is not honest or impartial, amounts to a breach of trust, or involves misuse of Authority information or assets and constitutes a breach of discipline that could result in termination of employment.
Culturally Responsive	Culturally responsive means the ability to understand, interact and communicate effectively and sensitively with people from a cultural background that is different to one's own. It is characterised by respect for culture, ongoing self-reflection, expansion of knowledge and commitment to improving practices and relationships.

Term	Definition
Formal complaint	A complaint received by the Authority in writing that is expressing dissatisfaction that needs to be fully explained, examined, dealt with and finalised in the normal course of business through actions of the relevant officer and in accordance with the Complaints Procedures.
Fraud	Fraud has the same meaning as defined under section 409 of the *Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913* (WA). Fraud is defined as conduct with intent to defraud, by deceit or any fraudulent means, to obtain property or gain a benefit, pecuniary or otherwise.
Informal complaint	An oral or written statement expressing dissatisfaction which is discussed with an Authority officer and does not contain a request to have the complaint formally investigated and decided.
Internal Review	A process conducted by the Authority, on the request of the person making the complaint, to examine whether the complaints management process was fair, reasonable and appropriate. The staff member undertaking the internal review must be separate from the original complaint management process and in a position at least equivalent to the person who managed the original complaint.
Investigation	The formal examination of a complaint by an authorised person/s.
Locally managed	A complaint managed internally by School Curriculum and Standards Division staff on behalf of the Authority.
Record-keeping for Complaints Management	The Authority's official record-keeping system located on CM supports the complaints-handling process. It consists of a Complaints Register and a filing system that is housed in a dedicated subfolder for each formal complaint received. Coordination of the processes involved in managing the complaint to its conclusion/resolution.
Management of a complaint	Coordination of the processes involved in managing a complaint to its conclusion/resolution.
Public Interest Disclosure (PID)	A public interest disclosure is a complaint or allegation made about corrupt conduct, improper conduct or detrimental action. The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003* (WA), enables people to make disclosures without fear of reprisal and aims to ensure openness and accountability by encouraging people to make disclosures and protecting them when they do.
Unresolved complaint	A formal complaint that is undergoing the resolution process and where a decision has not been made.

2. Procedures

2.1 Initial receipt of complaint

2.1.1 In the normal course of business, an SCS Division officer receiving a verbal complaint notification will try to resolve the issue when it is first raised, without further need for more involved consideration or investigation.

2.1.2 If discussion does not satisfy the complainant, the staff member will suggest that the complainant may wish to consult with the officer's line manager or alternatively, submit a formal complaint.

2.2 Making a formal complaint

2.2.1 A complainant wishing to make a formal complaint should be advised that it must be submitted in writing and that this may be completed via the 'Complaints' link provided on the Authority website at www.scsa.wa.edu.au.

2.2.2 A complainant wishing to make a formal complaint is required to:

- provide their name;
- provide a means of contact (address, phone number, email address);
- relate the complaint to a function of the Authority (e.g. a complaint against a teacher would not be handled by the Authority);
- qualify the merit of the complaint in terms other than that of a personal opinion; and
- provide evidence that supports the complaint.

2.2.3 If a complainant is unable to write the complaint, a person external to the Authority may help them, or complete the Feedback and Complaint Form on their behalf.

2.3 Management of a complaint

2.3.1 Procedural fairness must be provided during the management of the complaint or notification. The person managing the complaint should do so impartially, fairly and without prejudice or bias.

2.3.2 Complaint management must be culturally responsive.

2.3.3 Depending upon the directorate in which the complaint is handled, either the Assistant Executive Director, Curriculum, Assessment and Strategic Policy (CASP) or the Assistant Executive Director, Examinations, Certification and Testing (ECT) responsible for complaint management or their delegate will:

- send an acknowledgement letter to complainant within three working days and save a copy of that communication into the CM subfolder;
- ensure regular communication occurs with the complainant throughout the process; and;
- follow the record keeping procedures as described in section 4 of this document.

2.3.4 The relevant Assistant Executive Director will nominate an officer to manage the complaint, and will send an email about the complaint (with CM reference included) to that officer.

2.3.5 The nominated officer will:

- investigate the substance of the complaint;
- draft the response and save it to relevant CM folder; and
- email the response to the relevant Assistant Executive Director for review and approval.

2.3.6 After the Assistant Executive Director approves the response, they or their delegate will send it to the complainant and save a copy in CM.

2.3.7 If the complainant does not understand or is not satisfied with the resolution, the relevant Assistant Executive Director will make every effort to assist the person in gaining an improved understanding of the management process.

2.3.8 Locally managed complaints should be completed and resolved within a reasonable timeframe after receipt and assessment.

3. Internal Review

3.1 The complainant may request an internal review of their complaint if they are not satisfied with the response.

3.2 Only one internal review will be conducted unless additional information, not already considered, is provided or exceptional circumstances exist.

3.3 The internal review will be undertaken by a staff member who is separate from the original complaint management process and in a position at least equivalent to the person who managed the original complaint.

3.4 The complainant will be notified in writing of the outcome of the internal review.

4. Recordkeeping of complaints

4.1 At every stage, records should be kept in line with the Records Management policy and procedures and documented in the Complaints Register in CM. This includes the report on the outcome of the complaint or notification and the actions taken to resolve it.

5. Related documents

5.1 Related Documents

School Curriculum and Standards Authority Public Interest Disclosure Procedures

Department of Education Complaints and Notifications Policy and Framework

5.2 Legislation

Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003 (WA)

Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913 (WA)

Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cth)

Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003 (WA)

State Records Act 2000 (WA)

Public Service Management Act 1994

School Curriculum and Standards Authority Act 1997

School Curriculum and Standards Authority Regulations 2005

School Education Act 1999

School Education Regulations 2000 (WA)