Complaints Policy

Objective

- To resolve complaints quickly, cooperatively, and amicably at an early stage through discussion and reconciliation.
- To protect the rights of complainants by acting promptly to remedy the complaint, where such is valid and substantiated.
- To protect the rights of persons complained against by ensuring that complaints are properly investigated and decisions made only on the basis of sound evidence, proper evaluation, and by adhering to the principles of natural justice.
- To empower both parties to the conflict by treating their grievances seriously and with sensitivity, whether or not these can be resolved through the process of discussion and reconciliation.
- To ensure that all staff are treated fairly and are aware of the processes and outcomes that might be actioned in the event of a breach of expected conduct.

Where applicable, this Complaints Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Child Matters Disciplinary Policy.

Policy Statement

Child Matters is committed to ensuring that all complaints are taken seriously and dealt with fairly. The following procedures apply to and are available to all staff and students of Child Matters.

Procedure

All complaints will be resolved within four (4) weeks, if reasonably possible.

Informal Reconciliation

If a complainant decides not to make the complaint in writing, information reconciliation may be affected.

Provision will be made for all complaints to be held in an informal manner, if so desired by the complainant.

The complainant may arrange to meet with the person the complaint has been made about to resolve the conflict by discussion and reconciliation. Any of all parties to this meeting may bring a support person of their choice.

If reconciliation fails, or if the complainant so chooses, the complainant may make a complaint in writing.

Written Complaints

All complaints made in writing are to be made to the CE, except where the complaint is against the CE, in which case it should be directed to the Board Chairperson.

Receipt of all written complaints will be acknowledged in writing.

Written Complaints to the Board of Trustees

If conflict remains unresolved, or if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the complainant should submit the written complaint to the Board of Trustees for investigation and consideration.

Complaints against Students

If the complaint is made against a student, and upheld by the CE, the CE may decide that:

- A verbal or written warning will be issued; or
- The student's continued enrolment is subject to a suitable behavioural contract being negotiated; or
- The student's enrolment is terminated.

Refer: 6.5 Student Disciplinary Policy.

Complaint against Staff

If the complaint is made against a staff member, the CE is required to investigate the allegation. Complaints received anonymously will only be investigated if there is enough information to proceed fairly.

Child Matters is committed to upholding the principles of natural justice. Where a complaint involves allegations against an individual, that person will be given an opportunity to respond before any decisions are made.

If the complaint is upheld by the CE, the CE may decide:

- A verbal or written warning will be issued; or
- More serious disciplinary action will be taken, as appropriate.

Refer: 5a.7 Staff Disciplinary Policy

Complainant to be Informed

Complainants of written complaints will be informed in writing as to whether their complaint was upheld.

Complaints to be Recorded

A record is to be kept by Child Matters of all complaints, the responses to those complaints, and any related information to the complaint.

3.4

Responsibilities and Review

Responsibilities	Owner:	Chief Executive
	Comment and review:	Leadership Team
Review frequency:	2 years	

Date of last review: May 2025
Reviewed by: Jane Searle, Chief Executive
Date of next review: May 2027