



**C A R B R O O K**

**Animal Assisted Learning Centre**

# COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY



Transformed  
Futures.

# Complaints Handling Policy 4.0

<b>Purpose:</b>	The purpose of this policy is to provide written processes about receiving, assessing, investigating and otherwise dealing with complaints. <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Scope:</b>	Any person directly affected by the subject of a complaint. Examples may include staff, students or a student's parent or guardian, contractors, or community members.	
<b>Status:</b>	Approved	<b>Supersedes:</b> Version 3.0
<b>Authorised by:</b>	Transformed Futures Ltd	<b>Date of Authorisation:</b> 2 September 2024
<b>References:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Standards Australia, Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2022, NEQ)</a></li> <li>• Carbrook Centre Work Health and Safety Policy</li> <li>• Carbrook Centre Anti-Discrimination Policy</li> <li>• Carbrook Centre Sexual Harassment Policy</li> <li>• Carbrook Centre Disability Policy</li> <li>• Carbrook Centre Workplace Bullying Policy</li> <li>• Carbrook Centre Student Bullying Policy</li> <li>• Carbrook Centre Staff Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Carbrook Centre Child Protection Policy</li> </ul>	
<b>Review Date:</b>	Annually	<b>Next Review Date:</b> July 2025
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Transformed Futures Ltd	
<b>ISQ Template Version:</b>	February 2024	

<sup>1</sup> [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Regulations 2017, s.7](#)

Carbrook Animal Assisted Learning Centre (Carbrook Centre) is committed to ensuring that the Carbrook Centre operates with an open and transparent school culture whereby all staff, student, parents and guardians are provided with clear information and processes to have their complaints heard in a fair and supportive way. Carbrook Centre recognise that value of feedback (including complaints) to address concerns and ultimately services and support for all members of the school community.

This *Complaints Handling Policy* outlines the processes to be followed to ensure that student, parent and employee complaints and disputes are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective and fair way.

Information about how to access the complaints policy, and ongoing opportunities to provide feedback will be communicated to staff, students, parents and guardians through the student handbook, school newsletters and the website. Students, parents and guardians will also be made aware of the school's approach to open and honest communication at all student interviews and made aware of the process for complaints.

## Policy Statement

Carbrook Centre acknowledges the right of students, parents/guardians, staff and others to complain when dissatisfied with the school's services, including an action, inaction or decision of the school. The school encourages constructive criticism and complaints. Carbrook Centre is committed to ensuring that complaints received are handled in a responsive, efficient, consistent, effective, transparent and fair way.

Carbrook Centre will ensure employees can recognise, receive, and appropriately refer complaints to the informal or formal complaints procedure.

Carbrook Centre recognises that time spent on handling complaints can be an investment in better service to students and parents/guardians and a better culture for employees, and views complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process.

## Definitions

Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the school, related to the school's services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. <sup>2</sup>
Informal Complaint	A complaint about a matter that is likely to be simple, straight forward, easily manageable, or minor, where a simple or quick resolution is appropriate such as discussion of the matter with a relevant staff member
Formal Complaint	A complaint about a matter that is serious, complex or may pose a threat to the health and safety of any person. Examples include serious allegations or breaches of policy, complaints against a senior staff member, including the Executive Director or an informal complaint that could not be resolved informally. Assessment of the complaint is required by the Executive Director or a Director.
Complainant	The person, organisation or their representative making a complaint. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Standards Australia, Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2018, NEQ), s.4.3

<sup>3</sup> Standards Australia, Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2018, NEQ), s.4.2

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Respondent	The person who is referred to in a complaint by a complainant as the person responsible for their concerns or who can best respond to their concern.
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## Complaint Handling Principles

Carbrook Centre will manage complaints according to the following (which include principles of procedural fairness):

- complaints will be taken seriously, dealt with fairly and objectively, without judgement and addressed in a reasonable timeframe
- complaints should be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible, having regard to the nature of the complaint
- interested parties to the complaint (for example, the complainant and any respondent) will be heard and/or may provide relevant information in relation to the complaint
- confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- the complainant and any respondent will be offered support as appropriate
- victimising behaviour towards a complainant, respondent or other people associated with the complaint, will not be tolerated
- complainants that lodge a complaint on reasonable grounds will not suffer any other reprisals on the basis of the lodging the complaint

## Complaints that may be Resolved under this Policy

Carbrook Centre encourages anyone who feels impacted by an issue involving the school to file a complaint. Complaints can address matters such as:

- the school, its employees or students having done something wrong
- the school, its employees or students having failed to do something they should have done
- the school, its employees or students having acted unfairly or impolitely
- issues of student or employee behaviour that are contrary to the relevant Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate staff conduct as reported by a student.<sup>4</sup>
- issues related to learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- issues related to communication with students or parents or between employees
- issues related to school fees and payments
- general administrative issues
- issues relating to non-compliance with a process outlined in school policies or procedures, for example the child protection policy, discrimination policy, or privacy policy.<sup>5</sup>
- Student complaints may be brought by students or by parents on behalf of their children, as appropriate in the circumstances

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<sup>4</sup> Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 s.16(2)(a)

<sup>5</sup> Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 s.16(5)

## Issues Outside this Policy

The following matters are outside the scope of this policy and should be managed as follows:

- Child protection concerns including allegations of sexual abuse, likely sexual abuse or harm to children should be dealt in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy.
- Student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the Student Bullying Policy or Positive Behaviour Policy.
- Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the Positive Behaviour Policy.
- Student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to Executive Director who will involve the Police as appropriate.
- Disputes between board members, between company/association members and board members or between company/association members should be dealt with in accordance with the Constitution or Board Charter.
- Formal legal proceedings should be managed as appropriate in the circumstances.

## Responsibilities

### School

The school has the following role and responsibilities:

- develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the school's Complaints Handling Policy
- appropriately communicate the school's Complaints Handling Policy to students, parents and employees
- ensure that the Complaints Handling Policy is readily accessible by staff, students and parents
- upon receipt of a complaint, manage the complaint in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy
- ensure that appropriate support is provided to all parties to a complaint
- take appropriate action to prevent victimisation or action in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them
- appropriately implement remedies
- appropriately train relevant employees
- keep records
- conduct a review/audit of the Complaints Register in regular intervals
- report to the school's insurer when that is relevant

## All Parties to a Dispute

The complainant and respondent both have the following role and responsibilities:

- comply with the school's Complaints Handling Policy
- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner
- not provide deliberately false or misleading information
- not make frivolous or vexatious complaints or retaliatory complaints
- act in good faith and maintain a mutually beneficial relationship of trust and cooperation
- act in a calm, courteous manner and non-threatening manner
- acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced
- maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- not victimise or act in reprisal against any party to the dispute or any person associated with them.

## Employees Receiving and/or Managing Complaints

Employees receiving complaints have the following role and responsibilities:

- act in accordance with the school's Complaints Handling Policy
- refer the complainant to the school's Complaints Handling Policy and provide additional information as necessary
- maintain confidentiality as far as possible
- keep appropriate records
- forward complaints to more senior employees, including the Executive Director, if the complaint cannot be resolved at the initial level or if it involves serious issues that require the involvement of more senior employees
- not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

## Implementation

Carbrook Centre is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints at the school, including by the development and implementation of this policy and via the clear support and promotion of the policy.

Carbrook Centre is also committed to appropriately training relevant employees (especially senior staff) on how to resolve complaints in line with this policy and the related procedures.

Carbrook Centre will keep appropriate records of complaints, will monitor complaints and their resolution and will report on a high-level basis to the school Board on complaint handling at the school.

Carbrook Centre will act to encourage students, parents and employees to contribute to a healthy school culture where complaints are resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible.

Employees will be made aware of this policy during induction and annually.

## **Complaint Register**

Carbrook Centre will maintain a complaint register with details such as the date, source and description of complaints, the employee managing the complaint, the actions taken, outcome and the date the complaint was closed.

The complaint register will be stored securely.

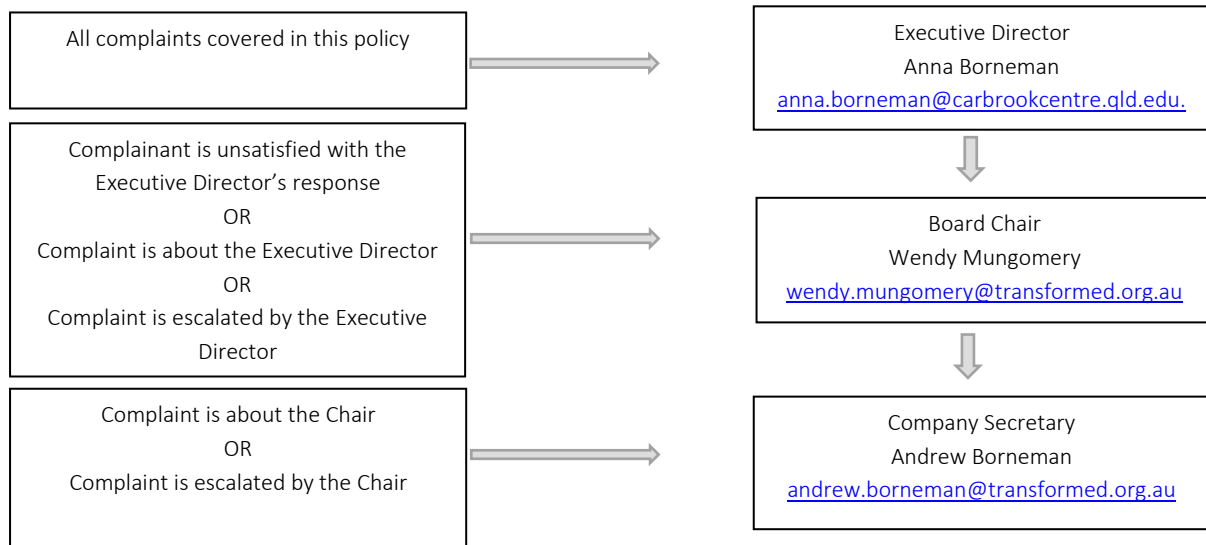
All complaints shall be entered onto the complaint register as soon as practicable after the complaint is received. The complaint register will not contain complaints about the Executive Director. Records of complaints about the Executive Director will be maintained by the Board Chair with access restricted to the Board Chair.

To safeguard confidentiality and maintain the integrity of the complaint process, access to the entire complaint register will be limited to the Executive Director.

The Executive Director may authorise the sharing of specific, relevant entries from the complaint register with other designated staff members (such as the Head of Campus or the leadership team), provided measures are taken to protect the confidentiality of all parties involved, particularly ensuring that respondents to a complaint do not gain inappropriate access to information about the allegations against them.

## How to Lodge a Complaint

Complaints can be lodged by students, parents, guardians, employees, contractors or community members. Complaints can be made in-person, over the phone or via letter or email. The flowchart below shows the order of complaint escalation.





## Complaints Register

The Executive Director will keep a record of all complaints, and these will be presented as one part of the Executive Directors Report to the Board. For complaints made to the Chair or Board, the Company Secretary will maintain the register.

Carbrook Animal Assisted Learning Centre						
Complaints Register						
Complaint #	Date Received	Complainant	Investigator	Outcome	Action	Status
201901						
201902						
201903						
201904						