



**Complaint Handling Procedures
regarding allegations of Staff Misconduct or
Reportable Conduct**

Foundation for Life

Table of Contents

1	Related Policies	3
2	Purpose of this Procedure	3
3	What is Staff Misconduct?	3
4	What is Reportable Conduct?	3
5	What if I become aware of Staff Misconduct or Reportable Conduct?	4
6	General Guidelines.....	4
	6.1 Making a complaint of alleged or convicted Staff Misconduct or Reportable Conduct	4
	6.2 Response to the Complaint	5
7	Expectations	6
8	Responsibilities	6
9	Contact	7
10	Other Relevant Policies.....	7

1 Related Policies

Please read this Procedure of Coast Christian School (referred to in this document as the 'School') in conjunction with the School's:

- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Child Safe Policy (section 4)
- Whistleblower Policy (if relevant)

(See also other related policies listed in section 8 of this Procedure)

2 Purpose of this Procedure

The purpose of this procedure is to help stakeholders (which includes parents, students, staff and any other person who has a concern about School related matters) understand how allegations of Staff Misconduct or Reportable Conduct about School staff can be communicated to and handled by the School, it does not extend to personal grievances between parents/caregivers or other members of the School community.

3 What is Staff Misconduct?

Staff Misconduct is:

- any conduct that puts a child (or other person) at risk of harm and/or
- any conduct that does not accord with our:
 - Child Safe Policy
 - Complaints and Grievances Policy
 - Code of Conduct for School Community Members (includes staff)
 - Statement of Doctrines and Beliefs
 - Visions, Mission and Values
 - All other School policies (requests for copies of other policies can be made over the telephone to the Office on 02 4368 3377 or in person at Reception).

4 What is Reportable Conduct?

The NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme is described in the School's Child Safe Policy (section 4, pp. 21-22).

Reportable Conduct involves a child (under 18 years of age) at the time of the alleged incident, can be current or historical, and involves certain defined conduct including;

- a sexual offence
- sexual misconduct
- ill-treatment of a child
- neglect of a child
- assault against a child
- failure to protect OR failure to report offences
- behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm to a child

Section 4.1 (pp. 22) of the School's Child Safe Policy outlines what is not deemed to be Reportable Conduct.

5 What if I become aware of Staff Misconduct or Reportable Conduct?

1. If the conduct involves an immediate and serious harm to a child (or other person), call the Police on 000.
2. If the conduct falls within the above definition of Reportable Conduct, follow the steps set out in section 4.2 (pp. 22-23) of the School's *Child Safe Policy*.
3. If the conduct falls within the above definition of Staff Misconduct, follow the steps set out in our *Complaints and Grievances Policy* (section 5).
4. If you wish to receive protections under the School's *Whistleblower Policy* please ensure to read the Policy first (also noted in section 1.3 of the *Complaints and Grievances Policy*).
5. If you are a Mandatory Reporter (as defined in the School's Child Safe Policy, section 3.1.1, pp. 10-11), you may also be required to report to the Department of Communities & Justice (see section 3.4 of the Child Safe Policy).

6 General Guidelines

6.1 Making a complaint of alleged or convicted Staff Misconduct or Reportable Conduct

Any complaint about the conduct of a School staff member (which includes employees, contractors and volunteers) should be raised directly with the Principal in the first instance by: Writing to the Principal via email: principal@coastcs.nsw.edu.au, Phoning the Office (02 4368 3377) to speak with the Principal and/or make an appointment to meet with the Principal.

Should the Principal be the subject of the allegation of Staff Misconduct or Reportable Conduct, the complaint should be raised with the Chair of the School Board (Board Chair) by: Writing to the Board Chair via email: boardchair@coastcs.nsw.edu.au. Phoning the Office (02 4368 3377) to make an appointment to meet with the Board Chair.

6.2 Response to the Complaint

Receipt of a complaint

The Principal will generally acknowledge receipt of a Complaint raised with the School in writing as soon as practicable.

Assessing a complaint

The Principal (or delegate) generally will assess the complaint and determine:

- whether the Complaint is one to be addressed under the Child Safe Policy as Misconduct or Reportable Conduct matter, or another matter identified in and dealt with by the relevant policies, (see section 5 above); and
- the priority of the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised; and
- whether the School may be required to report the matter to the Office of the Children's Guardian, Police, Department of Communities and Justice or other relevant authorities should the complaint relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

Managing a complaint

The Principal (or delegate) generally will manage a Complaint by:

- a) advising the Complainant of the likely steps that will be undertaken by the School in relation to the Complaint;
- b) if appropriate, advising the relevant parties of the Complaint at the relevant time and providing them with an opportunity to respond;
- c) collecting any additional information the School considers necessary to assess the Complaint;
- d) making a decision about how the Complaint will be resolved ('resolution decision'); and

- e) if appropriate, advising the Complainant in writing, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution decision of the Principal (or delegate) and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.
- f) Maintaining appropriate records, including notations on student files.

There may be circumstances where some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the School will determine, on a case-by-case basis the most appropriate method of handling the complaint.

A Complainant and the relevant parties that the Complaint is about may choose to have an appropriate support person present at any meeting with representatives of the School about the Complaint. However, the School maintains the right to determine whether the person's preferred support person is appropriate and may not approve the attendance of a support person where they are determined by the School to be inappropriate.

7 Expectations

The School commits to abiding by its policies (including Codes of Conduct) when dealing with matters of Staff Misconduct or Reportable Conduct. This includes operating in accordance with principles of procedural fairness and natural justice as far as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances.

A Complaint about a reportable conduct matter may be current or historical. Timeframes for investigation of Complaints relating to reportable conduct are dependent on the individual matter and may be over an extended period of time, particularly in the case of a historical allegation. The School may be required to include police or other agencies which may possibly elongate the timeframes even further.

The School is bound by privacy or other confidentiality requirements when conducting investigations of reportable conduct allegations, which may limit the information that can be shared with the Complainant regarding the outcome of an investigation.

8 Responsibilities

The School Principal is responsible for ensuring this procedure is implemented comprehensively (including annual staff training and public accessibility on the School's website in accordance with NESA obligations).

9 Contact

If you have any queries about these procedures, you should contact the Principal or Deputy Principal for advice.

10 Other Relevant Policies

Anti-Bullying and Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy

Child Safe Policy (including Code of Conduct)

Code of Conduct – Students

Code of Conduct – School Community Members

Employment Policy (Disciplinary Provisions)

Staff Discipline Policy

Whistleblower Policy