



# Complaints Management Policy

## Scope and Purpose

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This policy is designed to create a strong, transparent, and reliable partnership between students, parents, staff, and the wider school community. Students, parents, and other community members must be confident that Lambert School will listen to, assess, and respond to concerns and complaints in a fair, timely, and child-centred manner.

Lambert School recognises that students, and particularly children, may feel uncomfortable or unsafe raising concerns or making a complaint. Accordingly, this policy is informed by and gives effect to:

- the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations;
- the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023 (Tas) and associated regulations;
- best-practice governance expectations of the Tasmanian Schools Registration Board (SRB).

This policy applies to complaints raised by or on behalf of students, parents or carers, staff, contractors, volunteers, board members, and members of the wider community.

A student-friendly guide to making a complaint can be found [here](#). This guide was created using the [Child-Centred Complaints Handling Best Practice Guide](#) published by the CREATE Foundation.

## Introduction

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Lambert School is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and harmonious working and learning environment. Complaints, concerns, and grievances are recognised as a legitimate and important part of maintaining accountability, trust, and continuous improvement.

This policy exists to ensure that complaints and disputes are:

- encouraged to be raised early;
- managed respectfully and without fear of reprisal;
- resolved promptly and fairly wherever possible; and
- escalated appropriately where required.

As a community, Lambert School has a responsibility to ensure a safe place of work and learning that is free from bullying, intimidation, discrimination, harassment, abuse, neglect, or exploitation. This includes interactions:

- between students;
- between staff members;
- between students and staff;
- between parents or carers and staff; and
- between the school and the broader community.

All complaints will be dealt with in a supportive and respectful environment, without judgement, victimisation, or intimidation of any person involved in the process.

Nothing in this policy limits the right of any person to seek legal advice, make a report to external authorities, or raise concerns with regulatory bodies at any time.

Where appropriate and safe to do so, resolution directly between the parties is encouraged. This will never be required where a power imbalance exists, where a child may be at risk, or where the matter involves alleged serious misconduct.

## Definition of a Complaint

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A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern where a person believes, rightly or wrongly, that another party has acted unfairly, improperly, or unreasonably, or has failed to act when it should have.

Complaints may relate to:

- the conduct or behaviour of staff, students, volunteers, contractors, or board members;
- the safety, wellbeing, or treatment of a student;
- the quality, type, or delivery of education or support services;
- decisions, policies, procedures, or practices of the school; or
- actions or omissions that impact the wider school community.

Lambert School is committed to managing complaints in a manner that is fair, reasonable, proportionate, and consistent with procedural fairness for all parties.

The paramount consideration in all complaint handling is the safety, welfare, and best interests of children.

## How to Make a Complaint

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A complaint may be made:

- in person to a teacher or the Principal;
- via the complaints page on the Lambert School website;
- by email or written correspondence; or
- by another person acting on behalf of the complainant (including a support person).

Complaints may be made anonymously. Anonymous complaints will be taken seriously; however, anonymity may limit the school's capacity to investigate or resolve the matter fully.

Students are encouraged to raise concerns with a staff member they feel comfortable speaking with. Parents, staff, and community members may contact the school to arrange a meeting with the Principal.

All complaints made in person will be documented by the receiving staff member.

Complaints submitted via the website or QR code will be acknowledged and triaged within five (5) working days.

## Child-focused Complaint Resources and Supports

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To ensure that children and young people can understand and access the complaints process safely and confidently, Lambert School has developed a suite of age-appropriate, child-centred complaint resources. These materials are designed to explain, in clear and accessible language, what a complaint is, how to raise concerns, who can help, what will happen next, and how confidentiality is managed.

These resources include:

- an Early Childhood Complaints and Concerns Guide and simplified feedback form for younger students ;
- a more general Student Complaints and Feedback Guide and Frequently Asked Questions for older primary and secondary students; and
- clearly displayed complaints flowcharts for students, parents, staff, and complaints involving the Principal, incorporating QR codes that link directly to the relevant online forms

These documents are informed by the Child-Centred Complaints Handling Best Practice Guide published by the CREATE Foundation and are available in both digital and hard-copy formats across the school. Together, they support children to raise concerns in a developmentally appropriate manner, reinforce that students will not be penalised for speaking up, and give practical effect to this policy in line with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023 (Tas).

## Complaints about the Principal

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Complaints concerning the Principal are managed via a separate process, and may be directed to the Chair of the Lambert School Board at: [lambertschoolboard@lambertschool.tas.edu.au](mailto:lambertschoolboard@lambertschool.tas.edu.au).

If a complaint involves alleged criminal conduct, complainants may also contact Tasmania Police directly.

## Resolving a complaint

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Lambert School will acknowledge the receipt of a complaint within 48 hours, and endeavour to act on your complaint within five working days.

The School will assess each complaint and determine the most appropriate response, which may include:

- informal resolution or clarification;
- facilitated discussion or mediation;
- restorative processes (where appropriate and with consent);
- formal internal investigation; or
- referral to external authorities.

Where appropriate, the school may consult with the complainant regarding desired outcomes. This does not imply that a particular outcome can or will be guaranteed.

If a complaint is not resolved at the initial level, it may be escalated to:

- the Principal;
- the Lambert School Board; or
- external authorities, where appropriate.

## Procedural fairness

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Lambert School is committed to procedural fairness at all stages of the complaints process. This includes:

- treating all parties with dignity and respect;
- ensuring complaints are assessed impartially;
- informing the subject of a complaint of the substance of the allegations, unless this would place a child at risk or compromise a lawful investigation;
- providing reasonable opportunity for response;
- maintaining confidentiality to the extent permitted by law;

- keeping accurate records;
- ensuring decisions are evidence-based and proportionate.

Vexatious, trivial, or previously finalised matters may be declined, with reasons documented.

## Examples of Matters That May Give Rise to a Complaint

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### Students

- feeling unsafe, bullied, or harassed;
- being treated unfairly or without respect;
- concerns about learning, assessment, or support;
- concerns that a previously raised issue has not been taken seriously.

### Parents and Carers

- concerns about student safety or wellbeing;
- dissatisfaction with the quality or delivery of education;
- concerns about staff behaviour or decision-making;
- concerns about school policies, procedures, or practices.

These examples are not exhaustive.

## Record Management and Monitoring

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A confidential complaints register will be maintained by the school.

Records will include:

- the nature of the complaint;
- actions taken;
- outcomes and decisions.
- any escalation or external reporting.

Complaint data will be reviewed periodically to identify systemic issues, trends, and opportunities for improvement, in line with continuous improvement and child-safe governance obligations.

## Confidentiality

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Information relating to complaints will be handled confidentially and shared only with those who need to know, consistent with legal obligations.

The school will endeavour to respect requests for confidentiality or anonymity; however, this may limit the school's ability to investigate or respond fully.

All records will be stored securely in accordance with legislative and governance requirements.

## Roles and Responsibilities

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All staff are responsible for responding appropriately to concerns and assisting complainants to access the complaints process. Where a complaint raises concerns of child abuse, neglect, or reportable conduct, the school will act immediately in accordance with mandatory reporting and reportable conduct obligations under Tasmanian law.

The Designated Administration Officer is responsible for receiving, recording, and monitoring complaints. The current officer is Dr Tai Gardner.

The Principal is responsible for managing and resolving complaints that do not relate to them and have not been escalated to the Board.

The Lambert School Board is responsible for overseeing complaints about the Principal and for governance-level escalation and oversight.