

Parent and Student: Complaints and Grievances Guidelines

Rationale

BAS is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment. From time to time, students and parents can feel aggrieved about something that is happening within our Association that they believe requires attention, further investigation or change in procedures or a resolution.

Guidelines Statement

BAS endeavours to ensure that complaints are managed and resolved fairly and timely.

Principles

The complaints resolution procedure is implemented for resolving complaints in relation to issues that fall within the association's area of responsibility. Matters that are deemed to fall under the responsibility of member schools will be referred to the school/schools concerned to be followed up.

- All cases of serious misconduct: sexual offences, criminal charges, or other serious incidents must be referred to the relevant regulator or authority.
- The BAS Chair has a responsibility to address unacceptable conduct or concerns that are observed or brought to the association's attention.
- It is important that all complaints, ensuing procedures and outcomes are fully documented.
- The BAS Chair may choose to respond to a complaint through an informal process in cases where the complaint is minor, the complainant wishes the matter to be dealt with informally or the complaint has arisen from lack of or unclear communication.
- Formal processes will be used when informal processes have not been successful, a complainant seeks a formal process, or the principal believes the complaint warrants formal investigation.
- These guidelines will be made available on the BAS website and included in the BAS Handbook.

Complaints Procedure

In the first instance, complainants should contact the person/s involved in the issue when it first arises so that it can be resolved quickly. In many cases, this would involve their school contact at the relevant BAS event or activity; such as the responsible staff member present or the school's Head of Sport. The types of complaints are not limited to but could include

- issues related to student discipline procedures
- damage/loss of personal property
- bullying and harassment

Relevant contact details for BAS member schools can be found on the BAS website. It is recommended that complainants follow the prescribed procedures for the school concerned.

Heads of Sport, together with any other supervising staff, coaches or officials who may be involved, should be given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address your concerns. Remember, it may not always be possible to resolve an issue to your complete satisfaction.

If the matter is urgent and the school's Head of Sport is not available then contact the Administration Office to arrange for a member of the Leadership Team or other suitable staff member to either meet or contact you.

Concerns to be raised with the Principal of the school concerned

Most concerns are resolved by discussing the issue with the relevant person. However, if the issue remains unresolved you can then ask to speak to the principal of the school concerned.

To do this, you will need to request an appointment through the school office. Please note that:

- the principal may ask another senior staff member to speak with you on their behalf
- if a teacher is going to be present at the meeting it is more likely to occur outside of classroom hours.

Relevant contact details for BAS member schools can be found on the BAS website. It is recommended that complainants follow the prescribed procedures for the school concerned.

Concerns to be raised with the BAS CHAIR

If the complainant, after meeting with the principal of the school concerned, believes that the school has not listened to their concerns or followed acceptable processes then the complainant can take the issue to the BAS Chair.

Should a complaint or grievance require to be referred to the BAS Chair it should be directed in writing and forward to admin@bas.vic.edu.au

Maintaining a Safe Environment

At any stage in the complaint process, staff have the right to feel safe. Aggressive or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated. In such instances, the staff member will end the meeting and refer the matter to the principal and the occupational health and safety officer.

If the complainant feels unsafe, they should end the meeting and refer the matter to the principal. In the case of it being the principal, then the complainant should contact the BAS Chair.

Making, Receiving and Investigating Complaints

At BAS member schools, all staff are expected to:

- listen carefully and deal calmly and respectfully with complaints
- document the complaint, actions taken and outcomes
- look at all sides of an issue
- focus particularly on issues that may be affecting the learning and/or safety of students
- resolve complaints in a timely manner
- provide feedback to the complainant on any actions/outcomes/decisions taken
- accept that it is not possible to resolve all complaints
- identify when a complaint cannot be resolved
- ensure privacy and confidentiality of information is maintained in accordance with relevant legislation
- refer more complex or unresolved complaints to the principal or the school governing authority

Those making complaints are expected to:

- be clear about the topic or issue you want to discuss
- focus on the things that are genuinely affecting your child
- always remain calm and respectful, particularly when discussing the complaint in the presence of children
- remember you may not have all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue you wish to discuss
- think about what would be an acceptable outcome for you and your child that is consistent with school policy and procedures
- listen carefully to other sides of the issue
- be informed by checking the school's policies or guidelines, where relevant
- accept that it is not possible to resolve all complaints
- be aware that you have the right to seek advocacy, mediation, counseling or support from

Record Keeping

A record of a complaint should include the following detail:

- Date when issue was first raised
- Name of parent(s)
- Name of student(s)
- Detailed statement of concern/complaint including:
 - nature of complaint
 - identity of person(s) involved
 - time of allegation
- Description of the procedures applied and the time frame for reporting on the outcomes of any investigation
- Statement of outcomes
- Staff member(s) handling complaint

The record of complaint will be filed in school records management system.