



Complaints Management Policy

Guiding Principles

Purnululu Aboriginal Independent Community School (PAICS) aims to provide a safe, nurturing environment for both students and staff so that both may reach their highest potential.

The school implements a complaint handling system which satisfies each of the key action areas of Principles 6 and 9 of the National Child Safe Organisation Principles. The school's complaint handling system conforms to the rules of procedural fairness and includes a system for review.

The school publishes information to the school community about the role of the Director General in monitoring the school's compliance with these standards and has authority to respond to instances of non-compliance.

Where conflict or disputes arise, all parties must feel supported in their situation. There should be no presumption of fault or blame.

Efforts must be focussed on resolution of the issue between the target of the complaint and complainant.

All complaints must be treated as serious until investigation of the matter, when the true gravity of the complaint can be accurately assessed.

A complaint made regarding a policy or procedure should be processed in the same way as a complaint against a person.

Student Complaints

Student complaints must be accorded the same status as a complaint from any other source. Students are entitled to procedural fairness in the handling of a complaint. Students must feel supported and able to make a complaint in line with resources provided by the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Western Australia's 'Top Tips for Making a Complaint' <https://www.cyp.wa.gov.au/info-for-children-and-young-people/speak-up-and-make-a-complaint/>

Some specific strategies used by PAICS to ensure a child-friendly complaints system include:

- Sharing the above Top Tips with students in each year group, every school year,
- Teaching students to how to use Standard Australian English (SAE) to raise a complaint if they feel they are being treated unfairly,
- Whole school focus and expectation on building positive relationships between staff and students,
- Recording on the student management system staff/student interactions to identify any patterns,

- Employing and empowering Gija staff to support students to speak up, using home language, and
- Displaying posters around the school in Kriol and in SAE about students' rights, including the right to feel safe all the time.

In dealing with a student complaint, the following steps are to be taken:

1. Where immediate resolution is not possible, the nature of the complaint should be accurately recorded on the official complaints lodgement form and the matter brought to the attention of the principal without delay.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved, it should be brought before the Purnululu Aboriginal Independent Community School committee with all involved parties present as soon as practicable.
3. In the event the dispute cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties through the previous steps, outside mediation must be sought.
4. If all else fails, the dispute should be settled in a court of law.

Staff Complaints

It is expected that all staff working in the school conduct themselves in a professional manner and wherever possible attempt to resolve any dispute of an obviously non-serious nature before initiating an official complaint.

Where a dispute arises between staff members, all parties should approach the problem in a mature manner and attempt to resolve the dispute through reasoned discussion before initiating an official complaint.

In dealing with a staff complaint, the following steps are to be taken:

1. Where immediate resolution is not possible, the nature of the complaint should be accurately recorded on the official complaints lodgement form and the matter brought to the attention of the Principal without delay.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved, it should be brought

before the PAICS School Committee with all involved parties present as soon as practicable.

3. In the event the dispute cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties through the previous steps, outside mediation must be sought.
4. If all else fails, the dispute should be settled in a court of law.

External Complaints

Any complaint about the school arising from an external source is to be taken very seriously.

An initial response should be generated informing the complainant that their grievance is being processed.

Immediate reactions are to be avoided and the complainant must be kept informed of progress in dealing with their complaint.

In dealing with an external complaint, the following steps are to be taken.

1. Where immediate resolution is not possible, the nature of the complaint should be accurately recorded on the official complaints lodgement form and the matter brought to the attention of the Principal without delay.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved, it should be brought before the PAICS committee with all involved parties present as soon as practicable.
3. In the event the dispute cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties through the previous steps, outside mediation must be sought.
4. If all else fails, the dispute should be settled in a court of law.

Complaints about the Principal

In the case of a complaint about the Principal, the above mentioned procedures apply, along with the following actions that apply to a complaint being made about the Principal.

Any complaint about the Principal that has not been resolved by communication with the Principal should be addressed to the School Committee as nominated by the Purnululu Aboriginal Corporation. Complaints about the Principal can be made electronically by email or by post using the following methods of contact:

Email

Attn: Cailyn Clifton

ctac0710@gmail.com

(Purnululu Aboriginal Corporation Director and member of the PAICS Committee)

Attn: Sophia Mung

sophia.mung@purnululuschool.wa.edu.au

(Purnululu Aboriginal Corporation Director and Chair of the PAICS Committee)

Post

Attn: Sophia Mung

Chair, Purnululu Aboriginal
Corporation

PO Box 440

Kununurra 6743

In dealing with a complaint about the Principal, the following steps are to be taken:

1. Where immediate resolution is not possible, the nature of the complaint should be accurately recorded on the official complaints lodgement form and the matter brought to the attention of all members of the Purnululu School Committee at a School Committee meeting without delay.
2. Once a complaint has been lodged, School Committee members will inform the Principal and arrange a meeting between the person who lodged the complaint and the Principal, with School Committee

members present and, if deemed necessary and/or if requested by either party, with an external mediator appointed by the School Committee members. All parties are encouraged to attend with a support person and/or legal advisor.

3. If the matter cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved, it should be brought before the Purnululu Aboriginal Corporation Directors at a Director's meeting as soon as practicable and external mediation must be sought.
4. If these strategies fail to resolve the matter, the dispute should be settled in a court of law.

Complaints about a Board Member

If the subject of a staff complaint is a member of the School Committee or a board member of Purnululu Aboriginal Corporation (PAC), the Principal, or their delegate, will seek support from the PAC Board to investigate and resolve the complaint. The Chairperson of PAC will be informed of the complaint (if the Chairperson is the subject of the complaint another member of the committee will be informed) and conduct an investigation in conjunction with the Principal as per the school's complaints handling process. If the complainant is the Principal, the Chairperson (or other member) may request support from the school's Assistant Principal during this process. Should a conflict of interest be expressed by the complainant, a delegate approved by the Chairperson (or other member) will be nominated to investigate and address the complaint. The school's complaints handling process will be followed in an attempt to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant.

If the complaint is related to governance, has been raised with the corporation and the response has been inadequate a formal complaint can be lodged with ORIC. ORIC can be contacted on 1800 622 431 or at info@oric.gov.au to advise how to lodge a formal complaint.

For complaints not related to governance, that have been raised with the school and remain unresolved despite being escalated as per the school's complaints management system, a report can be lodged with the Non-government Schools Regulation Team. A report must be made using the Report a concern form and submitted via email at NGSRegulation.Concerns@education.wa.edu.au.

