

COMPLAINTS HANDLING Policy

Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that school staff, student, parent and employee complaints and disputes are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective and fair way.	
Scope:	This policy relates to employees of ThinkAgain, including volunteers, as well as school staff, students and parents.	
Status:	Active	Supersedes: 23/02/2020
Authorised by:	Board Chairperson	Date of Authorisation: 14/02/2021
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ThinkAgain Complaints Handling Procedure • ThinkAgain Child Protection Policy 	
Review:	Annually	Next Review Date: 2022
Policy Owner:	CEO	

POLICY STATEMENT

ThinkAgain is committed to ensuring that complaints from school staff, students, parents and employees are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective and fair way.

ThinkAgain views complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process.

ThinkAgain acknowledges the right of school staff, students, parents and employees to complain when dissatisfied with an action, inaction or decision of ThinkAgain and encourages constructive criticism and complaints.

ThinkAgain recognises that time spent on handling complaints can be an investment in better service to school staff, students, parents and employees.

Complaints that may be Resolved Under this Policy

ThinkAgain encourage students, parents and employees to lodge promptly any concerns regarding sexual harassment, child protection, discrimination, workplace bullying and privacy breaches as well as more general complaints that include areas such as:

- the charity, its employees having done something wrong;
- the charity or its employees having failed to do something they should have done;
- the charity or its employees having acted unfairly or impolitely;
- issues of employee behaviour that are contrary to their relevant code of conduct;
- issues related to learning programs;
- issues related to communication with students or parents or between employees

Student complaints may be brought by students or by parents on behalf of their children, as appropriate in the circumstances.

Issues Outside this Policy

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

- Child protection concerns or risks of harm to children should be dealt with in accordance with the law and the ThinkAgain Child Protection Policy.
- Student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the school's Student Code of Conduct or Behaviour Management Policy.
- Student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to the Principal who will involve the Police as appropriate.
- Formal legal proceedings.

COMPLAINTS HANDLING PRINCIPLES

ThinkAgain is committed to managing complaints according to the following principles:

- complaints will be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible;

- complaints will be taken seriously;
- complaints will be dealt with fairly and objectively and in a timely manner;
- procedural fairness will be ensured wherever practicable, including the right of interested parties to the complaint to be heard;
- confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible;
- all parties to the complaints will be appropriately supported;
- appropriate remedies will be offered and implemented;
- complainants, respondents and people associated with them will not be victimised as a result of lodging the complaints and they will not suffer any other reprisals;
- ThinkAgain will keep records of complaints;

RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of ThinkAgain

- appropriately communicate the charity's Complaints Handling Policy to school staff, students, parents and employees;
- upon receipt of a complaint, manage the complaint in accordance with the complaints handling principles;
- 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 from time to time;
- monitor and report to the board on complaints;
- refer to the charity's governing body immediately any claim for legal redress.

Responsibilities of all parties to a dispute

- lodge the complaint as soon as possible after the issue arises;
- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner;
- not provide deliberately false or misleading information;
- not make frivolous or vexatious complaints;
- act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner;
- act in a 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.

Responsibilities of employees receiving complaints

- inform the party lodging the complaint of how complaints can be lodged, when they should be lodged and what information is required;
- manage the complaint in accordance with the complaints handling principles;
- when appropriate, provide the complainant with a copy of the ThinkAgain Complaints Handling Policy;
- maintain confidentiality;
- keep appropriate records;
- to forward complaints to more senior employees, including the CEO, as appropriate;
- not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

COMPLIANCE & MONITORING

ThinkAgain is committed to the annual review of this policy.