



Overseas Students: Complaints and Appeals Policy

This Policy provides Overseas Students and their parents with information about procedures to facilitate the resolution of a dispute or complaint with Cranbrook School (the School).

Grievances brought by a student against another student will be dealt with under the School's behaviour management policies.

Rationale

Standard 10 of the *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018* (National Code) requires the School to have and implement a documented, internal complaints handling process and policy, including a documented appeals process and policy, and provide Overseas Students with comprehensive, free and easily accessible information about that process and policy.

Cranbrook School's Policy

It is Cranbrook School's policy to provide access to the School's [Complaints and Dispute Resolution Guide](#) to our Overseas Students for both formal and informal complaints, which are managed in accordance with the School's Complaints Handling Program. This includes, that if a formal complaint received from, or related to an Overseas Student is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, it may be escalated to an Appeals Panel, at the request of the complainant.

The School will respond to any complaint an Overseas Student makes regarding their dealings with the School, or any related third party the School has an arrangement with, to deliver the Overseas Student's course or related services.

First Steps

In the first instance, an attempt should be made to resolve the issue informally.

Staff will make every effort to resolve all enquiries, concerns, complaints and disputes promptly and in accordance with procedural fairness. Overseas Students and/or parents should contact the student's Housemaster (Senior School) or Class Teacher (Junior School) in the first instance to attempt informal resolution.

Lodging a Formal Complaint

If the informal resolution process is unsatisfactory or does not result in a resolution, the procedures as set out in the [Complaints and Dispute Resolution Guide](#) should be followed.

This also sets out the appeals process if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, whereby if the Overseas Student and/or their parents are not satisfied with the result of the School's complaints handling process, they can decide to internally appeal the School's decision, in accordance with the appeals process outlined in the [Complaints and Dispute Resolution Guide](#).

These internal procedures are a conciliatory and non-legal process.

For conditions that apply to handling of a complaint arising from the School's suspension or cancellation of a student's studies, please read the [Overseas Students: Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy](#).

Principles Regarding Complaints and Disputes

The following principles are applied to complaints and disputes:

- Student wellbeing is the first priority.
- The process is accessible to all parties and there is a commitment to cooperation by School staff.
- Procedural fairness is afforded to all parties.

- The complainant can present their case at no cost.
- Complainants are entitled to a support person in any discussions such as a friend, teacher or relative not involved in the grievance. A lawyer acting for the Overseas Student or their parents is not regarded as an acceptable support person.
- The subject of the complaint is informed of its substance.
- Appropriate confidentiality is maintained.
- Complaints are monitored and their management evaluated to pre-empt systemic/recurring issues.
- All persons in the School community are entitled to respect and courtesy.
- Complainants are entitled to be dealt with fairly and promptly.
- Receipt of a complaint will be acknowledged by the assigned Complaints Officer, or other appropriate staff member.
- The student's enrolment will be maintained whilst a complaint and/or appeal is being considered, except as outlined in the [Overseas Students: Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy](#).
- The complaints process, or appeals process, will begin within ten working days of receipt of the complaint being received by the School, and be completed in a reasonable timeframe.
- The complainant will be given a written statement of the outcome of the complaint, including the details and reasons.
- Procedures for lodging a complaint are communicated to the School community.
- The School will appoint an independent investigator, if required, when dealing with a complaint.

Procedures

Procedures are outlined in the [Complaints and Dispute Resolution Guide](#), which is available on the School's website.

Internal Appeals Process

Should an Overseas Student or their parents not be satisfied with the outcome of the internal complaints and dispute resolution process, they can decide to internally appeal the School's decision, in accordance with the [Complaints and Dispute Resolution Guide](#).

Where an internal appeal is made, the Headmaster will assemble an Appeals Panel, made up of a minimum of three senior staff with the requisite independence from the issue at hand to address the appeal on its merits. The Appeals Panel aims to resolve the complaint within 20 business days from the date of referral.

External Appeals Process

If the Overseas Student is not successful in the internal appeals process, the School will advise the Overseas Student within 10 business days of concluding the internal appeals process of the Overseas Student's right to access an external complaint handling and appeals process at no or minimal cost.

Should an Overseas Student or their parents not be satisfied with the outcome of the internal complaints and dispute resolution process, including the internal appeals process, they may lodge an external appeal through the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman investigates complaints about problems that Overseas Students or intending Overseas Students may have with private education and training in Australia. The services of the Commonwealth Ombudsman are free.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman will, in most cases, determine whether the School followed its policies and procedures correctly, and treated the Overseas Student fairly.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman cannot make decisions regarding academic merit.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman will also not investigate if the complaint has not been first raised with the School.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman may require that the School issues an apology, changes or reviews a decision, changes policies or procedures, issues a refund, or takes some other action.

Cranbrook School agrees to be bound by the recommendations of the Commonwealth Ombudsman and will implement the decision or recommendations made by the Commonwealth Ombudsman immediately and take any preventative or corrective actions required by the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

You can make a complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman by:

- Telephone on 1300 362 072 if within Australia or +61 2 6276 0111 if outside Australia
- On the online complaint form found at www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students

You can make a complaint in your own language. To do so, call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) in Australia on 131 450 if within Australia or +61 3 9203 4027 if outside Australia. The Commonwealth Ombudsman will pay for the interpreter.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman is open for enquiries 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, Australian Eastern Standard Time / Australian Eastern Daylight Time. Further information can be found on the website www.ombudsman.gov.au.

Record Keeping

The School maintains written records of a complaint, including records of any corrective and/or preventative action, on the Overseas Student's file and in the Complaints Register. Records are maintained in accordance with the [Overseas Students: Records Management and Retention Policy](#).

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