



Overseas Student Complaints and Appeals Policy

1. Introduction

Ruyton Girls' School (Ruyton) is committed to ensuring that all staff, students and members of the School community are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect in a learning and working environment. A member of the Ruyton community is entitled to voice concerns or make a complaint, whether informal or formal, as a result of experiencing behaviour by School staff or lack of satisfaction with School process that is not in accordance with the School's policies, values, expectations of conduct and Government regulations.

This Policy seeks to ensure that Ruyton meets the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act and National Code Standard 10 requirements for providers to have a policy that outlines the options available to overseas students should they have a complaint or grievance.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all overseas students and staff working with them. It does not relate to concerns regarding child abuse. Refer to Ruyton's child safety reporting procedures for guidance.

3. Key elements of the policy

3.1. General Principles

All members of the School community are entitled to voice concerns or make a complaint, either informally or formally, in order to ensure a safe, harmonious and effective learning environment is maintained. Ruyton will endeavour to handle all concerns and complaints informally where possible.

In resolving a complaint, the School will give priority to student wellbeing and educational needs.

Overseas students will be made aware of the complaints and appeals process as part of their induction process for new students to Ruyton. Parents/legal guardians will be advised of this policy on enrolment.

3.2. Complaints Against Other Students

Grievances brought by a student against another student will be dealt with under the School's Student Behaviour Policy (included in the Student diary).

3.3. Informal Complaints Resolution

Students should first contact their Wellbeing Leader or the Overseas Student Coordinator in an attempt to mediate the complaint in an informal manner. If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, students may present their case in writing to the Head of Senior School and if necessary, be assisted by a support person e.g. friend, relative, teacher not involved in the grievance.

If the written complaint lodged by a student cannot be resolved by the Head of School, it may at the request of the complainant, be escalated as a formal complaint to be heard by a Referral Committee.

3.4. Formal Complaint Resolution

The hearing of a formal complaint by the Referral Committee will be conducted in a timely manner and take into account the student's visa and enrolment in future subjects and commence within 10 working days of the School receiving the formal written complaint.

The School's Referral Committee will consist of a minimum of three members who have sufficient independence from the issue at hand to address the appeal in an equitable, impartial and objective manner. Participants may be drawn from the Deputy Principals, Head of School, Director of Wellbeing, Counsellors, Wellbeing Leaders and the Overseas Student Coordinator. The Principal will determine the make-up of the panel on a case by case basis.

Where a case is escalated to a Referral Committee, the Committee will aim to resolve the complaint as quickly as possible but no later than 20 working days after the original complaint was received. The internal complaints and appeals process is available to students at no cost. A student may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at all relevant meetings.

The students enrolment will be maintained during the process however the student may be excluded from classes during this time. A written statement of the outcome of the investigation, including details of the resolution and reasons will be provided to the student and their parents/legal guardian.

Where the appeal to the Referral Committee is not successful, the School will advise the overseas student of their right, and their parents/legal guardians right, to access an external complaints process at minimal or no cost. This advice will be given within 10 days of the completion of the internal review.

3.5. External Dispute Resolution

National Code Standard 10 requires the School to have arrangements in place for an external dispute resolution provider to hear complaints or appeals from overseas students arising from our internal complaints and appeals process. Where an agreement or resolution cannot be reached, the School nominates the use of an arbitrator referred by Independent Schools' Victoria, to resolve the matter.

Once an arbitrator has recommended a course of action, both parties would be expected to abide by the recommendation and cease further dispute.

4. References

- The Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act (Commonwealth)
- National Code of Practice 2018

5. Related Policies

- Overseas Student - Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy

APPROVED: Executive 2020