Walford

Policy 12.12

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS (INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS) POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Walford Anglican School for Girls is dedicated to creating a safe and nurturing environment that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of all individuals. Parents are key partners in their daughter's journey, actively participating in the care and growth of each student and working together with the School to ensure the best for their child.

Walford endeavours to create an environment in which people feel able to speak up about issues concerning the education and wellbeing of students and the conduct of staff. Complaints are an important way for parents students to provide information and feedback to the School and request a response or action.

Walford's general Handling Complaints Policy applies to parent complaints and provides the School's ordinary complaint handling framework. This policy supplements Policy 4.8 by setting out the additional rights and processes that apply to international students under the ESOS framework and National Code.

Where a complaint is made by a parent or legal guardian about an enrolment application, written agreement, fees, refund or other matter where the parent or legal guardian is the enrolling party, the complaint will ordinarily be managed as a parent complaint under Policy 4.8, with the additional protections in this policy applied where the matter relates to an international student or prospective international student.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out the additional complaints and appeals arrangements that apply to international students at Walford Anglican School for Girls under the ESOS framework and the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.

This policy should be read alongside Policy 4.8 Handling Complaints, which sets out Walford's general complaints handling framework.

SCOPE

This policy applies to complaints and appeals involving prospective, current and former international students where the matter relates to their application, enrolment, course progress, attendance, welfare, accommodation, fees, refunds, suspension, cancellation or other matters connected with Walford's provision of a CRICOS-registered course.

This policy applies to international students and, where applicable, their parents, legal guardians or authorised representatives.

Complaints about student-to-student conduct will ordinarily be managed under the School's student behaviour and wellbeing policies. However, a complaint about the School's handling of such a matter may be considered under this policy and/or Policy 4.8 Handling Complaints.

DEFINITIONS

Complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived situation, decision, action, omission or service relating to an international student's application, enrolment or education at Walford.
Appeal means a request for review of a decision made by the School, including a decision relating to course progress, attendance, suspension, cancellation, welfare arrangements, refund outcomes or enrolment.

Complainant means the person making a complaint or appeal. For the purposes of this policy, a complainant may be a prospective, current or former international student, or their parent or legal guardian. An authorised representative, including an education agent, may act only with written authority.

International student means a student who holds, or intends to apply for, a student visa to study a CRICOS-registered course at Walford.

WHO MAY COMPLAIN OR APPEAL

A complaint or appeal may be made by:

- a prospective international student;
- a current international student;
- a former international student, where the complaint relates to their period of enrolment or application;
- a parent or legal guardian of an international student or prospective international student; or
- an authorised representative, including an education agent, where written authority has been provided.

Where the student is under 18 years of age, the School will ordinarily involve the student's parent or legal guardian in the complaint or appeal process, unless this would be inappropriate having regard to the student's safety, wellbeing, privacy or applicable legal obligations.

INFORMAL RESOLUTION

Where appropriate, complaints should be raised as early as possible with the staff member closest to the matter. Depending on the issue, this may be the Head of Enrolments, Head of Boarding, relevant Head of School, Director of Learning and Teaching, Director of Finance and Corporate Services, or another appropriate member of the Executive Leadership Team.

Informal resolution may not be appropriate where the matter is serious, involves child safety, involves an alleged breach of law, or relates to a decision to report, suspend or cancel an international student's enrolment.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

A formal complaint or appeal must be made in writing to the Principal or delegate and should set out:

- the decision, action or issue being complained about or appealed;
- the reasons for the complaint or appeal;
- any relevant supporting information; and
- the outcome sought.

The complainant may be accompanied by a support person at any relevant meeting.

The School will commence assessment of the complaint or appeal within 10 working days of lodgement and will conduct the process in a professional, fair, transparent and timely manner.

The School will provide the complainant with a written outcome, including reasons for the outcome.
If the complaint or appeal is upheld, Walford will promptly implement any decision, corrective action or preventive action required.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT ENROLMENT APPLICATIONS

Complaints about the international student enrolment application process, including entry requirements, application handling, refusal of admission, offer conditions or withdrawal of an offer, may be made by the prospective student's parent or legal guardian. Where appropriate, the prospective student may also participate in the process.

The School is not required to offer enrolment to every applicant. However, the School will consider complaints about whether the enrolment process was applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with Walford's policies and applicable legal obligations.

A complaint or appeal about an enrolment application does not guarantee an offer of enrolment, a place in boarding, or a place in a particular year level or course.

PROGRESS, ATTENDANCE, SUSPENSION AND CANCELLATION APPEALS

Where the School notifies an international student of its intention to report the student for unsatisfactory course progress or attendance, or to suspend or cancel the student's enrolment, the student or their parent/legal guardian will have 20 working days from the date of notification to access the internal complaints and appeals process.

During the internal complaints and appeals process, the student must maintain enrolment and, unless otherwise approved by the School, continue to attend classes and meet course requirements.

The School will not report the student through PRISMS until the internal complaints and appeals process has been completed, unless permitted or required by law.

EXTERNAL REVIEW

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Walford's internal complaints and appeals process, they may seek external review through the Commonwealth Ombudsman, where the Ombudsman has jurisdiction.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman provides a free complaints service for future, current and former international students of private education providers, including schools.

The School will give the complainant written information about the relevant external review pathway at the conclusion of the internal process.

OTHER LEGAL RIGHTS

Nothing in this policy limits the right of an international student, parent or legal guardian to seek advice or take action under Australian consumer protection laws or other applicable laws.

REFERENCES

Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth)
National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, especially Standard 10
4.8 Handling Complaints.docx
Enrolments Policy 4.17
Entry Requirements for International Students 12.1
Refund Policy – International Students 12.5

Progress and Attendance – International Students 12.8
Privacy Policy 5.1
Parent Code of Behaviour 10.2
Student behaviour support policy 9.7
Boarding policies and procedures

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