Complaints Policy

Responsibility:	General Manager, Programme Manager, Programme Coordinator			
Approval:	Academic Committee			
PTE Applicable to:	Cornerstone Education LTD trading as: Business Management Programmes Aspire2 Health and Wellbeing.			
Policy Number: 3.2	Policy Version: 5	Date Created: April 2017	Review Date: October 2026	Next Review: October 2027

Purpose

To provide a process that is accessible and enables complaints to be made and resolved fairly in a timely manner, whilst protecting the rights of complainants and the PTE staff and students.

To provide protection and support for all parties concerned during this procedure and ensuring that those involved are not subject to harassment, retaliation or victimisation.

To use pertinent information collected via this policy and procedure to improve the performance of the PTE as a whole.

Responsibility

All managers who have direct responsibility for any staff and student complaints have responsibility for implementing this policy.

Policy Statements

1 A complaint from a student or group of students must be lodged to the General Manager/Programme Manager in the following ways:
- Completion of the online complaint form
- Written letter
- Email

2 The General Manager/Programme Manager will respond to complaints in a timely and efficient manner appropriate to the level of complexity of the issue.

3 Complaints will be considered from a cultural perspective and include the provision of culturally responsive approaches that consider traditional processes for raising and resolving issues.

4 If a complaint is about a PTE staff member, they have the right to have details of the complaint and the identity of the complainant UNLESS there are extenuating circumstances which may place the complainant at risk. Natural justice requires that a party be aware of his or her accuser. Therefore, maintaining a complainant's anonymity needs to be an exception rather than the rule.
Extenuating circumstances should therefore only be:

Where the complaint is made under the Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistle Blowers) Act 2022 or of the Privacy Act 2020 which includes prevention or lessening of a serious and imminent threat to:

- Public health or public safety, or
- The life or health of the individual concerned or another individual.

5 The PTE reserves the right not to proceed with a complaint:
- Which is anonymous or based on hearsay; or
- Which is made more than ninety days after the alleged incident

6 A support person may accompany the complainant or respondent at all stages of the complaint's procedure. The respondent may choose any support person he or she wishes to represent them.

7 Any person who feels he or she has been treated unfairly during the process of handling the complaint, or that actions taken have been unjustified, may appeal in writing to the General Manager within three weeks of being notified of the outcome of the initial complaint.

8 Any PTE staff member who is subject to a complaint has the right to reply to the issues raised and must be given the opportunity to exercise this right.

9 Complaints about the General Manager/Programme Manager are to be made to Aspire2 Group CEO.

10 The General Manager/Programme Manager will notify the Aspire2 Group – Corporate / CFO of any complaints that could potentially result in an insurance liability, e.g. complaints regarding academic quality issues that affect learning outcomes, programme delivery not as advertised.

11 Final outcomes of any investigation will be communicated, by the General/Programme Manager, back to the students and relevant staff.

All records generated during this process will be maintained on the confidential central complaints file held by the General Manager/Programme Manager. The General Manager/Programme Manager will provide a monthly summary report to Academic Committee to enable quality trends analysis.

12 If the complainant/s are not satisfied by the outcome of our complaints process, they may be able to raise their concerns externally to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority's via their website. If it is a financial or contractual complaint the complainant can raise with the Ngā Amuamu Tauira Study Complaints.

13 Issues pertaining to the misuse of public funds through fraud or mismanagement are to be raised via Policy and Procedure Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistle Blowers) Act 2022

14 New employees and students will be made aware of the complaints policy and procedure through the website, LMS and any other relevant induction processes.

Definitions

Complaint	Formal notification of any issue adversely affecting one or more individuals that requires investigation, action, and response. Records of all complaints must be maintained on the central complaints file.
Issues of Concern	Issues that have the potential to impair the student's experience or expose the PTE to academic risk.
Serious complaint	Issues involving violence, verbal abuse, cultural safety, unsafe conduct or work practice, disclosure of confidential PTE or personal information, theft, misrepresentation of NCNZ for personal gain, possession of or being under the influence of non-prescribed drugs or alcohol, or any other act not specifically addressed in this definition but which is of a similar nature.
"Whistle Blowers"	Report or disclosure of serious wrongdoing as defined by the Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistle Blowers) Act 2022

Related Documentation

Forms and Templates	Location where documentation is shared
Complaint Form	Policies and Procedures Section in Student Information Hub

Student Handbooks	Website Student Information Hub

Relevant Legislation

- The Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistle Blowers) Act 2022
- Privacy Act 2020.