



GUIDELINES FOR RESOLVING COMPLAINTS / GRIEVANCES

Kesser Torah College (KTC) aims to maintain a happy and productive environment, one in which our whole community (our staff, students and the families of students) can work together towards the education of our students.

One element in achieving this kind of environment is an effective complaints resolution process; a process which gives members of the KTC community confidence that their issues of concern - which might also be called grievances or complaints - are properly dealt with. We believe that an effective complaints resolution process is consistent with KTC's objectives, core values of *Derech Eretz* and a Nurturing Environment, as well as our obligations under Halacha and Australian law.

These guidelines are intended to provide assistance to members of the KTC community who wish to bring a complaint to the attention of KTC, by providing an understanding of:

1. what you can do if you have a complaint (including a concern, grievance or problem) relating to:
 - (a) your child's education or wellbeing
 - (b) operational matters
 - (c) matters relating to teaching and learning
 - (d) fees issues
 - (e) halachic or ethos matters.
2. how a complaint might be raised and resolved.

Please note: Allegations of behaviour or actions which fall under the guidelines for *Mandatory Reporting or Reportable Conduct*, or allegations of *Staff or Adult Misconduct*, are dealt with in the College's **Child Protection Policy**, which are located on the College's website or in hard copy on request from reception.

What does KTC aim to do?

KTC aims to address all concerns/complaints, and to treat these as expeditiously, fairly and confidentially.

Who to see for what?

Educational matters, or matters in general (other than complaints related to fees)

1. **Please note:** Educational and operational concerns/complaints are referred to the **College Principal** and the **professional staff** and not the President of the Board or members of the Kesser Torah Board. If a concern is "subject-specific", you should generally first contact the class teacher (Primary School) or Subject Teacher (High School). If the concern is "social" in nature or wider than a specific subject, you should contact the Year Coordinator/Head of Welfare (High School) or Head of the Primary School.

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2. If the matter cannot be resolved at this level, or if it is inappropriate to go to the teacher (for example if the complaint is about the teacher and/or you do not feel comfortable discussing it with him/her), you should contact the relevant member of the Senior Management Team:
 - For CRELS (Nest, Simcha) concerns: Vanessa McCarthy, Acting Coordinator
 - For ECC (3-4, 3-5 y.o): Ilana Ludwig or Christina Zanneti, Acting Coordinators
 - For Early Learning Jewish Studies concerns: Mushky Chaiton
 - For Primary School (PS) General Studies (GS) concerns: Noelene Bellingham, Head of Primary School
 - For PS Jewish Studies (JS) / Informal Jewish Education concerns: Rabbi Levi Milecki, Head of Primary School Jewish Studies
 - For High School (HS) GS concerns (Boys and Girls): Michele Hanwell-Short, Head of General Studies
 - For HS JS / Informal Jewish Studies concerns (Boys and Girls), Rabbi Yaacov Chaiton, Head of Jewish Studies
 - For Student Management in HS: Firstly, the Year Coordinator, then Rabbi Dovber (Berel) Light, Head of Student Management

If the concern cannot be resolved at this level, please make contact with College Principal, Roy Steinman. It may be necessary to set out your complaint/concern in writing, stating clearly the nature of the issue, and providing any supporting documentation.

3. Only if you think that the College Principal has engaged in unlawful or inappropriate conduct, or if he has refused to hear your complaint, would it be appropriate to raise this with the President of the KTC Board. Any complaint to the President in these circumstances should be in writing and should contain specific details of the matter or incident concerned. The President would then raise the matter with the College Principal or appoint a delegate to conduct an investigation into the matter on his/her behalf. Any findings from such an investigation conducted by the President, or his/ her delegate, will be deemed to be the final decision of KTC.

Process for raising complaints/grievances (educational concerns: teaching and learning issues; student wellbeing and behaviour; operational matters)

1. The person making the complaint needs to communicate this directly to the relevant staff member, preferably in writing.
2. The person(s) against whom a complaint is brought will be given details of the allegation(s) against him/her and will be given a reasonable opportunity to explain his/her side of the story.
3. There may be grounds under certain circumstances when the identity of the complainant may be held in confidence.
4. Other people (witnesses) may be interviewed
5. Notes will be taken of all interviews
6. Documents may be collected

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7. After considering the evidence, the senior manager conducting the investigation will communicate to all parties involved his/her decisions or findings about the concerns that have been raised and also any consequent actions or outcomes. This communication may be delivered verbally or in writing, depending on the nature of the concern or grievance raised.
8. There may be circumstances in which some of the steps outlined above need to be varied and KTC will determine, at its absolute discretion on a case-by-case basis, the most appropriate method of handling the complaint.
9. The outcome may result in the one or more of the following actions:
 - (a) a compromise between the parties involved about the issues raised
 - (b) a decision that a complaint is either substantiated or unsubstantiated
 - (c) a solution in which both parties benefit to some extent
 - (d) an apology by one party to another
 - (e) Some form of disciplinary action being taken
 - (f) no action being taken.
10. Whatever the process used, KTC will keep a confidential record of the complaint and the outcome of the process. The records will be kept in a locked cupboard in the College Principal's office and a reference to the investigation will be placed on the staff/student file.

Allegations of students being bullied by other students will be dealt with according to the College's *Anti Bullying Policy and Procedures* located on the College's website.

Workplace Bullying

Staff members who wish to raise concerns about workplace bullying, harassment, intimidation or discrimination are encouraged to follow the procedures as outlined in the College's *Statement About Unlawful Discrimination, Harassment, Vilification and Bullying* (located on the Staff Common Drive).

It is unlawful to victimise a person who has made a complaint of discrimination, harassment, vilification or unlawful bullying. However, if a person lies about a complaint or makes a vexatious or malicious complaint, or otherwise in bad faith, KTC may take whatever action it deems appropriate, which might involve disciplinary action (including expulsion or dismissal of a student) or termination of employment or work contracts.

Complaints Relating to Fees

1. If you have a complaint relating to the determination made by the Bursar (currently Ms Sara Benjamin) in relation to your fees, you are entitled to contact the Chairperson of the KTC Fee Committee (Chairperson) within two (2) weeks of such determination. You must provide your request for review in writing to the Chairperson, via the KTC Business Manager/Financial Manager detailing the basis for the review, including the nature of the issue, and providing any supporting documentation. If your request for review is not provided in writing to the Chairperson within the specified period, then your request will be deemed invalid under these Guidelines and it will be at the Chairperson's sole discretion whether to accept the review.

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It is requested that you provide the details of your request for review in no more than one (1) or two (2) pieces of correspondence (not including supporting documentation).

2. After receipt of all relevant specifics of your request for review to the Chairperson, the Chair person will use all reasonable endeavours to provide his/her determination within one (1) week. The Chairperson, at his/her sole discretion, may seek counsel from any individual (employee of KTC, including but not limited to the Bursar or the College Principal of KTC, (currently Mr Roy Steinman), from the KTC Fee Committee or outside KTC) but is not obliged to. The decision of the Chairperson is final and binding with the full delegated authority of the Board of KTC.
3. You acknowledge and agree there is no further 'right of appeal' once the Chairperson has made a decision regarding your request for review of fees.
4. Until a final decision is made under these Guidelines the determination of the Bursar is valid and binding on the relevant party. Fees, as determined by the Bursar, must be paid in accordance with the Bursar's determination. If fees are not up to date, as determined by the Bursar, throughout the review process as specified above, then KTC will be entitled in its absolute and sole discretion to determine the request for review to be invalid and KTC will be entitled to follow the Fees Policy (as specified in KTC's Policy Handbook).
5. You acknowledge and agree the Chairperson is not in breach of your or your children's privacy for seeking counsel from any third party in accordance with these Guidelines.

The records pertaining to such complaints will be kept in a locked cupboard in the College Principal's office and a reference to the investigation will be placed on the staff/student file.

Complaints Relating to Halacha (Jewish Law) or Hashkafah / Chabbad or Jewish Ethos

If you have a *Hashkafic* concern or complaint, you should address your concern in writing to the College Principal, who will raise the matter with the College's *Mechanchim* (religious Ethos Committee).