



Out of Hours Event Management Plan (School and Community Use)

Chatswood Public School

SSD 9483

Version Control

Version date	Document owner	Date
V1.0	Chatswood Public School	18 October 2023
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1 Out of Hours Event Management Plan (School and Community Use)

1.1 Introduction

This Out of Hours Event Management Plan (School Use) for Chatswood Public School has been prepared in accordance with State Significant Development SSD-9483 Conditions of Consent E1, E2, E3 and E4 for Upgrades Chatswood Public School and Chatswood High School. These Conditions of Consent state that:

- E1.** *Prior to the commencement of the first out of hours events (School Use) run by the school that involve 100 or more people, the Applicant is to prepare an Out of Hours Event Management Plan (School Use) in consultation with Council and submit it to the Council and Planning Secretary for information. The plan must include the following:*
- a. the number of attendees, time and duration (refer Section 2.1);*
 - b. arrival and departure times and modes of transport (refer Section 2.1);*
 - c. where relevant, a schedule of all annual events (refer Section 2.1);*
 - d. measures to encourage non-vehicular travel to the school and to promote and support the use of alternative travel modes (i.e. public transport) (refer Section 2.3);*
 - e. details of the use of the school halls at the Public School and/or High School, where applicable, restricting use before 8am and after 10pm (refer Section 2.2);*
 - f. measures to minimise localised traffic and parking impacts (refer Sections 2.3, 2.4 and 2.4); and*
 - g. include measures to minimise noise impacts on any sensitive residential receivers, including the preparation of acoustic management plan (refer Section 3).*
- E2.** *The Out of Hours Event Management Plan (School Use) must be implemented by the Applicant for the duration of the identified events or use.*
- E3.** *Prior to the commencement of out of hours events (Community Use) run by the external parties that involve 100 or more people, the Applicant is to prepare an Out of Hours Event Management Plan (Community Use) in consultation with Council and submit it to Council and Planning Secretary for information. The plan must include the following:*
- a. the number of attendees, time and duration (refer Section 2.1);*
 - b. arrival and departure times and modes of transport (refer Section 2.1);*
 - c. where relevant, a schedule of all annual events (refer Section 2.1);*
 - d. measures to encourage non-vehicular travel to the school and to promote and support the use of alternative travel modes (i.e. public transport) (refer Section 2.3);*

- e. *details of the use of the school halls at the Public School and/or High School, where applicable, restricting use before 8am and after 10pm (refer Section 2.2);*
- f. *measures to minimise localised traffic and parking impacts (refer Sections 2.3, 2.4 and 2.4); and*
- g. *include measures to minimise noise impacts on any sensitive residential receivers, including the preparation of acoustic management plan (refer Section 3).*

E4. *The Out of Hours Event Management Plan (Community Use) must be implemented by the Applicant for the duration of the identified events or use.*

1.2 Responsible Staff

Principal	Alex Montgomery	02 94193611
Business Manager	Annette Young	02 94193611

2 Chatswood High School Events Summary

2.1 Events Register

As Chatswood Public School is a school that has major upgrade works undertaken, there are some established events to consider in this report, however, new events will be the subject of review once use of the new buildings is better established. This section can be updated to include details of any events as applicable.

A summary of the expected number of events during each year, the maximum duration of each event and the expected arrival and departure times of attendees and modes of transport for these events will be summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 – Schedule of Chatswood Public School Events

Event	Description	Duration	Approx. no. Attendees	Arrival/ departure times	Estimated Mode of Transport	Frequency
School Use						
Parent Teacher Nights	Meetings between CHS staff and parents in School Hall	4.0 hours	600	3:30pm to 7:30pm	60% car, 40% public transport	6 nights per year
Moon Festival Night	Performance in School Hall	2.0 hours	3,000 – 4,000	3:10pm to 5:10pm	40% car, 10% public transport, 50% walk	1 event per year
School Musicals	Performance of musicals and plays in School Hall	3.0 hours	600	6:00pm to 9:00pm	40% car, 10% public transport, 50% walk	1 event per year
Community Use						
Elections	Polling booth location, dependent on Government timing in School Hall	11.0 hours	600/hour approx.	7:00am to 6:00pm	50% car, 50% walk	Saturdays, when needed
Community Language School	In General Learning Spaces	3.0 hours	100	3.10pm to 5:10pm	60% car, 40% public transport	Each Friday during school term
Community Language School	In General Learning Spaces	4.5 hours	100	9:30am to 2:00pm	60% car, 40% public transport	Each Saturday during school term
Community Language School	In General Learning Spaces	5.0 hours	100	9:00am to 2:00pm	60% car, 40% public transport	Each Sunday during school term
Total Events					As noted	

2.2 Conditions of the above events

Refer Table 1 for the schedule of events. Out of hours usage of buildings or outdoor sports courts will be managed appropriately by the school, with all associated activities restricted before 8am and after 10pm, excluding Government use for elections.

Events will also consider Willoughby City Council's (WCC) Festival and Events Policy and Endorsement of Community Projects and Events Guidelines which outlines Council's requirements. Refer to Appendix 1.

2.3 Travel Management

There are various transport strategies which will be implemented to encourage non-vehicular travel to the school and promote the use of alternate travel modes for out-of-hours events (school use). A School Transport Plan will be implemented by the School with the purpose of facilitating travel by sustainable modes (such as active or public transport) and 'educating' students and staff on these modes.

To promote and encourage the use of active / public transport as an alternative mode of travel to vehicular:

- transport maps and promotional items such as the Transport Access Guide will be made readily available on the school intranet (as well as with any event notification or page) refer to Appendix 2;
- notice boards will be used to display news of events and public transport news, maps and generic promotional posters;
- bicycle parking will be made available, noting the high traffic levels on the Pacific Highway and Centennial Avenue; and
- notice boards, the intranet and events pages will provide information regarding most safe and efficient walking routes to/from the School and the nearest public transport interchange.

2.4 Alternate Travel Modes

Pedestrian Network

Within the vicinity of the site, footpaths are provided on adjacent streets including the Pacific Highway, Centennial Avenue, Jenkins Street and James Street. Along the Pacific Highway and Centennial Avenue there are also pedestrian crossings supporting safe access. They offer connectivity and support pedestrian mobility within the catchment area.

The Walking Site Catchment area for Chatswood High School is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1 – Walking Site Catchment Area

Additionally, signalised pedestrian crossings are on all approach intersections of the Pacific Highway and Victoria Avenue. There is also a pedestrian bridge across the Pacific Highway at Victoria Avenue equipped with escalators and stairs.

Public Transport Network

The Chatswood Interchange provides a number of high frequency public transport services for both rail and bus services. The interchange is located east of the site, approximately 500m (10-15m walk) from Chatswood Public School. The School's proximity to the transport interchange is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2 – Proximity of Chatswood Public School to Public Transport Services

Figure 3 indicates the existing rail network accessible at the Chatswood interchange. The train timetable obtained from Transport for NSW (June 2023) indicates that

there are currently 426 train services that run weekdays at Chatswood Station in both directions.



Figure 3 – Existing Rail Network

Figures 4 and 5 indicate the existing bus network. Chatswood Bus Interchange provides good connection to a wide range of bus services operating to/from Sydney CBD, Northern Beaches, North shore, Willoughby, Parramatta, Macquarie University and Bondi. The bus interchange is adjacent to the Rail Interchange in Victoria Avenue and Orchard Road.

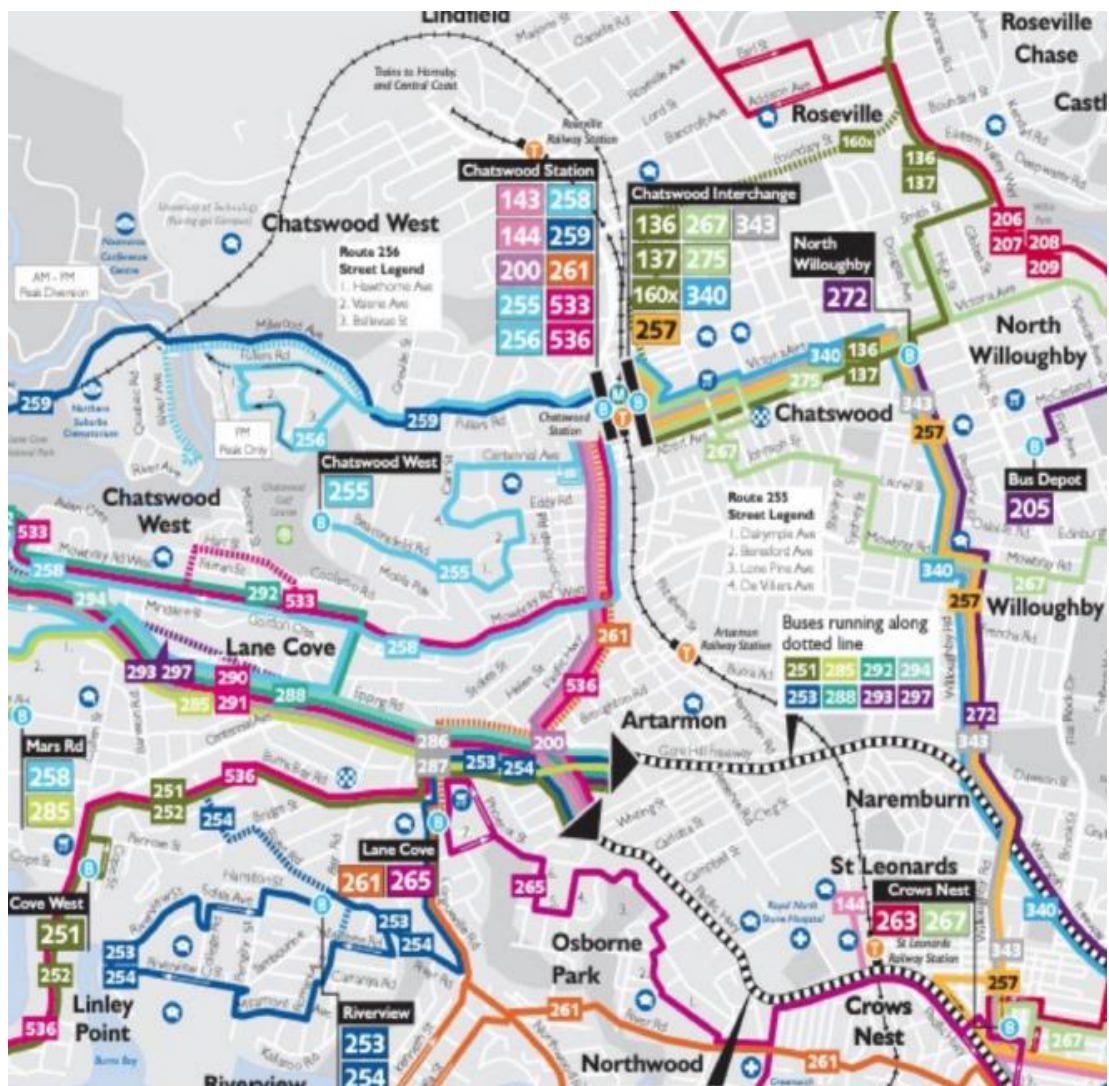


Figure 4 – North Shore and Westbus Network Map



Figure 5 – Northern Beaches and Lower North Shore Bus Network Map.

2.5 Cycling Infrastructure

A well-established cycling network exists providing a number of dedicated shared cycling paths and routes in the vicinity of the site. The existing cycling network around Chatswood High School is indicated in Figure 6 on page 10. Notwithstanding the proximity of the Chatswood Public School site to existing cycling infrastructure, it is acknowledged that the school's location on the Pacific Highway with surrounding hilly terrain combined with the young age of students present significant potential barriers to cycling as a mode of transport for students.

Council provides bicycle racks at key locations throughout the area. An end-of trip facility is located in Council's public car park at 75 – 79 Albert Avenue, Chatswood. Secure bicycle lockers are available for hire at Chatswood, St Leonards, and Artarmon train stations, or through Transport Info. Secure bicycle parking is also available on level B1 of the Chatswood Chase car park with free public showers and lockers. Further information regarding bike parking, lockers and end of trip facilities please refer to:

<https://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Residents/Parking-and-transport/Cycling>



Figure 6 – Cycling Network Map

2.6 Traffic and Parking

Chatswood Public School has 18 off-street parking spaces, including 3 parking spaces allocated for people with disability.

For School Use events, staff use will be prioritised over visitors, with accessible parking spaces able to be used by parents and carers.

For Community Use events, off street parking will not be available.

This satisfies some of the parking demand associated with smaller school use events but doesn't meet the demand for larger or community use events. These larger and community use events will rely on a mixture of on-street and off-street parking, as well as encouraged use of public transport. In some instances, bus transport may be provided by visiting groups.

This allocation of parking, in association with the above noted public transport initiatives will minimise localised traffic and parking impacts. Refer Appendix 3 – School Site Plan which highlights the location of the parking.

In the case(s) additional parking is required, there is sufficient parking in the adjacent streets.

3 Acoustic Management Plan

3.1 Noise Management in Design

Use of the Hall for events will not significantly affect the noise impact on properties to the north, west, east or south. The administration and teaching buildings, Buildings A, P1, P2 and B will provide barrier attenuation against any potential activity noise breakout for properties to the south and west. A commercial building is located immediately to the north and the Pacific Highway is immediately to the east. It is noted that the proposed Hall has been designed such that the only significant open areas of façade face south and west into the school.

3.2 Noise Management

The school use and community use activities currently scheduled to be out of hours are noted in Section 2.1, Table 1. It is noted that the school performances, plays, musicals etc may form part of the curriculum and drama requirements for the school, and these activities will not be related to the private hire of the Hall.

Condition of Consent E9 requires:

The Applicant must ensure that noise generated by operation of the development does not exceed the noise limits contained in the Acoustic Assessment Report (Ref:6698-1.1 Rev A) dated 10 March 2020 and prepared by Day Design.

The referenced Day Design Acoustic Assessment Report confirms several applicable noise limits as noted below:

- a. East boundary residential receivers across the Pacific Highway:
 - i. Day (7am- 6pm) – 58 dB(A) LAeq (15min)
 - ii. Evening (6pm-10pm) – 58 dB(A) LAeq (15min)
 - iii. Night (10pm-7am) - 53 dB(A) LAeq (15min)
 - b. North Residential receivers along James Street:
 - i. Day (7am- 6pm) - 50 dB(A) LAeq (15min)
 - ii. Evening (6pm-10pm) - 46 dB(A) LAeq (15min)
 - iii. Night (10pm-7am) - 38 dB(A) LAeq (15min)
 - c. West Residential receivers along Jenkins Street:
 - i. Day (7am- 6pm) - 48 dB(A) LAeq (15min)
 - ii. Evening (6pm-10pm) - 46 dB(A) LAeq (15min)
 - iii. Night (10pm-7am) - 39 dB(A) LAeq (15min)
 - d. South Residential receivers along Centennial Ave:
 - i. Day (7am- 6pm) - 50 dB(A) LA eq (15min)
 - ii. Evening (6pm-10pm) -46 dB(A) LAeq (15min)
 - iii. Night (10pm-7am) - 48 dB(A) LAeq (15min)
2. In accordance with the “Technical Guideline for Child Care Centre Noise Assessment” as recommended by Day Design, the relevant criteria for outdoor play shall not exceed Background + 10dB(A) at occupiable external areas of the school and openable windows of buildings.

Any proposed out of hours school related activities will occur during the day or evening period, therefore, sleep disturbance impacts are not expected. As noted above, school and community events will not be scheduled before 8am or after 10pm, avoiding associated sleep disturbance noise impacts as required by Condition of Consent E1(e).

Actions to manage the noise generated during after-hour uses, and to minimise the impacts on any sensitive residential receivers, have been agreed in consultation with the School Principal. The following measures may be taken by the School to manage the noise generated during out of hours school related activities:

- Closing doors during the evening when amplified music is played within the hall.
- Limitation of the use of any amplified music systems within the Hall to 98dB(A) LAeq (15Min) Sound Pressure Level (SPL).
- Instructing attendees to respect the surrounding by limiting noise.
- Staff members to discourage the attendees to congregate outside the venue.
- Staggering exit times to limit the crowd leaving the venue at the same time.
- Restriction use of the Hall and outdoor areas before 8am and after 10pm.
- Sound amplification beyond typical school use requirements will not be used.

3.3 Monitoring & Complaints Handling Procedure

In line with other operational plans, the intention is for the plan to be regularly reviewed and amended to suit requirements of the school and surrounding residential area. Currently annual review is proposed with update to the plan if required.

Refer to Appendix 4 for the School Complaints Handling Procedure.

Appendix 1

Endorsement of Community Projects & Events

Detail of Policy

Short Title	Endorsement of Community Projects & Events
Division	Community Services
Category	Community
File No	C04-0073
Date adopted by Council	12 September 2006 (Ratified 10.6.08)

COUNCIL POLICY

Purpose of Policy

To establish guidelines to be considered if Council is asked to endorse or support events or other community activities.

Requests for Endorsement / Support

Requests for Council to endorse community projects or events must be made in writing to the General Manager. Such requests must provide:

1. Full particulars of the project or event
2. Details of funding: including sources and whether funding is from private or public sources
3. Involvement of other levels of government
4. Involvement of other organisations
5. Reasons as to why Council's endorsement is sought
6. Outline of the areas where the project or event is consistent with Council's vision and mission and Willoughby Strategy

Requests for endorsement will be presented to Council for determination.

Guidelines

Situations where Council will consider endorsing community projects or events include:

1. Where there is a direct correlation between the event or community project and Council's core activities.
2. Where there is obvious, measurable correlation between the event or community project and the Willoughby community or the Willoughby area.
3. Where Council deems that the community project or event is of significant impact on Council's activities such that it warrants support.
4. Where the event is one that is organised by a local community group / organisation for the benefit of the local community.

Types of Endorsement

Council's endorsement of a project or event may be in the form of:

- ☐ Financial support as determined by Council
- ☐ In kind support by way of publicity in Council advertising, other publications or on Council's website.
- ☐ Allowing the person/committee/organisation to acknowledge Council's support in publicity literature, advertising etc.
- ☐ Allowing the use of Council's logo – subject to the specific approval of Council.
- ☐ Use of Council resources/equipment - subject to the approval of the General Manager after Council has approved the endorsement.

Festival & Events Policy

Short Title:	Festival & Events Policy
Division:	Community Services
Category:	Community
Date adopted by Council:	21 March 2011

1. BACKGROUND

There is an increasing demand from the community and external event organisers to stage events in the Willoughby area. With the completion of the Chatswood Mall upgrade and the opening of The Concourse in 2011 this demand is set to rise and a framework to manage this is required.

Council is committed to limiting our ecological footprint through the efficient use of resources, protecting the natural environment and encouraging biodiversity so that Willoughby City is improved for current and future generations. Various documents including The Sustainability Charter details Council's response to climate change and other environmental issues and outline the steps that will be taken to achieve a reduction in emissions, resource use and environmental impact. Council has achieved its 50% reduction target and is moving to assist the community to reach a 15% reduction in energy use.

Council incorporates a number of sustainable event management practices into the staging of both its events including using Greenpower and avoiding waste. For example, Council requests stall holders at the Spring Festival not to distribute balloons. We also have a sustainable meeting guide.

2. OBJECTIVE OF POLICY

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Establish the Council's position regarding all community, commercial and external events held within the City of Willoughby.
- Specify the sustainable event management practices that should be incorporated into the staging of events.
- Establish key protocols for event delivery that are in line with Council's Communication, Sponsorship Policies and the Endorsement of Community Events by Council guidelines.

3. KEY PRINCIPALS

The Council recognises the contribution events make to the diverse character and culture of the City and is committed to sustainable event practices. The Willoughby City Strategy 2010-2025 and the Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2010-2014 identify the following strategic goals that are of particular relevance to the foundations of this policy:

3.1 Community and Cultural

- Facilitate and support cultural, sporting and social activities and events.
- Develop business partnerships and sponsorships of community programs and events.
- Promote Willoughby City Council's involvement in local community and cultural events.

- Promote and assist community and charitable organisations.
- Acknowledge, respect and protect Aboriginal heritage.
- Implement cross-cultural activities, arts and events that offer opportunities to share cultural experiences and develop mutual respect.
- To be a healthy, educated, safe and interactive community, with schools, open space, recreation facilities, and programs which promote healthy lifestyles and learning and contribute to the social, spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing of the community.
- Position The Concourse and Chatswood CBD as the cultural heart of the City.
- Continue to build skills, relationships and partnerships with local performing groups to develop cultural identity and resources.

3.2 Sustainable Practices

- Undertake a range of sustainability education programs for the whole community
- Developing sustainable purchasing guidelines for Council to reduce our overall ecological footprint.
- Adopt and promote strategies for waste management including avoidance, reuse and recycling.
- Reduce waste to landfill.

4. POLICY

4.1. Events in Willoughby City should:

- 4.1.1. Be inclusive of the broad community and contribute to the cultural vibrancy and diversity of the Willoughby community.
- 4.1.2. Provide an opportunity for community, charity and not for profit organisations to participate.
- 4.1.3. Respect and publicly acknowledge the local indigenous heritage and traditions.
- 4.1.4. Be sensitive to the interest of local residents.
- 4.1.5. Encourage the engagement of local artists and local employment generally and the use of local resources.

4.2. All events should be conducted to ensure that minimal environmental harm is caused during the course of setting up, holding and cleaning up after an event.

- 4.2.1 A waste management plan should be developed for all events.
- 4.2.2 Sustainable purchasing guidelines should be followed where possible when acquiring goods and services for events.
- 4.2.3 Publicity material used to promote Council events is to be printed on recycled paper using waterless ink. Electronic forms of marketing materials such as einvites should be used whenever possible.
- 4.2.4 Utilise sustainable sources of energy and energy efficient products to power events.
- 4.2.5 No balloons are permitted at events conducted in the Willoughby Local Government area.

4.3. Council is to develop Event Guidelines that provide comprehensive assistance and guidance to event organisers. This will include advice on sustainable event management practices dealing with issues such as: energy, water, waste, transport,

sustainable purchasing and ecological footprinting. The guidelines will be produced by January 2012.

5. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all events, whether public or private, held within the Willoughby City Local Government area that:

- require Council approval.
- are produced by Council.
- are produced, presented or promoted in partnership with Council; or attract Council funding and/or sponsorship.

This policy covers all events held by Willoughby City Council including: arts, cultural, sporting, environmental and educational events, meetings and conferences, openings of buildings, facilities, sculptures, public art programs and plaques and can be broadly categorised by the following:

Council events

Community events are projects that create and foster a positive community spirit through involvement, participation, relationship building and cooperation.

External events

External events are those coordinated by external organisations or associations to the City of Willoughby that are held within the Council boundaries.

Commercial events

Commercial events are small to large-scale events that directly benefit the local economy by attracting substantial visitor numbers to the area and providing the area with local, national or international recognition.

6. PROCEDURES FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Responsibility for approval of events lies with Councils Events Unit in consultation with other areas of Council including Marketing and Communications, Traffic Management, Planning under delegation of the General Manager.

The Festival and Events Unit develops an annual calendar of Council events in consultation with the Cultural Events Advisory Committee and other areas of Council.

Festival and Events that are significant in scale are tabled at the Committee meetings for feedback. The Festival and Events Calendar is then approved by Council and implemented in conjunction with other areas of Council including the Media and Marketing Group.

7. EVENT PROTOCOL

As Council deals with many stakeholders within Council and the Community the importance of correct protocol is acknowledged. The following procedures are mandatory for Council run Events.

7.1 Council has an official Acknowledgement of Country that is as follows:

On behalf of Willoughby City Council, I wish to acknowledge the traditional inhabitants of the land on which we stand, the Guringai nation, their spirits and ancestors.

7.2 When conducting official events and programs where there are presentations that are public or of an official nature the Mayor or the General Manager (or his nominated delegate) is the official spokesperson of Council.

- 7.3 In the event of there being an opening or a commencement of a Program, Conference, Meeting, Exhibition, Performance or Event, the Mayor (or his nominated delegate) will officiate at the event.
- 7.4 Unless otherwise approved the General Manager (or his nominated delegate) will act as the Master of Ceremonies and conduct the ceremonial proceedings of the Event.
- 7.5. All speeches, running orders and requests for other speakers to present at Council functions need to be approved by the relevant managers of the Festival and Events Unit and the Marketing and Communications Group.

For further information please contact the Festivals and Events Manager.

8. OTHER RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

- Management Plan
- Delivery Program
- Cultural Policy
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Code of Conduct for Volunteers
- Sponsorship Policy
- Communications Policy
- Community Facility Concessional Hire Policy
- Community Grants Scheme
- Display of Publicity Banners - DCP 20
- Endorsement of Community Projects and Events – Guidelines
- Sustainable Purchasing Policy
- Draft Sustainable Food Policy

9. OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

International Standard (ISO 20121) “Sustainability in Event Management” currently under development with Australian Standards and ACEM, MIA, ISIS and other industry leaders.

Appendix 2



Chatswood Public School

Travel Access Guide

Project overview

Chatswood Public School has been upgraded with new and improved education facilities to support the student community.

Active ways to get to school



Walking is an active and healthy way to get to school

- Look both ways before crossing the road.
- Only cross the road at dedicated crossing facilities. For example at zebra crossings or signalised pedestrian crossings.



Ride your bike

- Wear a helmet when riding your bike
- Ride your bike on bike-friendly routes
- Park your bike in the racks inside the school
- Ride with school friends and or a parent / carer



Ride your scooter

- Wear a helmet when riding your scooter
- Park your scooter in the racks inside the school
- Ride with school friends and or a parent / carer

Drop Off / Pick Up Expectations

- Student Drop Off / Pick Up by vehicles will be along Centennial Ave
- Park legally within the drop off / pick up area
- Do not stop in the travel lane to drop off / pick up children
- Please follow the direction of staff supervisors

Using public transport to get to school



The nearest bus stops are located along the school frontage on Pacific Highway and Centennial Avenue. The bus routes that service these bus stops are 255, 256, 259 and 530.



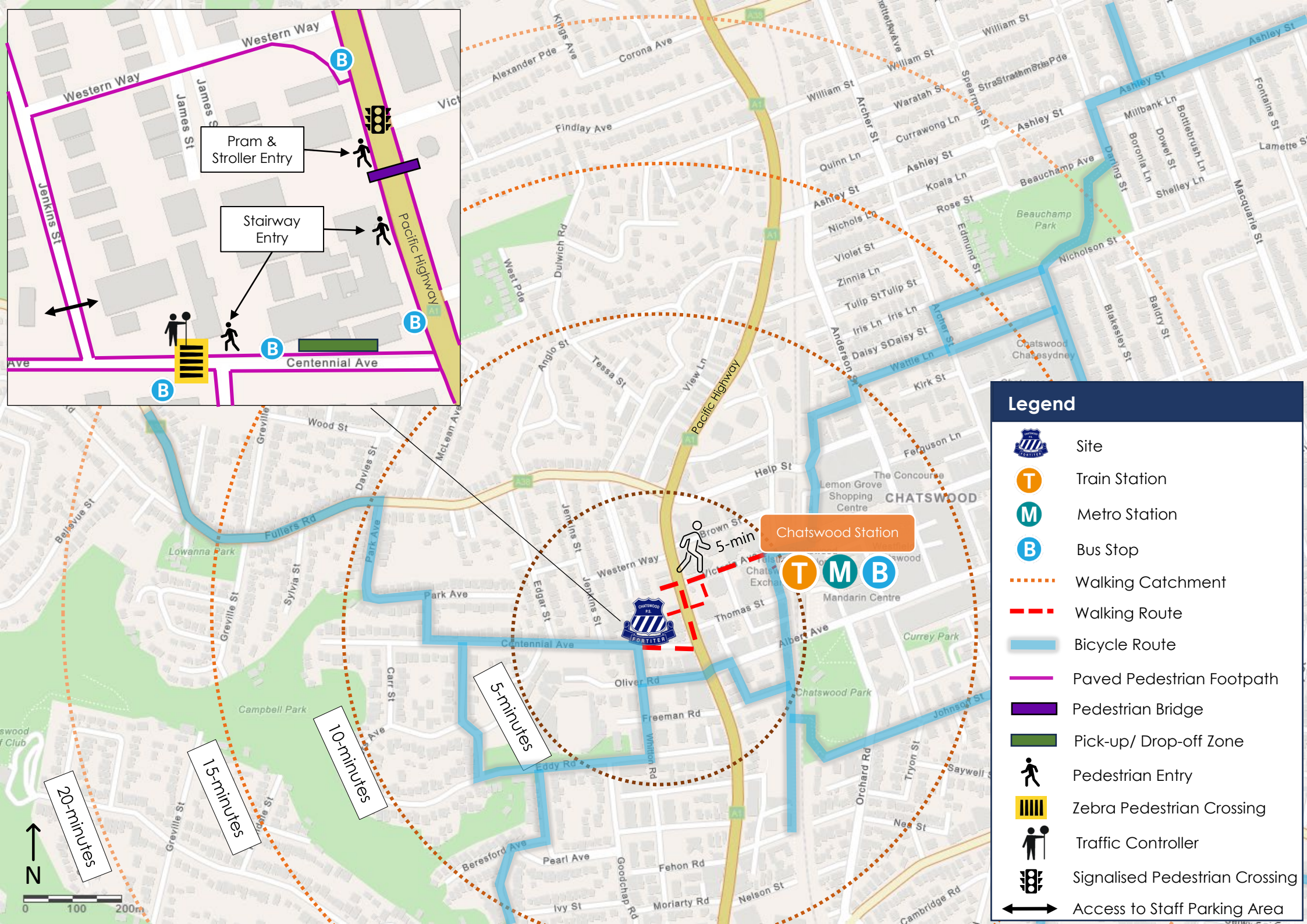
The nearest train/ metro station is Chatswood Station which is serviced by Metro North West Line, T1 (North Shore & Western Line) and the T9 (Northern Line).

Apply for a School Opal Card

- Step 1: Complete the on-line application form at transportnsw.info/school-students.
- Step 2: The school will check the on-line application and approve the issue of the Card. Once approved, Transport for NSW sends the School Opal card to the home address given in the application. For more information on the School Opal card and the School Student Travel Scheme (SSTS), please visit transportnsw.info/school-students.

For more information contact:

School Infrastructure NSW
Email: schoolinfrastructure@det.nsw.edu.au
Phone: 1300 482 651
www.schoolinfrastructure.nsw.gov.au



Legend



Site



Train Station



Metro Station



Bus Stop



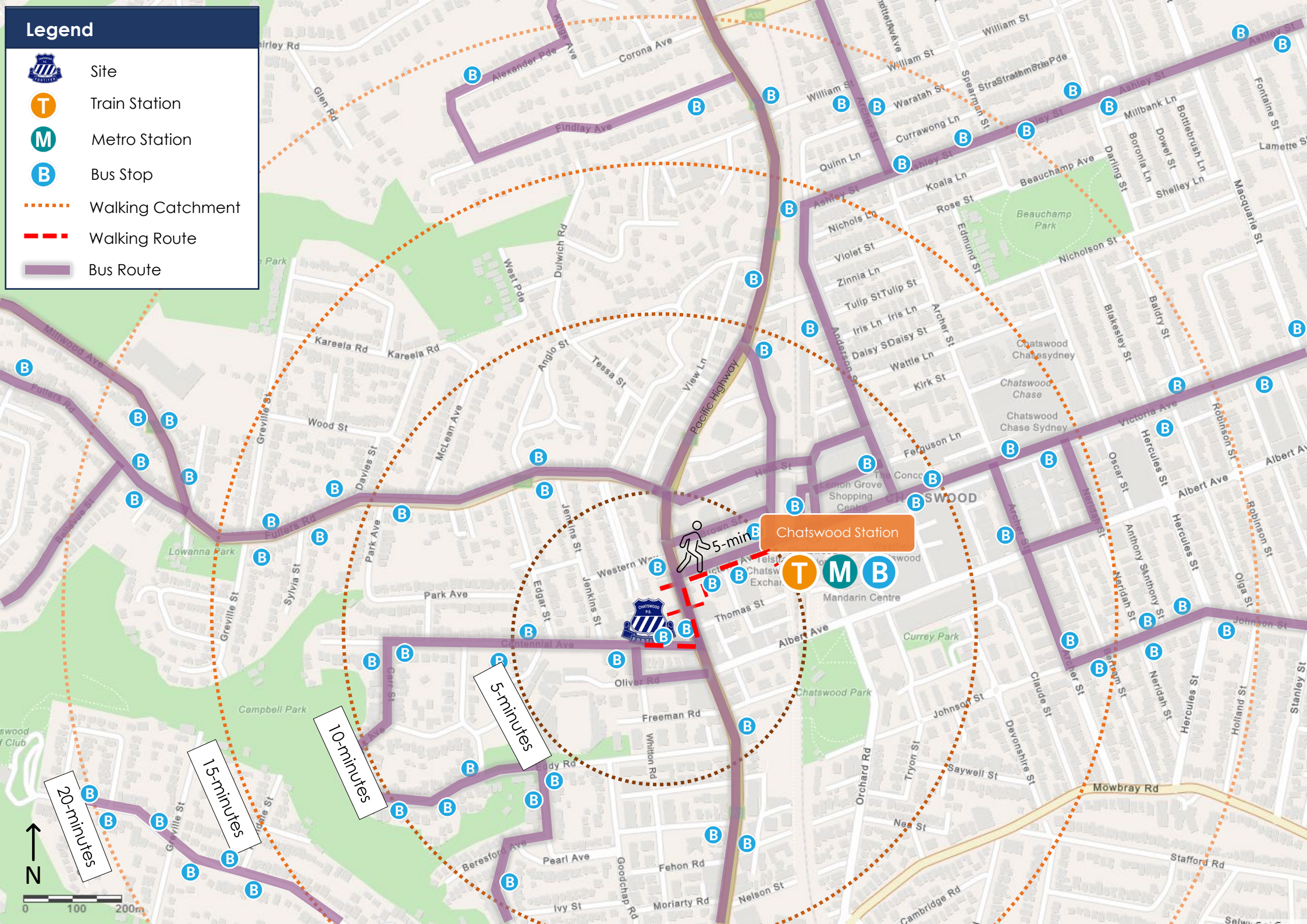
Walking Catchment



Walking Route



Bus Route



Appendix 3



Chatswood Public School – Site Plan – Carpark Location

Appendix 4



SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND CONSUMER COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

JANUARY 2017

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Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This procedure outlines how complaints will be handled by the Department of Education (the Department).

Our complaint procedure is intended to:

- enable us to respond well to complaints
- resolve complaints in a timely, fair and helpful manner
- give the public confidence in our administrative processes
- provide information to enhance our services, systems and complaint handling, and
- prevent complainants or students from suffering detriment because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

The Department is committed to:

1. Respectful treatment of complainants.
2. Providing information about making complaints and ensuring that it is accessible to complainants.
3. Good communication with complainants about the status of their complaints.
4. Taking ownership of complaints and ensuring that people who are responding to complaints are supported.
5. Timeliness of complaint handling and dealing with issues as soon as possible.
6. Transparency through recording and analysing complaints data to inform systems improvement.

A Complaint Management Toolkit which is designed to assist with and support the management of complaints is available for use in conjunction with this procedure.

Appendix 1 – Flowchart for school community and consumer complaints outlines the key steps in the process where a parent or community member makes a complaint to the Department.

The procedure gives timeframes for complainants and complaint managers to undertake key steps in the process. Those timeframes should be met where reasonably practicable and may be impacted by school holidays, staff availability, complexity and other workplace priorities.

2. Receiving a complaint

2.1 First steps

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the Department, where a response or resolution is reasonably expected or legally required.

A complaint can be about any aspect of the services provided or contracted by the Department, including the behaviour or decisions of staff, practices, policies and procedures or the way in which the Department has handled a complaint.

This procedure applies to all complaints other than complaints made by staff, which are dealt with under the Staff Complaint Procedure.

Anyone who works for the Department may receive a complaint.

Some complaints may fall outside the standard definition of a complaint, such as allegations of misconduct by a staff member and therefore need referral or a report to be made. See [Complaint Managers Toolkit: Referring Complaints](#).

Complaints can be made in many different ways, e.g. in person, by telephone, in writing, online.

2.2 Assessing risk and referring certain matters

Any staff member may receive a complaint. The receiving staff member should assess the complaint to identify any immediate health, safety or security risks.

The person who receives a complaint should immediately action and/or escalate to the principal or workplace manager if there are risks. Any identified risks and risk management actions should then be documented by the principal or workplace manager.

Some complaints are not dealt with by the Department. Where there are allegations of criminal conduct, there must be a report to Police (if in doubt, contact Legal Services Directorate on 9561 8538). Where there is a risk of significant harm to a student contact the Child Protection Helpline. For other risks of a child protection nature or if unsure, complete the Mandatory Reporter Guide, record the outcome and take any required action.

Other complaints need to be referred to a specialist area of the department for handling, if the complaint is about:

- allegations of a child protection nature against an employee
- allegations of corrupt conduct
- allegations of misconduct
- possible criminal conduct
- a risk of harm or significant harm to a child
- privacy issues
- early childhood complaints linked to the National Quality Framework
- legal proceedings and requests for payment of damages
- requests for information, including requests under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.

For detailed information about referring these and other complaints and contact details for seeking advice from the relevant area of the Department see [Complaint Managers Toolkit: Referring Complaints](#).

A complaint of racism can be raised with the Anti-Racism Contact Officer, who can provide advice about the process and information about who will handle the complaint.

2.3 Deciding who is the best person to manage the complaint

If the complaint is not being referred to a specialist area as specified above and cannot be resolved directly by the staff member, a complaint manager should be identified by the principal or workplace manager. Any employee who has sufficient knowledge and authority about the complaint issue, may manage the complaint.

Most complaints are best resolved promptly at the local level. In schools, the classroom or subject teacher is often the best person to handle routine concerns about matters within their classroom and/ or area of responsibility.

Some complaints will need the involvement of the principal, workplace manager or another executive staff member. As issues are clarified, a complaint may be handed to another suitable complaint manager (for example, a teacher).

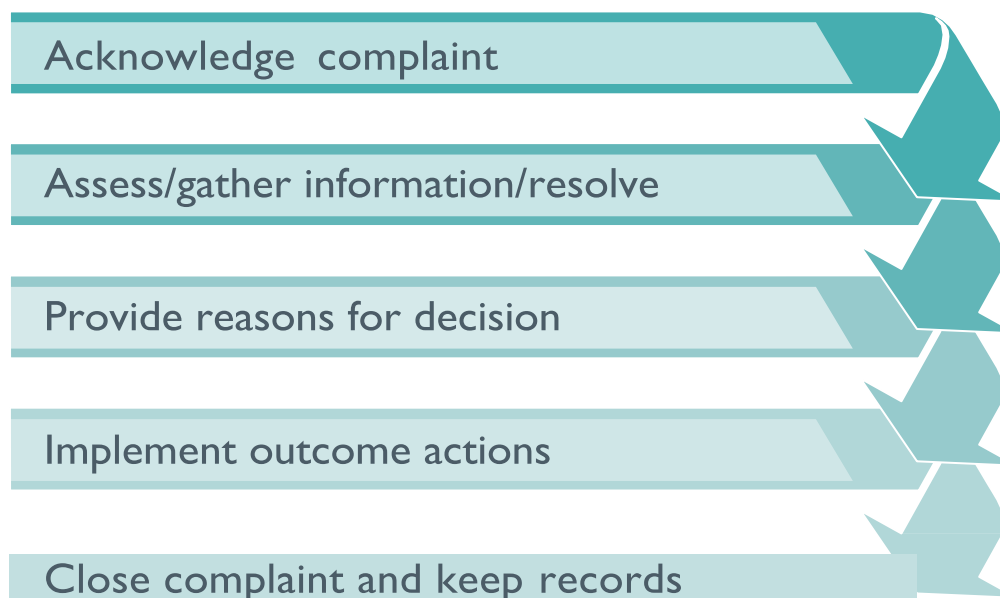
Few complaints should require management at the director level. Some complaints received at the director or executive level may also be suitable to be referred to the school or workplace.

Complaint Managers Toolkit: Identifying the right complaint manager provides examples of complaints suited for management at the local, school executive and director levels.

In many cases, staff can manage a complaint made directly to them, even if the complaint relates to their actions. For example: where a parent complains to the classroom teacher about their programming or student behaviour management, the teacher may be able to respond to the complaint. This often also best meets the parent's needs.

3. Managing the complaint

The five key stages of managing a complaint are:



Complaint managers can use the Complaint Managers Toolkit: Checklist for complaint managers as they work through each stage of the process.

3.1 Acknowledging the complaint

When responding to a complaint it is important to deal with all complainants with respect and be helpful and positive at all times.

Complaint managers should:

- acknowledge the complaint as soon as possible, if possible within 3 working days. This can be done in person, by telephone, email or formally in writing. If acknowledgement was made verbally, it should still be documented by the complaint manager
- let the complainant know that they will be kept up to date with progress
- keep the matter as confidential as possible by only sharing information with those who **need to know** about the complaint issues
- listen carefully to the issues and resolve the complaint directly at the local level wherever possible.

In some cases, the appropriate complaint manager may not be identified or available within 3 days. In these cases another person may acknowledge the complaint and advise the complainant who will be managing the complaint and invite them to contact the complaint manager if they have further details to provide.

See [Complaint Managers Toolkit: Checklist for complaint managers](#) for further ideas about the complaint handling process and [Complaint Managers Toolkit: Acknowledging the complaint](#) for some suggestions on acknowledging complaints.

Anonymous complaints

Complaints can be made anonymously. If staff receive an anonymous complaint they still need to deal with the issues that are raised – to the extent possible. It is not appropriate to try to establish who made the complaint or approach anyone to ask them if it came from them. Sometimes anonymous complaints raise the most serious issues.

3.2 Assess, gather information and resolve

Assess

It is important to determine what the complaint is about. This may require going back to the complainant to clarify their concerns. For verbal complaints, it is useful to document the complaint issues, provide these to the complainant and ask them to confirm that the complaint has been characterised accurately.

If the process of clarifying/defining the complaint starts to indicate that the complaint issue is different from what was first raised, that should be documented and confirmed with the complainant. That way, there is agreement about the nature of the complaint.

Clarify the complainant's expected outcome. Provide information about likely outcomes for the type of complaint and be candid with the complainant if the desired outcome is not achievable.

Keep matters confidential as it is easier to handle and manage complaints when the information about the complaint is only shared on a need to know basis. While the complaint manager cannot enforce this with the complainant, it may be useful to remind them that it will assist the resolution process if only those who need to know are told about the complaint. Similarly, the complaint manager should try to maintain confidentiality to the extent that is possible.

Gather information

Gather enough information to allow a proper assessment of the concerns as quickly as possible. Information to be gathered could include:

- policies and procedures
- copies of other departmental documents such as forms, reports, student records etc
- copies of previous correspondence
- information and/or accounts from students, staff or other areas of the Department
- further information from complainants.

All staff should assist the complaint manager and respond promptly and co-operatively when a complaint manager makes reasonable requests for information. [Complaint Managers Toolkit: Gathering information](#) gives further information.

If a staff member requests to have a support person present during a meeting refer to [Complaint Managers Toolkit: Role of the staff support person](#). Complainants should also provide any additional information requested for a proper assessment of their concerns.

Complaint managers should assess each complaint issue on its merits.

Resolve – the complaint outcome

Complaints should be finalised as soon as possible and no later than 20 working days. Complaint managers must keep people updated on the progress of their complaint. If a delay is anticipated, inform the complainant and other parties and provide reasons for the delay.

Consider any reasonable outcomes suggested by the complainant and any staff member complained about. However, ultimately the complaint manager determines how a complaint is to be resolved.

Outcomes will depend on the circumstances of each complaint and take into account any statutory requirements. Complaint managers should consider flexible approaches wherever possible. There is a non-exhaustive list of possible outcomes at [Complaint Managers Toolkit: Findings and possible outcomes](#).

3.3 Provide information about the complaint outcome

Complaint managers should provide information about the outcome to the complainant. This may be in a meeting or by telephone or email.

When giving the outcome information, explain:

- the outcome of the complaint and any action that is going to be taken, by whom and when
- the reason/s for the decision
- any internal or external options for review.

In any case, the complaint outcome should always be confirmed in writing. Email is acceptable. Complex complaints may require additional record keeping (for example, file notes of contentious meetings).

While it's good practice to provide as much information as you can about outcomes, it is important keep confidential specific personal details about the management of staff.

If a person is the subject of a complaint, they should also be provided with information about the outcome.

Some templates for such letters are at [Complaint Managers Toolkit: Sample outcome and decision letters](#).

3.4 Implement outcome actions

Take all reasonable steps to implement and monitor the outcomes of the complaint. Where the outcomes relate to whole of school or work area processes, the principal or other workplace manager should oversee progress and / or delegate responsibility to a specific member of staff with relevant responsibilities.

3.5 Record keeping

Complaint managers should document:

- their contacts with the complainant
- how they managed the complaint
- the outcome of the complaint, including how and whether any concerns were substantiated and the actions taken in response
- the steps taken to follow up any outcome actions.

Staff resolving complaints immediately at the local level should use their professional judgment to decide what, if any, records to keep. For more information about documenting complaints, see [Complaint Managers Toolkit: Keeping records](#).

4. Management of unreasonable conduct by people making complaints

All staff should be accessible and responsive to people who make complaints. At the same time, proper resolution of complaints depends on:

- the Department performing its functions efficiently and effectively
- the health, safety and security of the children and young people in the care of the Department and the health safety and security of the department's staff
- the Department's capacity to allocate resources fairly across all the complaints we receive

When people behave unreasonably in their dealings with the Department, their conduct can significantly affect staff wellbeing and the progress and efficiency of the Department's functions. As a result, the Department will take proactive and decisive action to manage any unreasonable conduct connected with complaints and will support staff to do the same. See [Complaint Managers Toolkit: Unreasonable complainant conduct](#) for more information about managing unreasonable complainant conduct.

5. Reviews

Complainants may request a review of the complaint outcome if they have information that:

- the complaint outcome was incorrect and/or
- the complaint handling process was unfair.

Requests should be in writing and give the reasons for the request for review and which particular part of their complaint is the subject of their review request. The request should be addressed to the initial complaint manager or their supervisor. Requests for review should be made within 10 working days from the initial complaint decision, unless there are circumstances that may have reasonably prevented the complainant from requesting the review within 10 days (such as illness, needing advice from another person about seeking a review, an advocate or adviser being unavailable within the 10 day timeframe).

The review must be conducted by a more senior officer than or at least an equivalent level to the person who handled the complaint. The reviewing officer must not be the subject of the complaint in any way or have been involved in managing the complaint.

The review should be completed within 20 days of the receipt of the request, wherever possible.

External reviews of complaints may be conducted by organisations such as the NSW Ombudsman.

[Complaint Managers Toolkit: Reviews](#) provides further information about the review process.



6. Ongoing Responsibilities

All staff and managers have ongoing responsibilities to:

- respond to and manage complaints so that the complaints process is accessible to all members of the community
- take reasonable steps to prevent people making complaints being treated unfairly because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf
- keep confidentiality about complaints at all times, including after a satisfactory resolution. This requires everyone, including the complainant, to ensure that information is

restricted to those who genuinely need to know. People should only be told as much as they need to know and no more

- support those involved. To the extent possible, the complaint managers should monitor the well-being of all parties involved in or impacted by the complaint and arrange support where available

Schools and workplaces can assess their compliance with these ongoing responsibilities using [Complaint Managers Toolkit: Complaint handling responsibilities](#).

7. Representation of complainants

Complainants may ask a representative to make a complaint on their behalf, for example, via an advocate, family member, legal or community representative, Member of Parliament or another organisation. Wherever possible, the complainant should confirm in writing their consent to have a representative.

Staff should allow the complainant to bring a nominated representative unless there are reasonable grounds to believe that their role as a representative is not appropriate, e.g. if that person poses a risk to health or safety or their entitlement to information about a child has been restricted by law. If the complainant is represented by a lawyer, it may be appropriate to seek advice from the Principal, workplace manager or Legal Services Directorate.

When similar complaints are made by related parties, the principal or other workplace manager should consider if it is appropriate to communicate with a single representative of the group. This will only be possible where the parties agree and the privacy of children or others involved in the process can be maintained. See [Complaint Managers Toolkit: Working with community advocates and support persons](#) for more information about working with advocates and support persons.

Toolkit Resources

Complaint Managers Toolkit:

- [Toolkit: Checklist for complaints managers](#)
- [Toolkit: Acknowledging the complaint](#)
- [Toolkit: Referring the complaint](#)
- [Toolkit: Identifying the right complaint manager](#)
- [Toolkit: Gathering information – complaints from families and community members](#)
- [Toolkit: Complex complaints – identifying issues/particulars for resolution](#)
- [Toolkit: Findings and possible complaint outcomes](#)
- [Toolkit: Sample outcome paragraphs and advice](#)
- [Toolkit: Apologies](#)
- [Toolkit: Unreasonable complainant conduct](#)
- [Toolkit: Keeping records](#)
- [Toolkit: Reviews](#)
- [Toolkit: Checklist for reviewers](#)
- [Toolkit: Complaint handling responsibilities](#)
- [Toolkit: Promoting accessibility](#)
- [Toolkit: Working with community advocates and support persons](#)
- [Toolkit: Fair management of complaints](#)
- [Toolkit: Role of the staff support person](#)

8. Appendix One – Consumer complaint flowchart

