



COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES RESOLUTION GUIDELINES

Rationale

It is implicit within the College Mission Statement that a positive working relationship and partnership between school and families are the basis of our school community. Within this context, a process to deal with complaints and grievances is crucial to provide a fair and just approach to concerns raised. It is important to the College, that such complaints are dealt with sensitively, confidentially and effectively. The College seeks to resolve the matter as soon as possible, incorporating the principles of procedural fairness, and in a way, which treats all parties with dignity and respect.

Principles

The underlying principles, which frame the College Complaints and Grievances guidelines, are as follows:

- The vast majority of concerns, which arise from parents and others, need never take the form of a formal complaint. The Principal, senior staff and teachers are available to discuss and resolve concerns in more informal ways and in a timely matter.
- If deemed necessary in the professional judgement of the Principal (or another senior staff member), a complaint may be addressed in a more formal manner.
- Official complaints must be submitted in writing, clearly outlining the specific issue along with dates, times and witnesses if appropriate.
- The College deals directly with parents/guardians. Parent/guardians may request that they be accompanied by a support person (eg for translation purposes), however this person cannot replace the parent. The support person cannot act as the parent advocate.
- Matters that fall within the Child Protection Framework will be handled as per the protocols outlined in the appropriate guidelines and the associated legislation and regulations
- It is important to note that anonymous complaints will not be accepted or acted upon.

Procedures for Parent Concerns

It is important that concerns are directed to the appropriate person.

In many instances, the first point of contact for parents can be the General Office, or other administrative personnel. These staff members have a responsibility to direct calls to the appropriate member of staff, with a follow up email to ensure that the concern is documented for time, source and nature of the call.

Issues relating to **academic** concerns are directed initially to the Subject Teacher and then to the Studies Coordinator, or House Coordinator. If a satisfactory response or resolution is not reached via the above channels, the Dean of Learning is available to be contacted. All academic issues concerning Assessment, Appeals and other HSC information should also be directed to the Dean of Learning.

Issues relating to a **Pastoral** or student management are relayed to the Home Room Teacher and the House Coordinator. If a satisfactory response, or resolution is not reached via the above channels, the Dean of Pastoral Care can be contacted.

The Assistant Principal and the Principal are also available and can be contacted if a complaint is not resolved through these conciliation processes. If conciliation is still not achieved, the parties involved may refer the complaint to the Chair of the College Board.

Concerns about a Member of Staff

In the instance where a complaint is made against a staff member, the staff member concerned must be informed of the complaint and are entitled to know the details of the complaint against them, including the name of the person raising the complaint, as well as the specific details of the complaint. A complaint against a member of staff will be investigated by an appropriate Executive staff member and a report presented to the Principal.

On receipt of the report, the Principal may conduct further interviews, or request further information and will then decide whether the complaint is upheld or dismissed. The staff member concerned must be given the opportunity to respond, prior to any action being taken in response to the complaint. In each case, the outcome will be communicated to both the complainant and staff member.

Where there is a meeting in relation to a complaint about a staff member involving the Principal, parents, students, other staff; the staff member must be told in advance the purpose of the meeting and who will be in attendance. The staff member must be given the opportunity to be accompanied by another staff member of their choice. In this instance, all matters must be raised in relation to the complaint. If a matter is not raised in this instance, it cannot be raised at a later date, or as part of another instance.

Student Grievances

Where students have a concern or grievance, it is important that they convey it to the appropriate staff member. In the instance where a student has a pastoral or other concern, they should seek an appointment with their Home Room Teacher, or House Coordinator to discuss the issue, or where necessary the Dean of Pastoral Care. The College Counsellor is also available to act in a supporting role as required.

All academic issues concerning assessment of HSC information should be directed to the Dean of Learning.

Concerns about the Principal

Formal complaints by parents or staff involving the Principal, must be submitted in writing, addressed to the Chair of the Board, in an envelope marked 'confidential'. The Chair of the Board may address the issue or, or refer the matter to the Executive Director of Good Samaritan Education for appropriate processes to be followed.