

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 a timely matter.
- If deemed necessary in the professional judgement of the Principal (or another senior staff member), a complaint may be addressed formally in the immediate instance.
- Official complaints must be submitted in writing clearly outlining the specific issue along with dates, times and witnesses- if appropriate.
- In the instance where a complaint is made against a staff member, the staff member concerned will be informed of the complaint. Teachers and other staff members 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. The staff member concerned must be given the opportunity to respond prior to any action being taken in response to the complaint.
- 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.
- Formal Complaints involving the Principal will be forwarded to the Chair of the Board, who will then decide on the appropriate action to be taken and by whom.
- 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

Issues relating to academic concerns are directed initially to the Subject teacher and then to the Studies Coordinator. If a satisfactory response or resolution is not reached via the above channels The Dean of Curriculum, Assistant Principal, and the Principal are available and can be contacted. All academic issues concerning Assessment and other HSC information should be directed to the Dean of Curriculum. The Dean of Curriculum also deals with Appeals, which are lodged with the Board of Studies.

Issues relating to a Pastoral or student management issue are relayed to the Home Room teacher and the Year Coordinator. If a satisfactory response or resolution is not reached via the above channels The Dean of Pastoral Care, Assistant Principal, and are available and can be contacted.

If a complaint is not resolved through the conciliation process, the Principal will make a decision based on the substance of the complaint, all relevant information and any relevant policy or guidelines. If conciliation is not achieved the parties involved may refer the complaint to the Chair of the College Board.

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 Year Coordinator to discuss the issue, or where necessary the Dean of Pastoral Care. The School Counsellor is also available for such discussion.

In the instance where a complaint is made against a staff member, the complaint 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. 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.