

Parent Concerns & Complaints Policy

Preamble	The College's key values of Honesty, Commitment, Fairness, Respect and Perseverance provide a framework within which high standards of conduct between staff, parents, and students are maintained at all times. Within this framework, it is the College's desire and responsibility to manage and resolve concerns and complaints fairly, efficiently, and effectively, in accordance with the College Staff Code of Conduct, and relevant legislation.
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Rationale	This policy has been established to ensure and maintain a safe and supportive learning environment, which encourages positive and productive relationships between students, parents and staff.
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Concerns & Complaints Covered	<p>These procedures cover concerns and complaints about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• general issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the college's code of conduct• incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the school yard• learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning• communication with parents• fees and payments• general administrative issues• any other school-related matters except as detailed below. <p>These procedures do not cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the <i>Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide</i>. Those matters include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• student discipline matters involving expulsions• complaints about employee conduct or performance and complaints that should be dealt with by performance management, grievance resolution or disciplinary action• complaints by the Department's employees related to their employment• student critical incident matters• other criminal matters.
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Expectations	<p>The college expects a person raising a concern or complaint to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs• provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint• maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties• acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties• act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner• show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame• recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced <p>The college will address any concerns and complaints received from parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ courteously, efficiently, fairly, and promptly, or within the timeline agreed with the person with the concern or complaint in accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Department's regulatory framework.
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Raising Concerns Or Complaints	<p>In the first instance, a complaint should be made to the college.</p> <p>The complainant should telephone, visit or write to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student's teacher or Year level Coordinator about learning issues and incidents that happened in their class or group the year level coordinator if students from several classes are involved the assistant principal about issues relating to staff members or complex student issues the principal about issues relating to college policy, college management, staff members or very complex student issues. For contact details for any staff member, call the office on 9401 2599 If you are not sure who to contact, contact the Assistant Principal.
Help With Raising Concerns Or Complaints	<p>Complainants can seek the services of an advocate when they feel they are unable to express their concern clearly. An advocate can be a friend or someone who is available through an appropriate support organisation who does not receive a fee for service.</p> <p>All parties involved in addressing a complaint may seek the services of a mediator when there is difficulty coming to an agreement.</p> <p>The college will ensure that the complainant is aware of these supports. A complainant who wishes to use these support services should ensure the person addressing the concern or complaint is aware of their intention and is in agreement.</p>
Recording Parent Concerns or Complaint Information	<p>In the first instance, when the complaint is easily resolved in a telephone call, the staff member will make a diary record of the issue and the resolution. For more complex or serious issues, a written record should be made of the following details and recorded on SMT (Student Management Tool).</p> <p>Documentation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> name and contact details (with permission) of the person with a concern or complaint the date the concern was expressed or complaint made the form in which the concern or complaint was received (such as face-to-face, by telephone, in writing, by email) a brief description of the concern or complaint details of the school officer responding to the concern or complaint action taken on the concern or complaint the outcome of action taken on the concern or complaint any recommendations for future improvement in the school's policy or procedures.
Addressing Concerns or Complaints	<p>The college will make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the Department.</p> <p>The college will determine whether a concern or complaint should be managed through the college's concerns and complaints process or through other complaints processes of the Department.</p> <p>All complaints will be noted and acted on promptly by the staff member who receives the complaint.</p> <p>The college will acknowledge all complaints made in writing. It will provide the complainant with a timeline for investigating the complaint.</p>

Concerns and complaints about general school matters (such as the timing of events, school policies and facilities) will be addressed by the principal or a relevant staff member.

The college will make every attempt to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible.

If the complaint involves many students and a range of issues, the college will need more time to investigate and resolve it.

Should the complaint involve complex issues, the college might need to take advice from the Department's regional office which may take more time. The college will tell the complainant the new timeline for addressing the complaint and the reasons for any delays. In all cases, the college will try to resolve a concern or complaint within 20 school days.

Remedies

If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, the college will offer an appropriate remedy.

For example, at its discretion and depending on the circumstances, the school might offer:

- an explanation or further information about the issue
- mediation, counselling or other support
- an apology, expression of regret or admission of fault
- to change its decision
- to change its policies, procedures or practices
- to cancel a debt (such as for college payments)
- a fee refund.

The college will implement the remedy as soon as practicable.

Referral of concerns or complaints

If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the college, they should contact the Department's appropriate regional office.

The officer from the region will ask the complainant for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and the complainant's opinion about why the college did not resolve it to their satisfaction.

If the complaint cannot be resolved by the complainant, college and regional office working together, the regional office may refer it to the Department's Conduct and Ethics Division.

The Division will ask the complainant for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and the complainant's opinion about why the college and regional office did not resolve it to their satisfaction and will ask the complainant to outline their view on the course of action required to resolve the complaint. Where the complainant is unable to provide a written account the officer from Conduct and Ethics Division should act on the information provided.

Communication & Training

The school will make information about procedures for addressing concerns and complaints readily available to parents and the school community.

The college's procedures for addressing concerns and complaints will be published on the college website.

The college will:

- brief all members of staff (including volunteers) about its procedures to address concerns and complaints annually.
 - provide staff with training and support appropriate to their responsibilities under the procedures
 - ensure staff who manage complaints demonstrate the personal attributes outlined in the *Good Practice Guide: Ombudsman Victoria's guide to complaint handling for Victorian public sector agencies*.
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Monitoring &
Review

The college will monitor parent concerns and complaints and consider issues raised through the parent complaints process, and any other relevant information from the parent opinion survey, when undertaking a review of the college's policies, procedures and operations.

The college will review its information about complaints made over time to:

- identify common or recurring issues that may need addressing
 - assess the effectiveness of these and other procedures and whether they are being followed
 - use information provided to the college through the parent opinion survey on the views of parents.
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Review

This policy will be reviewed by School Council every 3 years.

Ratified

This policy was ratified by School Council on 21 June 2016.
