

COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCES RESOLUTION

POLICY

Rationale:

- Our school has both a desire and a responsibility to ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained by staff, students and community members within the College at all times, and that complaints are managed and resolved fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation. Positive, clear and effective processes for resolving grievances between members of the College community assists in the building of strong relationships, dispels anxiety, and ultimately provides students with an enhanced learning environment.

Aims:

- To provide a harmonious, positive and productive school environment.
- To resolve complaints fairly, efficiently, promptly and in accordance with relative legislation.
- To provide clear, positive and fair processes that allow grievances to be aired and resolved in a timely and effectively manner.

Implementation:

- By definition for this policy, community members are considered to be those people who have an interest in, and may assist with, the operations of the College while not necessarily being an employee.
- Our school seeks to provide a positive, harmonious and productive environment with open, clear and consultative communication among its members.
- It is the Principal's responsibility to provide a healthy and positive school environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. In doing so, the Principal must ensure that all staff and community members are aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- While we accept our responsibility to consult, and to communicate both clearly and effectively with the community, community members who are directly involved in College activities have an obligation to read notices and newsletters, to attend briefings, and to seek clarification when required.
- Parents / guardians, with concerns involving their child or an issue of everyday class operation, should make an appointment to see their classroom teacher or sub-school leader, detailing the reasons for the appointment. An appointment should be made with the Principal to discuss issues involving school policy, operations beyond your child's classroom, concerns about staff, or grievances that are probably not easily resolved. Community members may be accompanied by another person, in a support role, at appointments to resolve grievances.
- Parents Association and College Council members may be approached and may choose to assist in resolving complaints and grievances through the appropriate forums of each body, without becoming involved in confidential or personal issues.
- The Principal is required to use local complaints resolution procedures, where appropriate, for resolving complaints in relation to issues that fall within the school's area of responsibility. All cases of serious misconduct – sexual offences, criminal charges, or other serious incidents – must instead be referred to the DEECD Complaints and Investigations Unit.
- It is incumbent upon the Principal to act where unacceptable conduct is observed or brought to his or her attention.
- Complaints and grievances may become vexatious and the Principal may insist on any complaints or grievances being lodged in writing prior to proceeding to attempt resolution.

- A complainant may at any stage choose to take their complaint directly to an external agency such as the Merit Protection Boards, Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission or the Ombudsman.
- It is important that all complaints, ensuing procedures and outcomes are fully documented and treated as confidential.
- The Principal may choose to respond to a complaint through an informal process in cases where the complaint is minor, the complainant wishes the matter to be dealt with informally, or the complaint has arisen from lack of, or unclear, communication.
- Formal processes will be used when informal processes haven't been successful, a complainant seeks a formal process, or the Principal believes the complaint warrants formal investigation.
- Full details regarding formal complaint resolution procedures are contained within the DEECD guidelines and contain the following steps.
- The formal process involves: -
 1. Investigating the complaint including formal interviews, written statements, conveying the details of the complaint to the respondent in writing, providing the opportunity for a written response.
 2. Dismissing or accepting the complaint. Acceptance may involve the Complaints & Investigations Unit, verbal or written warnings, conciliation, or counselling etc.
 3. Preparation of a detailed confidential report which is kept on file.
 4. The Principal will monitor the situation for an agreed period of time.
- Parties dissatisfied with the process can appeal to the previously mentioned external agencies.
- All matters must be treated with utmost confidentiality and professional respect at all times. People who have had a complaint lodged against them, have the right to be aware of the nature of complaints, the right to respond to them and the right to have a support person attend meetings to resolve complaints and grievances .
- The Principal will provide community members with appropriate DEECD contact names and numbers if grievances are not resolved.
- The College Council President will be kept informed of all written and serious complaints.

This policy was last ratified by College Council in....

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