



# COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

## Communicating a Complaint

The College values direct communications and expects that individuals (students/parents) will bring a complaint directly to the parties involved, and that those involved will make every effort to resolve the complaint. Wherever possible, complaints should be resolved by a process of discussion, cooperation and conciliation. The aim is to reach an acceptable outcome, which restores and maintains good relationships.

**Anonymous complaints will not be considered by the College.**

## Initial Contact with College Staff

The complainant should make initial contact with members of the College staff who may be in the best position to resolve the complaint. In most instances, this will be one or more of the following people:

- House or Subject Teacher
- House Leader
- Domain Leader
- Student Counsellor
- Head of Students
- Head of Learning & Teaching
- Deputy Principal
- Business Manager

If there is uncertainty about the most appropriate person to address the complaint, contact should be made with the College Office for referral to the appropriate person.

Due to teachers' classroom and supervision duties, a parent's first contact is best made by email, with an appointment request for either a phone conference or face-to-face meeting. Parents are asked to outline concerns or issues (e.g. academic performance, discipline, student/peer incidents) so that the staff member can investigate and constructively prepare for the meeting/phone conference. Likewise, staff members who seek a meeting or phone conversation with parents are expected to afford parents this same courtesy.

Teachers are expected to respond in a timely manner to parent emails (within 24 hours), and to do so by phone or email.

Parents and staff are strongly discouraged from sending or discussing confidential, sensitive and/or emotional information via email. These matters are best discussed face to face or over the phone. The College email systems are monitored and should not be considered private.

## Resolving a Complaint

If initial communication between the parties does not resolve the complaint, then the **complainant should:**

- contact a member of the College Leadership Team to make an appointment for either a phone conference or a face-to-face meeting
- outline the nature of the complaint, either verbally or in writing, and the steps taken to resolve it.

When a complaint has not been resolved through initial communication between the parties, and the complainant contacts a member of the Leadership Team for further action, the **College will:**

- respond in a timely manner to the complainant to organise a meeting/phone conference
- keep all discussions of the complaint confidential
- fully document the complaint, any actions taken to resolve it and outcomes of those actions
- ensure that no one is victimised as a result of a complaint being made
- if necessary, enable a person who has made a complaint to be accompanied by another person of his/her choice as a support person
- inform the person against whom the complaint has been made of the nature and content of the complaint, their right to respond, and to be accompanied to any meeting by another person of his/her choice as a support person
- organise a process of mediation if a complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the College.

## Serious or Repeated Complaints or Allegations of Misconduct

Where a complaint relates to an allegation of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, or when complaints are sufficiently serious or repeated, the Principal will be informed and due process to report and/or resolve the complaint will be instigated.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) may be a point of reference in responding to and resolving the matter.

## Avenues of Appeal

If a complaint remains unresolved, the College should advise the complainant that he/she may have the right to seek an avenue of appeal through authorities such as Catholic Education Melbourne or Mary Aikenhead Education Ltd. The Human Rights Commission and/or legal representation may also be another avenue of appeal.