



Complaints resolution

Rationale

It is important that concerns and complaints by students, staff, parents/caregivers/whanau and members of the community are resolved as quickly as possible and in a fair and consistent manner, in order to ensure the best educational outcomes for students and to facilitate confidence in the school's processes.

Guidelines

1. The college will make a genuine effort to resolve all concerns and complaints.
2. The basic principle the school adheres to is to have the complaint dealt with by the most appropriate person, in the most informal way, at the earliest opportunity, as is appropriate to the matter raised.
3. There is a distinction between 'concerns' and 'complaints'.
4. Concerns will normally follow the process set out in the 'Procedures for resolving concerns' unless there are culturally specific circumstances that require a different process.
5. A complaint generates a more formal response and must be made in writing and signed by the complainant. They should be addressed to the Principal who will follow the process set out in the 'Procedures for resolving formal complaints', unless there are culturally specific circumstances that require a different process.
6. If the complaint involves the Principal, it should be addressed to the Board Chair.
7. Legal requirements and the relevant conditions of any related current employment contracts will be adhered to. For some issues, outside mediation may be sought.
8. The Board of Trustees will only become actively involved when the issue is extremely serious, or if it is unresolved between the Principal and the complainant, or if it involves the Principal.

Chairperson:



Date:

30/6/20

Next review date: October 2022

ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES:

- Procedures for resolving concerns
- Procedures for resolving formal complaints

(NB: Procedures are developed as part of school management. The Board of Trustees will be informed of the development or revision of procedures derived from Board policies by the Principal. For some especially significant procedures, these will be presented to the Board in full)



Relating to COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION POLICY

Procedures for resolving concerns

For anyone raising these matters, they should be informed of the distinction between concerns and complaints. They should know that if they are not satisfied with the way a concern has been dealt with, they may make a formal complaint.

1. For Students

Students are encouraged to talk directly to their teachers whenever a subject related problem arises. They should approach the teacher at a suitable time (e.g., at the end of the lesson) or make an appointment. If the concern is not resolved, students should approach their Academic Mentor, Dean, the Head of Department of the subject area or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Depending on the concern, this person will either find out more about the concern, or, with the consent of the student, refer it on to someone more appropriate.

For non-subject related concerns students are encouraged to go to their Dean who will then refer them to the appropriate person.

2. For Parents/Whanau

Classroom Issues

If there is a concern about a classroom matter the first step is to try to contact the class teacher (email, phone or in person) and discuss the matter with her/him.

Teachers will, wherever possible, will respond to a request to make contact or return emails by the end of the following school day.

If the response provided by the school does not fully address the concern, the matter can be taken further by making a formal complaint (see 'Procedure for making a formal complaint').

Other concerns

If there is a concern about a matter which the parent/caregiver does not feel able to discuss with the teacher directly or which does not involve a particular teacher, they may contact one of the following (the school website or the school office can give names and email addresses):

- the student's Academic Mentor
- the Head of Department of the subject concerned

- the student's Dean
- the Guidance Counsellor
- a member of the Senior Leadership Team

3. For members of Staff

Staff members are encouraged to talk directly to their colleagues whenever a problem arises. They should approach the colleague at a suitable time or make an appointment.

If the concern is not resolved, or it is not appropriate to raise it directly with the person concerned, the staff member should contact the person most likely to be able to provide an immediate response e.g. HOD or member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Concerns about students should be referred to Deans, unless the complaint is such that it should be referred directly to a member of the Senior Leadership Team e.g. in cases of physical harassment.

4. For members of the Community

Members of the community who wish to raise concerns should do these through communication with the staff member in charge of the activity, or, if appropriate, directly with the Principal via phone, email or the school office.



Relating to COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION POLICY

Procedures for resolving formal complaints

These procedures apply to students, parents, whanau and staff. If they are not satisfied with the College's response to their concerns, or if it is of a more serious nature, they may wish to make a formal complaint as set out below:

1. Write down the complaint giving specific details. Include details of efforts that have been made to resolve the matter. Include the name and contact phone number of the person making the complaint.
2. Address the written complaint to the Principal. The Principal may delegate the complaint to another person such as the Deputy or Assistant Principal or a Dean.
3. When the Principal receives a complaint, s/he will discuss the matter with the complainant before deciding what further action should be taken. Support person(s) may accompany a complainant.
4. The complaint will be investigated by talking to the person about whom the complaint has been made and interviewing anybody else who may have had a part to play in the incident. Written statements will normally be taken.
5. The Principal will decide what steps will be taken as a result of the investigation and will ensure that a record of the process is kept.
6. If the complaint involves a staff member, and it involves allegations of incompetence or misconduct, they will be informed of their right to have representation at any meeting between them and the Principal (or Board members).
7. The complainant will be informed of the process, as well as the outcome of the investigation.
8. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the matter may be referred to the Board of Trustees for consideration and action.
9. Complaints will generally be treated in confidence. However, in the interests of natural justice any persons included in a complaint must have the opportunity to hear all details about the complaint and reply to it. This will involve them in needing to know the identity of the complainant. Any people involved in the process may be accompanied by a support person if they wish.
10. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint they may write to the Board of Trustees for a review of the complaint.

Complaints received by the Board of Trustees

1. The Board of Trustees will investigate complaints that:
 - a. Have been referred to it by the Principal (usually these would be of a very serious nature, eg. staff misconduct)
 - b. The complainant has considered their complaint has not been resolved appropriately through the process identified above
 - c. Involve the Principal
2. On receiving a written complaint, the Board will decide what further action is required on a case-by-case basis. Before the Board decides to deal with a complaint it must check that the procedures outlined above have been followed. If not, it will normally return any letter of complaint to the writer and ask that they follow these first, or refer the complaint back to the Principal.
3. All letters addressed to the Chairperson of the Board are for the whole Board. The Chair should not act independently as to what action will be taken.
4. The letter of complainant is tabled at the Board meeting and referred to relevant parties for reporting back to the Board. The Board decides whether to deal with the matter as a whole or appoint a committee to investigate and recommend to the Board. For example, a complaint about a member of staff is likely to be handled by the Personnel Committee.
5. The complainant is advised of the steps in the Board process.
6. At the meeting (public excluded) of the Board/sub-committee, the reports are received and the parties may be invited to speak to their complaint or answer questions. They are entitled to have appropriate support people attend, and/or representation. The Board or committee considers the evidence and/or information, and either seeks further information and/or advice, or comes to a decision or recommendation.
7. Depending on the delegated powers of the committee, either they or the Board as a whole come to a resolution as to how the Board will respond and/or what action will be taken.
8. The Board's response is communicated to the parties to the complaint in writing.
9. Any of the parties may request the Board to reconsider their decision. However, normally for such a reconsideration to take place, new information that would have been relevant to the Board's deliberations must be produced. Any review by the Board should be completed within 28 days of the referral or if more time is needed the complainant will be notified.