

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE POLICY

Date approved	May 2011	Date amended	February 2015
Approved by	St Mary Star of the Sea College Board		
Author	Frank Pitt, Principal		
Responsible body	College Board College Principal College Executive College Staff		
Supporting documents, procedures and policies	St Mary's College Staff Code of Conduct St Mary's College Child Protection Policy St Mary's College Communications and Technology Policy St Mary's College Pastoral Care Policy St Mary's College Student Welfare (Wellbeing) Policy		
Reference and legislation	Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 Child Protection Legislation Amendment Act 2003 Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 Education Legislation Amendment (Staff) Act 2006 Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 Ombudsman Act 1974 Protected Disclosures Act 1994		
Audience	Public - accessible to anyone		
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1. PURPOSE OF POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to outline and provide a general guide on:

- a) Maintaining a workplace that nurtures positive relationships between the College and families and teachers and their students.
- b) Encouraging and supporting positive relationships between staff members.
- c) Resolving difficulties, grievances and complaints in a prompt, impartial and just manner.
- d) Treating each complaint confidentially and sensitively with resolution being the goal in all instances.
- e) Seeking resolution to issues in a way that treats all parties with dignity and respect.
- f) Meeting all compliance requirements including compliance with relevant legislation.

2. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This policy applies to students, parents, all staff, teaching and non-teaching, permanent, temporary, or casual, executive members and the College Principal.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

It is implicit within the College Mission Statement that a positive working relationship and partnership between the College and families is the basis of our College community. To this end, a process to deal with complaints and grievances is crucial in order to provide a fair and just approach to concerns raised.

In an organisation the size of St Mary's College, complaints or grievances may cover a wide range of issues. Parents and other members of the College community may, from time-to-time, wish to complain about a College matter.

It is important that such complaints are dealt with sensitively, confidentially and effectively. The matter must be resolved as soon as possible and in a way which treats all parties with dignity and respect. It is important to note that anonymous complaints will not be accepted or acted upon.

4. DEALING WITH PARENT COMPLAINTS

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 more informal ways.

If deemed necessary in the professional judgement of the Principal (or another senior staff member), a complaint may be addressed in a more formal manner.

It is important that a concern is directed to the correct person. The first point of contact for parents can often be the Receptionist or office staff. These staff members have a

responsibility to direct calls to the appropriate member of staff. Calls are noted in order to track the time, source and nature of the call.

Issues relating to academic concerns are directed initially to the Subject Teacher and then to the KLA Coordinator.

Issues relating to a pastoral or student management issues are relayed to the Tutor Group Teacher and then to the House Coordinator.

It is also important to note that the Assistant Principals and the Principal are available and can be contacted if a satisfactory response or resolution is not reached through the above channels.

5. DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS ABOUT A MEMBER OF STAFF

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

Where there is a meeting of the staff member concerned with the Principal, parents, student/s or other staff member in relation to the complaint, the staff member must be told in advance the purpose of the meeting and who will be attending the meeting.

The staff member must be given the opportunity to be accompanied by a staff member of their choice.

Where action is taken the staff member must be involved.

If a matter is not raised with the staff member involved, then the matter cannot be raised at a later date or as part of another incident, as the staff member has not been given a right of reply. If the complaint is not resolved through the conciliation process, the Principal must make a decision based on the substance of the complaint, all relevant information and any relevant policy.

6. DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE PRINCIPAL

If a complaint is against the Principal, the parent or staff member must put their complaint in writing, addressed to the Chair of the Board of Directors in an envelope marked confidential

The Chair of the Board of Directors may address the issue or, if of a serious nature, refer the matter to the Executive Director of Good Samaritan Education so that their established processes may be followed.

7. STUDENT GRIEVANCES / COMPLAINTS

Where students have a serious grievance, it is important that they convey it to Assistant Principal, Pastoral Care. Should the concern or grievance be about the Assistant Principal, Pastoral Care or any other member of the Leadership Team excluding the Principal, the students must refer the matter to the Principal.

All academic issues concerning assessment or Higher School Certificate information should be directed to the Dean of Mission & Innovation. The Dean of Mission & Innovation also deals with appeals which are lodged with the Board of Studies. If the complaint is not resolved, the Principal must seek resolution, as outlined above.

In the instance where a student has a pastoral or other concern, they should seek an appointment with their Tutor Group Teacher or House Coordinator to discuss the issue, or where necessary the Dean of Pastoral Care. The Pastoral Counsellor is also available for such discussions.

At St Mary's College, in all instances the focus of effective complaint resolution is conciliation and acknowledging the rights of all concerned.

VERSION CONTROL AND CHANGE HISTORY

Version control	Date effective	Approved by	Amendment
1.0	2006	Board	Initial adoption
2.0	May 2011	Board	Reformatting template and updating legislation
3.0	June 2013	Board	Reviewed without change
4.0	February 2015	Board	Additions to Dealing with Complaints about the Principal and Student Grievances / Complaints.
5.0	February 2015	Chair of Governance & Nominations Committee	Changed next review date (and expiry date) to bring in line with Committee meetings