

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES RESOLUTION POLICY

PREAMBLE

St Vincent's College is a Mary Aikenhead Ministry in the tradition of the Sisters of Charity. We are called to develop in each member of our community a contemporary understanding and application of the charism of Mary Aikenhead and the spirituality of the Sisters of Charity, and the Mary Aikenhead Ministries' mission, vision and values of justice, love, compassion and hope.

The College aims to respond professionally to complaints and grievances within the context of our espoused values of Generosity of Spirit, Hope, Justice, Respect and Service of the Poor, through a process which provides a fair and just approach to concerns raised.

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

It is important that all complaints are dealt with sensitively, confidentially and effectively, with the aim of resolving the matter as soon as practicable 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. The exception is anonymous complaints regarding Child Protection issues.

PROCEDURES

In the first instance, an informal approach is preferred. Parents and others are encouraged to discuss their concerns directly with the Principal, senior staff or teachers.

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

The first point of contact for lodging a complaint can often be the Receptionist or office staff. These staff members have a responsibility to direct the matter 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 Head of Department.

Issues relating to a pastoral or student management issue are relayed to the Tutor Teacher and then to the Head of House.

If an issue needs to be escalated, then that can be done to the Deputy Principal Pastoral Care, members of the COR Team or the Principal, as appropriate.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT STAFF MEMBERS

If a complaint is made against a staff member, that staff member will be informed. 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 will 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 members in relation to the complaint, the staff member will be told in advance the purpose of the meeting and who will be attending the meeting.

The staff member will be given the opportunity to be accompanied by another staff member of their choice.

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 a conciliation process, the Principal will make a decision based on the substance of the complaint, all relevant information and any relevant policy.

If a complaint is against the Principal, that complaint needs to be put in writing, addressed to the Chair of the College Board.

All documentation regarding complaints and grievances is kept confidentially in a secure file.

STUDENT GRIEVANCE/COMPLAINT

Where students have a concern or grievance, it is important that they raise it with the appropriate staff member.

All academic issues concerning assessment, or HSC information should be directed to the Director of Teaching and Learning. The Director of Teaching and Learning also deals with appeals which are lodged with NESAs. If the complaint is not resolved, the Principal will seek resolution, as outlined in the HSC Assessment Handbook.

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

REVIEW

This policy statement was approved on 16 May 2012 and was reviewed in 2014 and 2019.