



Complaints and Grievance Resolution Policy

Preamble

St Bede's College holds the care, safety and wellbeing of its students to be at the core of all we do. The College is resolutely committed to ensuring that all College staff, including employees, Board members, committee members, contractors, volunteers and clergy (**College Staff**), act in a manner that promotes the inherent dignity of each of our young men and their fundamental right to be respected and nurtured in a safe school environment.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

Purpose

To provide a clear, positive and fair procedure for managing disputes and handling grievances and complaints from parents, guardians, carers and students. Further, to allow complaints to be aired and resolved in a timely and effective manner.

Scope

Unless indicated in the attachments below this policy and accompanying procedures apply to all St Bede's students and staff at both the Mentone Campus and Bentleigh East Campus.

At St Bede's College we are committed to building a school culture that features positive and respectful relationships. As a Catholic school in the Lasallian tradition, these relationships are grounded in the values of the gospel, in particular the values of justice, compassion, reconciliation, truth and love. In keeping with Catholic social teaching, a respect for the innate dignity of each person shapes all of our relationships.

In building and nurturing this culture, we acknowledge that students and parents can sometimes feel aggrieved about something that is happening at the College. Every member of our College community has a right to have their grievance or complaint addressed, and we will work positively and resolutely to achieve a satisfactory outcome for the people involved.

This policy outlines our principles and procedures for receiving and resolving complaints.

Statement of Policy 1. Complaints Resolution: Guiding Principles

In receiving and responding to complaints, the following guiding principles will direct and shape the College's actions:

- We will work with the complainant with respect, courtesy and openness and with a genuine desire to achieve fair and reasonable decisions.
- The complaint will be resolved as quickly as possible.
- Confidentiality, impartiality and the principles of natural justice will form the basis of our complaints resolution process.
- The person(s) facing the complaint will be provided with detailed information about the substance of the complaint and will have the opportunity to respond.
- Personal information disclosed will be treated as confidential.
- Our resolution process will be grounded in sound and fair procedures for information sharing, conciliation, investigation and decision making.
- If a satisfactory outcome cannot be achieved, the College will provide the complainant with options for having the decision reviewed or mediated via an external authority.
- The communal needs of the school community will in most instances exceed the needs of any individual.

2. Expectations of people making a complaint

In making a complaint, the College requests and expects that the complainant will:

- Raise the concern with the appropriate staff member as soon as possible after the issue has arisen
- Communicate and respond in ways that are constructive, fair and respectful
- Provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
- Observe confidentiality and a respect for sensitive issues
- Act in good faith to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- Have realistic and reasonable expectations about possible outcomes/remedies.

If as a complainant you are a parent, and your concern/complaint relates to your son's treatment by another student or students while at school, the College expects that you will refer your complaint directly to the College, via your child's subject teacher, homeroom/tutor or Year Level/House Coordinator. Under no circumstances should you approach another student while in the care of the College to discuss the issue or chastise him. Direct contact with parents to resolve the matter is also discouraged if the complaint pertains to issues or incidents that have arisen at the College.

3. Procedures

3.1 Key Referral People

Complainants are encouraged to make contact with members of the College staff who are most closely connected with the complaint/concern. For parents, this will be your son's subject teacher, Homeroom Teacher/Tutor or Year Level/House Coordinator. If there is any uncertainty about the most appropriate person to address a concern or complaint, you are encouraged to contact the College. Reception staff will refer you to the appropriate person.

3.2 Email Communications and Teaching Staff

Due to teachers' classroom and supervision duties, a complainant's first contact is best made by email, with an appointment request for either a phone conference or face-to-face meeting. Complainants are asked to outline concerns or issues (e.g. learning program, discipline, student/peer accidents) so that the staff member can prepare for the meeting/phone conference. Complainants and staff are strongly discouraged from sending or discussing confidential, contentious and/or emotional information via email. These matters are best discussed face-to-face or over the phone.

3.3 Informal and Formal Resolution Processes

If initial communication between the parties does not resolve the complaint (an 'informal' resolution process), then the complainant should:

- Contact the relevant senior member of staff (either the appropriate House/Year Level Coordinator or relevant Deputy Principal). Make an appointment for either a phone conference or face to face meeting.
- Outline the nature of the complaint. All formal complaints must be submitted in written form (see attached sample complaint form).
- In moving to a more formal process, the relevant Deputy Principal or a senior member of staff will:
 - Organise a meeting/phone conference
 - Fully document the complaint, any actions taken to resolve it and outcomes of those actions
 - Further and fully investigate the matter
 - Ensure that no one is victimised as a result of a complaint being made
 - If necessary, enable a complainant to be accompanied by another person of his/her choice as a support person
 - Enable the person/s against whom the complaint has been made 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 school.

3.4 Serious or Repeated Complaints, or Allegations of Misconduct

Where a complaint related to an allegation of physical, emotional or sexual abuse (refer to Child Safety Procedure), or when complaints are sufficiently serious or repeated, the principal will take action to report the matter to the appropriate authorities, ensure a comprehensive investigation, and work with all parties to facilitate a resolution.

3.5 Avenues of Appeal

In some rare cases it may not be possible to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant using these procedures.

If a complaint remains unresolved, or if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcomes, the complainant has the right to seek other avenues of appeal through authorities such as the Catholic Education Office, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission or the Ombudsman.

Associated Documents

PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools

Child Safety Procedure

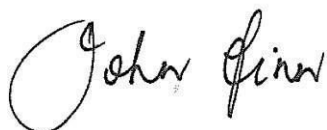
Child Safe Policy

Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy

St Bede's College Commitment Statement to Child Safety

St Bede's College Student Handbook

Document Authorisation



Mr John Finn
ST BEDE'S COLLEGE PRINCIPAL

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Reviewed: Aug 2020

Principal: Mr John Finn

Next Review Date: Aug 2023

Appendices

- **Appendix 1: Sample Acknowledgment Letter to Complainant**

Dear [NAME]

I refer to information provided by you/your son/your daughter, [child's name], to [name], [position], regarding the attached complaint.

The matter has been referred to me and I propose dealing with it by (state the process). Please let me know if you have any comments or requests about the process of resolving the complaint.

You will be contacted at various stages of the process regarding progress of the complaint. If you require any information, please contact me on (telephone number).

Yours sincerely

Appendix 2: Sample Complaint Form

1. YOUR DETAILS			
Family name:	Given name(s):		
Address:			
Contact number:	Email:		
2. YOU ARE: (PLEASE TICK ONE)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/caregiver	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	
3. SUBJECT OF THE COMPLAINT (PLEASE TICK ALL RELEVANT BOXES)			
<input type="checkbox"/> School	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff member	<input type="checkbox"/> Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy/Procedure
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)			
4. DETAILS OF THE COMPLAINT			
(Please attach additional page(s) if space is insufficient. You may also attach further documentation if you wish.)			
5. DETAILS OF THE OUTCOME YOU ARE SEEKING			
(Please attach additional page(s) if space is insufficient.)			
6. HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY RAISED THIS CONCERN WITH A STAFF MEMBER? (PLEASE TICK)			
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	If yes, when?	
Who dealt with the matter?			
What was the result?			
Signature:	Date:		

School Office use: RECORDING OF OUTCOMES	
<i>For matters which have been resolved:</i>	
Resolution options	
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-resolution <input type="checkbox"/> Supported self-resolution <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitated mediation <input type="checkbox"/> Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Investigation	
Actions undertaken:	
Outcome:	
Date matter is finalised:	
Name of staff member:	Signature:
<i>For matters which need further action:</i>	
Referred to: Name:	Date:
Referred by: Name:	Signature:
Outcome:	
Name of staff member:	Signature:

Appendix 3: Flow chart of procedure for handling complaints

