

Raising Concerns and Complaints Policy



The school's approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on our core values of:

- S**ocial & Personal Responsibility
- O**pportunities for all
- A**chieving Personal Best
- R**espect and Relationships

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS COVERED BY THE PROCEDURES:

These procedures cover concerns and complaints about:

- General issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school's code of conduct.
- Incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the school yard.
- Learning programs, assessment and report of student learning.
- Communication with parents.
- School fees and payments.
- General administrative issues.

These procedures do not cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the *Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide*.

Those matters include:

- Student discipline matters involving expulsions.
- Complaints about employee conduct or performance and complaints that should be dealt with by performance management, grievance resolution or disciplinary action.
- Student critical incident matters.
- Other criminal matters.

These procedures have been developed in accordance within the Educational Department guidelines as listed in "Addressing parents' concerns and complaints effectively: policy and guides" and have been approved by the School Council.

EXPECTATIONS:

The school expects a person raising a concern or complaint to:

- Do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs.
- Provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint.
- Maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties.
- Acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties.
- Act in good faith, and in a **calm and courteous manner**.
- Show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame.
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.

The college will address any concerns and complaints received from parents:

- Courteously
- Efficiently
- Fairly
- Promptly, or within the timeline agreed with the person with the concern or complaint
- In accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the Department's regulatory framework.

RAISING CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

In the first instance, a complaint should be made to the school.

The complainant should telephone, visit or write to:

- The student's teacher or Team Leader about learning issues and incidents that happened in their classroom.
- The Team Leader or Year Level Educator if the issue is a behavioural concern or relating to general student wellbeing issues.
- The Assistant Principal about issues relating to staff members or more complex student issues.
- The Principal about issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or extremely complex student issues.

To contact a staff member, please call the office on 5945 1433.

If you are not sure who to contact, contact the Principal's Personal Assistant, Jackie Stewart on 5945 1433 for further advice.

HELP WITH RAISING CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

Complainants can seek the services of an advocate when they feel they are unable to express their concern clearly. An advocate can be a friend or someone who is available through an appropriate support organisation who does not receive a fee for service. All parties involved in addressing a complaint may seek the services of a mediator when there is difficulty coming to an agreement. A complainant who wishes to use these support services should ensure the person addressing the concern or complaint is aware of their intention and is in agreement.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Pakenham Secondary College will make every effort to resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the Department.

The College will determine whether a concern or complaint should be managed through the school's concerns and complaints process or through other complaints processes of the Department. All complaints will be noted and acted on promptly by the staff member who receives the complaint.

The College will make every attempt to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible. If the complaint involves many students and a range of issues, the school will need more time to investigate and resolve the issue. Should the complaint involve complex issues, the college might need to take advice from the Department's Regional Office or the central office which may take more time.

REMEDIES

If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, the school will offer an appropriate remedy. For example, at its discretion and depending on the circumstances, the school might offer the following:

- An explanation or further information about the issue
- Mediation, counselling or other support
- An apology, expression of regret or admission of fault
- To review its decision
- To review its policies, procedure or practices
- To cancel a debt (e.g. school payments)

The College will implement the remedy as soon as practicable.

REFERRAL OF CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the College, they should contact South East Victoria Regional Office. The officer from the region will ask the complainant for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and the complainant's opinion about why the school did not resolve it to their satisfaction.

If the complaint cannot be resolved by the complainant, college and regional office working together, the regional officer may refer it to the Department's Group coordination Division. The Division will ask the complainant for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and the complainant's opinion about why the

school and regional office did not resolve it to their satisfaction and will ask the complainant to outline their view on the course of action required to resolve the complaint. Where the complainant is unable to provide a written account the officer from Group Coordination Division should act on the information provided.

COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING

The College will make information about procedures for addressing concerns and complaints readily available to parents and the school community, in a clear and easy-to-understand language.

The information will include:

- How a person can make a complaint
- The person's responsibilities
- Information to be provided by the person
- Who the person should contact and their contact details
- The process and timeframes for managing complaints.

The College's procedure for addressing concerns and complaints will be:

- Published on the school's website
- Printed in the college's newsletter

MONITORING THE PARENT COMPLAINTS POLICY

The College will monitor parent concerns and complaints and consider issues raised through the parent complaints process, and any other relevant information from the parent opinion survey, when undertaking a review of the school's policies, procedures and operations.

The School Council will regularly review its policy and procedures to effectively address parent concerns and complaints as part of its cyclic policy and procedures review schedule.

Ratified by College Council	
Review Cycle	Year
Review Date	