

# Parent Complaint Policy



## Rationale

Wantirna College aims to work in partnership with parents to provide the best possible educational experience for our students. We are committed to continuous improvement and we welcome feedback, both positive and negative as an important opportunity for reflection and learning. We acknowledge however, that despite our best intentions, parents and students may have concerns in relation to our service. These may include, but are not limited to issues such as:

- Customer service
- Facilities
- Quality of instruction
- Assessment practices
- Management of issues
- Concerns regarding staff practice

This policy aims to provide an outline of the complaints process at Wantirna College, to provide clarity to members of the community about how they can raise concerns and lodge complaints and the processes the College has for dealing with them. As parents and students may raise issues with many different members of staff this policy also outlines how the receiving staff member should pursue the issue on behalf of the parent/student.

## Policy

### Guidelines

1.1 Complaints will be dealt with in a respectful manner and will be focussed on seeking resolution.

1.2 The complainant should be clear on the nature of the issue they are making a complaint about.

- carefully consider the issues they would like to discuss
- remember they may not have all the facts relating to the issues that they want to raise
- think about how the matter could be resolved
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the DET

### Program

2.1 Both parties will:

- Be considerate of each other's views and respect each other's role
- Be focused on resolution of the complaint, with the interests of the student involved at the centre
- Act in good faith and cooperation
- Behave with respect and courtesy
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- Operate within and seek reasonable resolutions that comply with any applicable legislation and Department policy.
- Recognise that Colleges and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

2.1.1 The College will not respond to anonymous complaints. People who have concerns about issues at the College must be willing to put their name to the complaint and to identify the person the complaint pertains to.

2.2 The staff member receiving the complaint will listen without judgement and will record the details of the complaint.

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- 1.3 Members of the community should be confident that if they make a complaint to any member of staff then that staff member will refer it to the most appropriate person to deal with it.
- 1.4 Serious complaints of misconduct of staff and/or underperformance of teachers should be directed to a member of the Principal team. (See also the Wantirna Child Safe Policy for complaints in relation to allegations towards staff).
- 1.5 Parents, students and other members of the College community have the right to formalise their complaint to the College.
- 2.3 Due to the nature of the positions, it is anticipated that the Office staff, Leading Teachers or Year Level Leaders will be the staff members most likely to receive a complaint. The staff member receiving the complaint will make a written record of the complaint and refer to the appropriate member of the leadership team for follow up.
- 2.3.1 Complaints regarding serious misconduct or underperformance of teachers should be referred directly to a **member of the Principal Team**.
- 2.3.2 Complaints about teacher pedagogy, curriculum or assessment should be referred to the relevant Leader of Learning Area or Leader of Catalyst Programs.
- 2.3.3 Complaints regarding student management, student behaviour, teacher responses to student behaviour should be referred to the relevant Leader of Sub School.
- 2.3.4 Complaints about the Student Wellbeing program or the Program for Students with Disability should be referred to the Leader of Student Wellbeing.
- 2.3.5 Complaints that cannot be resolved should be referred to the relevant member of the principal team.
- 2.4 Members of the community who wish to make a complaint of this nature are encouraged to book a meeting with, or phone a member of the Principal team to discuss the issue in more detail.
- 2.4.1 The complainant will be asked to put their complaint in writing. This will start a process of investigation into the complaint.
- 2.4.2 The member of the Principal Team working on the complaint will keep the complainant informed of progress in the investigation in the context of privacy and confidentiality requirements.
- 2.4.3 The complaint will be dealt with in the context of broader DET policies and processes but will ultimately seek resolution for all parties.
- 2.5 Where a complainant wishes to formalise their complaint, they will be requested to make their complaint in writing. A meeting (either phone or in person) will be set up with a member of the Principal team to discuss the complaint to ensure there is a full understanding of what the issues are.
- 2.5.1 The member of the Principal team dealing with the complaint will gather further information to gain a full understanding of the situation from all perspectives. This process may involve speaking to others or accessing relevant records.

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- 2.5.2 The member of the Principal team may consult within the Principal team for further insight or advice on how to move forward with the issue. In some circumstances the handling of the complaint may be taken on by the Principal.
  - 2.5.3 Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the member of the Principal team to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties.
  - 2.5.4 If a resolution is not able to be reached the complainant will be advised regarding avenues in the DET where they may take their issue.
  - 2.5.5 Where a member of the community is not satisfied with the proposed resolution, the College may invite them to attend a meeting with a third party, or to participate in a mediation with an accredited mediator to assist in the resolution of the dispute.
  - 2.5.6 If the member of the community making the complaint is not satisfied that the complaint has been resolved by the College or their complaint is about the Principal, then the complainant should be referred to the Community Liaison Officer at the North Eastern Metropolitan Region Office of the Department of Education.
- 1.6 The College will deal with complaints in a prompt manner.
  - 2.6 Members of the community making a complaint should expect an initial contact from a Leading Teacher or member of the Principal Team within two days under normal circumstances.
    - 2.6.1 Depending on the complexity of the complaint a resolution meeting (phone or in person) should be held within 10 College days. This time frame may be extended for more complex issues.
    - 2.6.2 The Leading Teacher or Principal Team member will consult with the person making the complaint and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.
  - 1.7 Complaints will be clearly documented and kept on file.
  - 2.7 The Leading Teacher or Principal Team member will keep accurate records of meetings, conversations and information related to complaints.
  - 1.8 Where a parent believes their complaint has not been resolved, they will be provided with information regarding how to take it further.
  - 2.8 If a parent is not happy with how a complaint is dealt with, or their complaint is about the Principal they should be referred to the Community Liaison Officer at the Regional Office.

Policy written by:	Catherine Ford
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