



ST STANISLAUS' COLLEGE BATHURST

Complaints & Grievances Handling Policy & Procedures

Intended Audience: College Employees, College Community

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1. Introduction

St Stanislaus' College Bathurst is a day and boarding school for boys in Years 7 to 12. The College seeks to proclaim the gospel in the spirit of St Vincent de Paul through the formation of our students and all associated with the school in a welcoming, caring environment where all our students are supported and challenged to do their best.

As a Catholic School in the Vincentian tradition, education at the College is underpinned by the below College values.



1.1. Policy Statement

St Stanislaus' College Bathurst is committed to providing education and care to children and young people to assist them to develop into high-achieving, supported young adults, positively connected to each other and to the communities in which they live and which they will serve.

The College recognises that from time to time members of the College community may have complaints or grievances they wish to raise.

1.2. Policy Purpose

This policy has been developed to outline the response of the College in dealing with complaints and grievances.

1.3. Policy Principles

Complaints or grievances will be responded to in confidence, and as soon as possible, with respect and procedural fairness for all involved.

Procedural fairness principles will be followed in all aspects of complaint and grievance handling. This includes:

- Giving the complainant the opportunity to put forward a complaint;
- Offering reasonable assistance to enable the complaint to be made and to know the complaint handling procedures;
- Informing the respondent of the substance of the complaint investigation process including outcomes;
- Handling the complaint process confidentially;
- Responding to complaints as quickly as possible and advising the complainant and the respondent of the outcome of the investigation;

- Assessing the facts and circumstances of the situation objectively and determining the complaint fairly;
- Informing the complainant and the respondent of any avenue for review.

1.4. Policy Scope

This policy sets out staff responsibilities and processes that should be followed upon receipt of a complaint or grievance.

Complaints regarding reportable conduct matters will be dealt with in accordance with the College *Child Protection Policy and Procedures*.

Complaints regarding a grievance between staff members about work matters, including work relationships and decisions made by other staff members which impact on their work, will be addressed via established team communication protocols.

1.5. Record Keeping

All records pertaining to complaints or grievances will be maintained confidentially by the Leader – Governance and Risk in a secure location.

1.6. Related Policies

- *Child Protection Policy and Procedures*

2. What is a Complaint or Grievance?

A complaint or grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the College about an educational and/or operational matter relating to services provided by the College or the behaviour or decisions of a staff member, contractor or volunteer, including misconduct.

If a parent/carer or student has a concern about the conduct of a staff member, they should raise their concern with the College in accordance with section 3. If a complaint that concerns the behaviour of a staff member which may constitute reportable conduct, the matter will be addressed in accordance with the College *Child Protection Policy and Procedures* in accordance with section 1.4. Please refer to the College *Child Protection Policy and Procedures* for information about reportable conduct. Complainants are not required to assess whether their concern meets the threshold of reportable conduct before making a complaint. Any concern about a child's wellbeing may be reported under this policy.

Complaints may be made by a student or parent/carer.

The College will seek to resolve complaints or grievances informally where possible but acknowledges that in some cases a person may wish to make a formal complaint.

3. Policy Procedures

3.1. Raising a complaint

Students and parents/carers have the opportunity to communicate complaints or grievances through direct contact by phone, email or through a meeting with relevant staff of the College. The Head of College, members of the College Leadership Team, and Head of Boarding, along with other staff (eg: Pastoral Care Coordinators) make themselves available to meet with families to hear any concerns, as outlined in Section 3.2. College staff also make a commitment to visiting areas in which our boarding families live, to be involved in direct conversation with families.

Anonymous complaints will not be responded to by the College. Where an anonymous complaint concerns child protection matters or raises a serious legal matter, it will be forwarded to the appropriate authorities.

Informal complaints may be raised by a complainant directly with the person involved. However, if the complainant does not feel comfortable doing so or the matter is one where it may not be appropriate to do so, a complaint can be made to either a Pastoral Care Coordinator, member of the College Leadership Team or the Head of College. Any complaint about the conduct of a staff member should be raised directly with the Head of College in the first instance.

Should the matter not be resolved through informal processes, the complainant may raise the matter formally with the College. A formal complaint can be made in writing to the Head of College via completion of the Complaints or Grievances Form using the following link: <https://forms.gle/CrxEjp8z2xu8c3X66>.

Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint concerning the Head of College, the complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of the College Board of Directors, via email board@stannies.com or by completing the Complaints or Grievances Form (<https://forms.gle/CrxEjp8z2xu8c3X66>). In this situation, the references in this Policy relating to the role of the Head of College, should be read as references to the Chair of the Board.

3.2. Where to direct a complaint in the first instance

Complaints arise as a result of various issues. It is important that the relevant member of staff be contacted in the first instance, as follows:

- Classroom issues – the classroom Teacher;
- Pastoral care/wellbeing issues – the student's Tutor or Pastoral Care Coordinator;
- Personal issues – College Counsellor;
- Behaviour issues – Pastoral Care Coordinator;
- Appeals on behaviour issues – Deputy Head of College;
- Academic issues – the relevant Academic Care Leader;
- Appeals on academic issues – the Dean of Curriculum, Compliance and Analytics;
- Boarding issues – Houseparent or Head of Boarding.

On issues outlined above, after parents/carers or students have raised the complaint with the relevant member of staff, and believe the issue has still not been resolved or addressed properly, the complaint should be raised with the College.

If a parent/carer has a complaint about a student other than their own son, they should raise it with the relevant Pastoral Care Coordinator.

3.3. Handling a formal complaint

The Head of College will generally acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing as soon as practicable.

The Head of College will generally assess the complaint and determine:

- whether the complaint is one to be addressed under this policy or is a staff grievance or reportable conduct matter which are dealt with by the relevant policies; and
- the priority of the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised; and

- whether the College may be required to report the matter to the Office of the Children’s Guardian, NSW Police, Department of Communities and Justice or other relevant authorities should the complaint relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

The Head of College generally will manage a formal complaint by:

- a) advising the complainant of the likely steps that will be undertaken by the College in relation to the complaint;
- b) if appropriate, advising the relevant parties of the complaint at the relevant time and providing them with an opportunity to respond;
- c) collecting any additional information the College considers necessary to assess the complaint;
- d) making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved (“resolution decision”); and
- e) advising the complainant in writing, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution decision of the Head of College and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.

There may be circumstances where some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the College will determine, on a case by case basis the most appropriate method of handling the complaint.

A complainant and the relevant parties that the complaint is about may choose to have an appropriate support person present at any meeting with representatives of the College about the complaint. However, the College maintains the right to determine whether the person’s preferred support person is appropriate and may not approve the attendance of a support person where they are determined by the College to be inappropriate or a conflict of interest (perceived or real).

4. Complaints and Allegations of Staff Misconduct or Reportable Conduct

Complaints and allegations of staff misconduct and/or reportable conduct are handled by the College in a different manner to other complaints. This is because the College has legal obligations to report certain staff conduct to external authorities. Staff misconduct is a broad term that could include breaches of professional boundaries, codes of conduct or prescribed standards of behaviour, whereas reportable conduct is a term defined under the *Children’s Guardian Act 2019* as:

- a sexual offence;
- sexual misconduct;
- an assault against a child;
- ill-treatment of a child;
- neglect of a child;
- an offence under section 43B (failure to protect) or section 316A (failure to report) of the Crimes Act 1900; and
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.

Complaints relating to alleged staff misconduct or reportable conduct should be made to the Head of College. If the Head of College is the subject of complaint, the Board Chair (board@stannies.com) should be notified.

When dealing with such complaints or allegations, the Head of College or Board Chair, as the case may be, will provide impartial information about policies, processes and procedures to:

- any person with a concern arising from alleged misconduct or reportable conduct, or
- any person against whom there is an allegation of misconduct or reportable conduct.

5. Further Information

For further information regarding this Policy, please contact the Leader – Governance and Risk.

Appendices

Appendix A – Complaints Resolution Flowchart

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COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION

Initial Phase



- Complaint received.
- Complaint details recorded.
- Complaint entered in Register – generated from responses to Google Form.
- Complainant notified of staff member appointed to investigate and of the process to be taken.

Assess Phase



- Information and relevant data gathered, interviews held as required.
- Staff member handling complaint determines outcome of complaint and liaises with Head of College.

Resolution Phase

- Head of College is consulted as to findings and process to implement or in the case of the Head of College handling the complaint, decision is finalised.
- Individuals notified of results of investigation and processes to be implemented.
- Register updated with resolution included on file.
- Appeals process may be undertaken by the complainant.
- Processes and/or responses implemented.
- Ongoing monitoring as required.