

COMPLAINTS POLICY – PARENT/STUDENT/EXTERNAL

This Policy is designed to ensure Emmanuel College complies with the 7 minimum Child Safe Standards in line with Ministerial Order No 870. As educators, we have a mandatory obligation to create a culture which prioritises a safe, nurturing community for every child. The Standards provide a framework for routinely reviewing and strengthening child safety strategies, policies and practices.

Introduction

Emmanuel College is committed to building a culture that features positive and respectful relationships. As a Catholic school, in the Marianist tradition, these relationships are grounded in the values of the gospel, in particular justice, compassion and reconciliation. Respect for the innate dignity of each person shapes all our relationships.

We hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Our commitment is drawn from, and inherent in, the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the Gospel (CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety)

At times students and parents, or members of the wider community, feel aggrieved about something regarding the College. In such cases their complaint will be addressed and all reasonable steps taken to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

Most complaints or grievances are best dealt with informally and directly between the persons concerned, however, this may not always be possible.

Complaints Resolution: Guiding Principles

The following principles inform the College response to complaints:

- 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 form the basis of our complaints resolution process.
- The person(s) who is the subject of 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.
- The resolution process is grounded in sound and fair procedures for information sharing, conciliation, investigation and decision making.
- If a satisfactory outcome cannot be achieved, the school 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.

In light of these principles, our procedure aims to ensure that:

- Parents/guardians register their complaint or grievance with respect for all parties concerned
- We listen and take complaints or grievances seriously
- We respond to complaints or grievances within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way and
- We take appropriate action with the full knowledge of all parties concerned.

Confidentiality is a major issue in the handling of complaints or grievances. Confidentiality shall be maintained at all stages of the complaint or grievance with communication limited to those people who need to be informed in order to resolve the complaint or grievance.

The College is available to assist parents/guardians through discussion in developing a clearer understanding of any College expectations.

Expectations Of People Making A Complaint

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

- Raise the concern or complaint 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 child's treatment by another student or students while at school, the school expects that you will refer your complaint directly to the school, via your child's house leader. Under no circumstances should another student, involved in the matter, be approached to discuss the issue or chastise him or her. Direct contact with other parents is also discouraged if the complaint pertains to issues or incidents related to the College.

Procedures

Key Referral People

Complainants are encouraged to make contact with members of the school staff who are most closely connected with the complaint/concern and that initial contact be made with the relevant College personnel in the order listed below:

Type of Issue	Order of individuals to communicate with for most appropriate resolution
Curriculum Matters	Subject Teacher Domain Leader Leader, Teaching & Improvement Deputy Principal – Leader of Learning
Student's Academic Progress	Subject Teacher Domain Leader House Leader Deputy Principal – Leader of Learning
Wellbeing Concerns	Homeroom Teacher House Leader Pastoral Leader Deputy Principal – Campus Leader
General Student Behaviour	Homeroom Teacher House Leader Pastoral Leader Deputy Principal – Campus Leader
Transport Matters (including buses)	Leader of Campus Organisation House Leader Pastoral Leader
Off Campus Issues (in and out of school hours)	Deputy Principal – Campus Leader
Uniform	Homeroom Teacher House Leader Pastoral Leader Deputy Principal – Campus Leader
Financial Issues	Finance Officer Assistant Business Manager Business Manager Deputy Principal – Campus Leader Principal
Staff	Any Deputy Principal
Privacy Laws/Act	Deputy Principal – Campus Leader Principal

If there is any uncertainty about who to contact regarding a concern or complaint, you are encouraged to contact the college. Reception staff will arrange for contact with the appropriate teacher/leader.

Identifying concerns

Complainants are asked to outline concerns or issues (e.g. learning program, discipline, student/peer incidents) so that the relevant teacher/leader can investigate the matter and prepare for any follow-up meeting/phone conference. This can be done either through an initial email or phone call, or, if preferred, through making an appointment for a meeting. 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.

Parents/Guardians are required to express their complaints or grievances in a calm and respectful manner towards all staff who may be involved. On presenting the complaint or grievance, the family must be able to be identified. Any anonymous complaint or grievance cannot be satisfactorily substantiated and/or investigated.

Resolution Process

If communication or initial meetings between the parties do not resolve the complaint, then the complainant should:

- contact the relevant senior leader to make an appointment for either a phone conference or a face-to-face meeting;
- outline the nature of the complaint, either verbally or in writing, and the steps taken to resolve it.

The relevant senior leader will:

- organise a meeting/phone conference
- fully document the complaint, any actions taken to resolve it and outcomes of those actions
- ensure a full investigation of the matter has been conducted
- take reasonable steps to 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 against whom the complaint has been made to respond, and to be accompanied to any relevant 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.

Child Safe Related Complaints

Where a complaint relates to an allegation of physical, emotional or sexual abuse the College Child Safe Policy is enacted.

Avenues of Appeal

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 Catholic Education Melbourne or the Association of Canonical Administrators.

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