

## GRIEVANCE & CONCERNS POLICY for STUDENTS, PARENTS AND STAFF

One of the distinctives of the College is the working partnership between parents, staff and students. Whilst every endeavour will be made to maintain Godly, pro-active, working relationships, from time to time it is possible that concerns, misunderstandings and disagreements may arise. So that good relationships are maintained, it is imperative that these concerns are dealt with Biblically, directly and promptly. Immediate resolution avoids cynicism, gossip and a critical spirit and restores a climate in which quality learning and teaching can proceed and relationships can be quickly restored.

The following scripture give us an indication of how to manage some grievances:

*“If your fellow believer sins against you,[n] you must go to that one privately and attempt to resolve the matter. If he responds, your relationship is restored.[o] 16 But if his heart is closed to you, then go to him again, taking one or two others with you. You’ll be fulfilling what the Scripture teaches when it says, ‘Every word may be verified by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’”*

Matt 18 v 15-16 (*Passion Translation Bible*)

### Policy Principles

- Resolving grievances and concerns should be underpinned by a commitment from all parties to maintain good pastoral relations.
- The College’s ethos encourages openness to hearing concerns of students and parents.
- The College values feedback from parents and complaints will be received in a positive manner.
- The focus for resolution of the concern and grievance should be upon an issue, not an individual.
- All individuals should be treated fairly and impartially.
- All individuals have the right to present their case fully and openly, and without fear of retribution.
- Resolution of any concern or grievance should be achieved as quickly as possible.
- Grievance resolution should involve the minimum number of people.
- Parties should be encouraged to resolve the matter together in the first instance.
- No one will be victimised as a result of lodging a formal grievance.
- Everyone should be treated with respect.
- Meetings to discuss grievances will be suspended if any person(s) behaves in an insulting or offensive manner.
- Notwithstanding this Policy all legislative obligations such as Mandatory Notification, privacy etc, will be met.
- All members of the College community are expected to behave in ways that are consistent with the College values and Christian ethos.

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**General Procure**

The following procedures are published so that all members of the community have a clear understanding of the course of action to follow in dealing with concerns, grievances and conflict:

1. Clearly identify the issue.
2. Arrange an interview with the person who is directly involved with the concern or conflict (this will involve making an appointment either by phoning or using the student's diary (Student grievances only and where appropriate)). On many occasions, it is helpful to have the concern written down as writing helps to clarify the problem and allows time for the other person to collect their thoughts and any necessary documentation.

Thoughts to keep in mind:

- Attack the problem, not the person.
- Deal with facts, not guesses or rumours.
- Verbalise feelings rather than acting them out.
- Avoid unhelpful emotions that cloud the negotiations and the issues.
- Be committed to giving more than taking.
- Be prepared to forgive, rather than judge.

3. If the other person involved refuses to resolve the concern, grievance or conflict, take someone with you and try again.
4. If the person continues to resist resolving the concern, make an appointment with someone who holds a Position of Responsibility within the College. The leader chosen will depend upon the nature of the concern (note the flow chart).
5. If satisfactory resolution is not achieved, contact should be made with the relevant Head of School.
6. If satisfactory resolution is still not achieved, contact should be made with the Principal.
7. If the concern or conflict is with the Principal, and the matter is unresolved, contact should be made with the Chairman of the Board.

**STUDENT PROCEDURE**

STEPS:

Decide on the level of grievance. If you are unsure how to identify the level of the grievance you may ask for support or advice from your pastoral/class teacher.

For Low Level

1. Talk to person who has caused offence.
2. If uncomfortable doing this or you're not satisfied with initial approach seek the assistance of a friend, student leader or teacher.
3. If you're not satisfied with the outcome above, talk to your pastoral/class teacher who will assist in mediation, take appropriate action against the accused or refer onto the Head of School.
4. The Head of School will then either assist in mediation, take appropriate action against the accused or refer onto Principal.
5. If the Principal is involved, he/she will listen to arguments and then make adjudication.

For Moderate Level

Proceed Immediately to step 2

For High Level  
Proceed Immediately to step 3

For Extreme Level  
Proceed Immediately to step 4

### **Student Responsibilities**

When raising a concern or grievance a student will be required to:

- Speak in a calm and respectful manner.
- Specify the issue or enquiry in a calm way and within a specified time (if appropriate).
- Do not knowingly present an unjustified complaint.
- Listen to advice and fair comment.
- Seek to be supported by a mentor or parent during the process.

### **Staff Responsibilities**

When approached by a student who raises a concern or grievance, a teacher will:

- Listen to the student's concern or grievance.
- Be objective and fair in dealing with the matter.
- Provide appropriate justification for the result/issue/consequence.
- Re-assess issue if deemed appropriate and fair.
- Recommend to the student an appropriate pathway for proceeding if the matter still remains unresolved.
- Refer the matter to the next level if required.

### **PARENT(S)/CAREGIVER PROCEDURE**

STEPS:

Should a parent/caregiver wish to raise a grievance or concern, the following procedure should be followed:

1. Arrange a time to speak to the relevant teacher(s) about the problem.
2. Please do not enter College classrooms, offices or playgrounds about a major grievance without prior arrangement.
3. Let the teacher know what you consider to be the issue.
4. Allow a reasonable timeframe for the issue to be addressed.
5. If the grievance is not addressed arrange a time to speak with the Principal.  
Parents may bring a person with them to support or advocate for them.
6. If you are still unhappy, please arrange a time to discuss the issue with the Chair of the College Board.

Parent(s) with a grievance about Board Policy should:

1. Arrange a meeting time with the Principal to discuss your concern.
2. Allow reasonable time frame for issues to be addressed.
3. If you are still unhappy, please arrange a time to resolve the issue with the Chair of the College Board

### **Parent Responsibilities**

When raising a concern or grievance a parent/caregiver will be expected to:

- Address College Staff in a calm and respectful manner, courteous behaviour is required at all times.
- Specify the issue or enquiry in a calm way and within a specified time (if appropriate).
- Do not knowingly present an unjustified complaint.
- Do not under any circumstances address or approach a student directly with a grievance.

### **STAFF**

STEPS:

When approached by a parent/carer who raises a concern or grievance, the Staff member will:

1. Arrange a time to speak to the person concerned.
2. Allow reasonable time for the issue to be addressed.
3. If the grievance is not resolved speak to your Principal/Line Manager who will convene a meeting between parties which may include a Union Representative or Grievance Officer to support staff if requested. The role of the support person is to witness that natural justice is being carried out, that participants are treated with respect and that the appropriate processes have taken place. They may mediate to talk through issues but may not take sides or advocate. They may be requested to take minutes.
4. If the issue is not resolved within a reasonable time arrange a time to speak to the Chair of the College Board.

#### **Formal Grievances:**

Formal investigation refers to the process used to respond to written grievances, whereby an investigation is undertaken to gather information relating to the allegations to inform a recommended resolution.

- Any member of the SVCC community may lodge a formal written grievance with the Principal, who will work towards a resolution of the grievance at the local level.
- Complaints against the Principal should be lodged with the Chair of the College Board. A written grievance should be marked "Confidential" and forwarded as soon as possible after the event(s) which prompted the grievance.
- The investigating officer (Principal or nominated senior staff member) will make a determination on the basis of an investigation whether or not to uphold the grievance.
- The complainant and respondent will be informed of the outcome and action taken.
- If the issue is not resolved within a reasonable time or they are not satisfied that the grievance has been managed appropriately, arrange a time to speak to the Chair of the College Board.

#### **Confidentiality and discretion:**

- As far as possible and appropriate, the College will maintain and respect due discretion throughout the disclosure and resolution process. Notwithstanding any undertaking or impression, whether expressly or indirectly given to the contrary, the College cannot be held to any overriding legal obligation to maintain confidentiality.
- The College will treat your complaint with respect and sensitivity. However, you should not assume that your communications with us, or any documents you may supply to us, will necessarily be kept confidential. Although we endeavour to deal with complaints with appropriate discretion, we reserve our right to disclose details of the matter to other persons who in our opinion need to know them, in order to facilitate the resolution of the complaint and meet our legal obligations.
- In all matters raised, every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that natural justice and procedural fairness is afforded all parties involved.
- Every matter shall be dealt with and decided on its particular circumstances and merits, and any resolutions made, or decision taken shall not create a precedent or be binding on future matters.
- The party raising the grievance or concerns may withdraw it at any stage during the process. If withdrawn the matter will be deemed closed, although the College may within its sole discretion wish to continue addressing the matter as it deems appropriate.
- Staff management remains at the discretion of the Principal.
- **Neither the Minister for Education nor the Department for Education has any power to directly intervene in any complaints relating to the operations of a non-government school.**

**Legislative Context**

*Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*

*Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*

*Statutes Amendment (Child Sexual Abuse) Act 2021*

*Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 (SA)*

*Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)*

*Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*

*Teacher Registration and Standards Act 2004 (SA)*

*Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011(SA)*

*Education Act 2013 (Cth)*

*Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (including National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018)*

*Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*

**Relevant Conventions**

*National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*

*The United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child*

**Relevant Standards and Frameworks**

*Australian Student Wellbeing Framework*

*National Quality Framework*

*Protecting Children is Everyone's Business: national framework for protecting Australia's children 2009 – 2020*

*Child Safe Organisations National Principles*

*Disability Standards for Education 2005*

**Relevant Cross Sector Guidelines**

*Protective Practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people*

*Managing allegations of sexual misconduct in SA education and care settings*

*Sexual behaviour in children and young people - Guidelines*

*Suicide Postvention Guidelines*

**Relevant Related School Policies and Procedures**

*Child Protection Policy*

*Code of Conduct (Staff)*

*Code of Conduct (Students)*

*Harassment and Bullying Policy*

*Volunteer Information Booklet*

*Critical Incident/ Emergency Management Policy*

*Pastoral Care Program*

*Positive Behaviour Policy*

*Camps and Excursion Policy*

*Privacy Policy*

*Sexual Harassment Policy*

*Duty of Care*

*Medication Policy*

*Risk Management Policy*

*Drug Policy*

*Acceptable Use of Information & Communication Technology (Student) Policy*

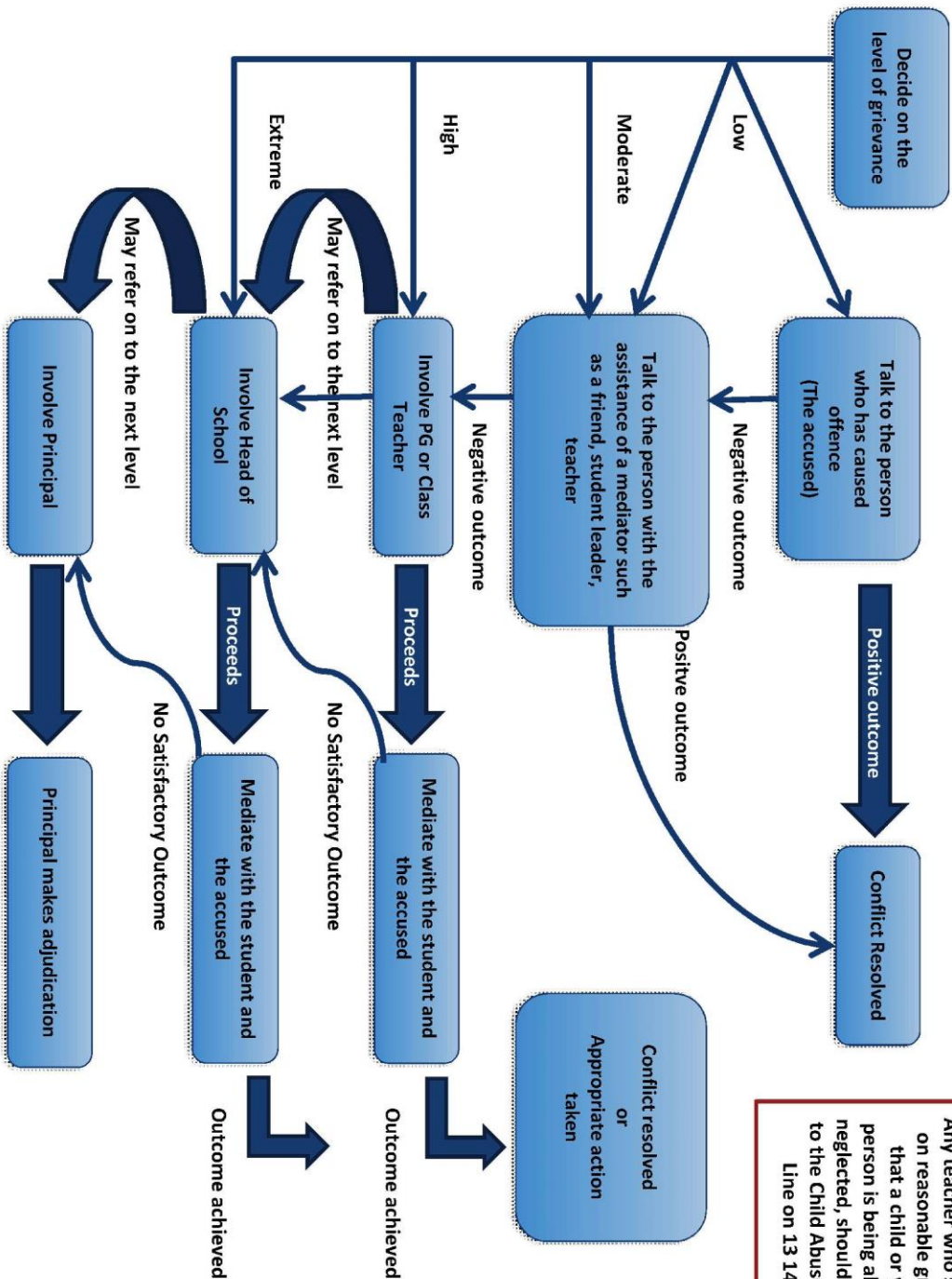
*Acceptable Use of Information & Communication Technology (Staff) Policy*

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**Reviewed:** 2022    **Next Review Date:** 2025    **Approved by Board:** 2022    **Managed by:** Leadership

# Grievance Flow Chart



Any teacher who suspects, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is being abused or neglected, should report it to the Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78.