

Grievance Procedures and Guidelines for Parents and Community Members



**LORETO
COLLEGE**

Marryatville, South Australia

www.loreto.sa.edu.au

Loreto Mission and Values

Mary Ward was an inspirational leader, believing passionately that ‘women, in time to come, will do much’ and that a strong education focused on girls and women would create ‘seekers of truth and doers of justice’. All Loreto schools in Australia share the same set of values: freedom, justice, sincerity, verity and felicity. These values are at the heart of our educational philosophy; they shape our identity and how we interact with others through our words, thoughts and actions.

Overview

Loreto College is committed to providing a safe and supportive work and learning environment for all within our College community. Loreto College is also committed to developing a culture based on mutual trust and respect.

Part of this commitment involves ensuring the College community has access to processes that allow for grievances to be managed appropriately, promptly and fairly. The College is a working community and concerns, grievances, disputes and allegations of inappropriate or illegal behaviour may arise.

The Grievance Procedure and Guidelines for Parents and Community Members provides clear and transparent information about how a parent, student or other member of the community (other than a staff member) can raise grievances about the College, staff conduct, a student’s education and/or student wellbeing, and about how such grievances will be managed and resolved.

Loreto College takes all complaints and concerns received from staff, parents, students and other complaints from outside of the College seriously. The College will ensure that all grievances are addressed objectively and with sensitivity. The following procedures will guide parents/guardians and community members in addressing grievances as quickly as possible.

Scope

The Grievance Procedures and Guidelines applies to all Board Directors, staff, students, parents/guardians, visitors, volunteers and other members of the College community.

The Grievance Procedures and Guidelines does not address complaints relating to the following:

- Employee concerns or complaints, which should be raised in accordance with the SA Catholic Schools Enterprise Agreement 2020 (or as amended);
- Concerns about child harm or risk of harm, reportable conduct and student safety, which will be addressed in accordance with the Reporting Harm of Children and Young People Procedure;
- Legal matters, including requests for compensation, payment and redress.

Related Documents

- Positive Behaviour and Personal Responsibility Policy R-12
- Privacy Policy
- Reporting Harm of Children and Young People Procedure
- Grievance Procedures and Guidelines for Students

Definitions

Complainant: the person making a complaint

Complaint Responder: the person responding to the complaint

Grievance: a complaint/concern that a parent has in relation to their child's education

Grievance Process: step by step process a parent must follow to have his or her complaint addressed satisfactorily

Parties: refer to both complainant and respondent

Respondent: the person about whom the complaint is made

Witness: persons who directly witness an alleged incident

Guiding Principles

The complainant is encouraged to raise their concern appropriately and as soon as possible so a timely resolution can be achieved. Grievances are responded to as a matter of priority with the intention of restoring mutual trust and respect. Grievances should be lodged in good faith and without frivolous, malicious and vexatious intent.

When raising a concern or complaint with the College, a member of the College community can expect to:

- (a) be treated with respect and courtesy;
- (b) have their grievance taken seriously, considered impartially (with consideration of any power imbalances) and dealt with on the merits;
- (c) have the grievance dealt with in a confidential and timely manner;
- (d) have access to appropriate and easily understandable information regarding the grievance resolution process being followed by the College (including this procedure and guideline);
- (e) be supported by the College during the grievance handling process, with a focus on maintaining the emotional wellbeing of any students involved;
- (f) be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the grievance;
- (g) not be victimised, or subjected to reprisal, for raising grievances in good faith.

In return, Loreto College expects that a member of the community who raises a grievance will:

- (a) treat others (including staff, students and parents, both former and present) with respect and courtesy;
- (b) raise grievances in accordance with this procedure and guideline and as soon as possible after the event giving rise to the grievance has occurred;
- (c) provide complete and factual information about the grievance;

- (d) ask for assistance or further information as needed;
- (e) act in good faith to achieve a reasonable outcome;
- (f) be understanding and accepting of any outcome reached, being mindful that the College must sometimes manage the interests of a number of students and other individuals when making decisions and may be privy to confidential information not known to the person raising the grievance.

Framework

The College's framework for dealing with grievances involves a two-step process, namely:

- Stage 1 – a concern is raised with the College
- Stage 2 – a formal written complaint is made to the relevant Leader
- Stage 3 – possible outcomes and review

The aim of the College is for the prompt resolution of concerns, ideally without there being a need for a formal complaint to be made. As the Board appoints the Principal to manage the day-to-day operations of the College, a review by the Board Chair should be a last resort.

Timeframes listed in this procedure and guideline are only a guide and can vary due to the nature of the grievance and surrounding circumstances. Where timeframes set out in procedure and guideline cannot be met, the College will strive to communicate with the affected parties about the status of the grievance and the steps taken (or to be taken) to progress a resolution.

Please note the processes outlined in this procedure and guideline are intended to be conciliatory, non-adversarial and non-legal.

Raising the concern (Stage 1)

- At first instance, the concern should be raised directly with the College. The College must be aware of a concern and of its substance in order to address it.
- The College believes that a concern is often best resolved closest to its source, and when a concern relates to a student, encourages concerns to be raised with the relevant classroom teacher in the first instance.
- However, depending on the nature and severity of an issue, and whether the classroom teacher has a conflict of interest, concerns may instead be raised directly with a senior staff member (Leader of Student Wellbeing and Academic Care or a member of the College Executive Leadership Team). For guidance on who to contact at first instance, please refer below:

When a formal complaint is related to a specific area within the College, the complaint should be directed toward the Leader of that area.

Area	Leader
Teaching, Learning and Curriculum – Senior School	Assistant Principal: Pedagogy and Academic Leadership
Teaching, Learning and Curriculum – Junior School	Assistant Principal: Head of Junior School and/or Assistant Principal: Pedagogy and Academic Leadership
Pastoral and Wellbeing – Senior School	Leader of Student Wellbeing and Academic Care and/or Assistant Principal: Wellbeing and Engagement
Pastoral and Wellbeing – Junior School	Assistant Principal: Head of Junior School and/or Assistant Principal: Wellbeing and Engagement
Boarding	Assistant Principal: Wellbeing and Engagement
Early Learning Centre	Executive Director: HR, Risk and Compliance

Concerns from community members, visitors or volunteers should be directed to the Executive Director: HR, Risk and Compliance, Assistant Principal: Wellbeing and Engagement or Principal.

- A student can directly raise concerns with the class mentor or homeroom teacher, LSWAC, Assistant Principals or the Principal.

The following considerations are relevant prior to, and when, raising a concern:

- Clearly identify the issue or problem prior to contacting the College.
- Decide whether the issue or problem is in the nature of a complaint, concern, enquiry or suggestion. This will help in finding a solution.
- Identify the party or parties involved.
- Consider the practical outcomes you are trying to achieve (while being realistic and open to other outcomes and solutions).
- If there is more than one issue or problem, write a list so that you are adequately prepared and then decide which issue or problem matters most to you.
- Consider whether there are any interim measures you would like the College to consider whilst it makes enquiries about the issue or problem.
- Make an appointment to meet with the relevant staff member to discuss the concern – the best way to do this is to contact Front Reception to arrange a mutually convenient time for a telephone call or meeting. When contacting Front Reception, please identify yourself and

the student concerned, the subject of your concern, identify the person you would like to speak with and provide a brief description of the issue you wish to speak about (for example, 'homework', 'wellbeing', etc).

- (h) Remain courteous and calm when conveying your concerns. The College is within its rights to terminate a conversation with the person raising the concern until such time that a courteous and calm conversation can continue.

Schedule 1

Further details about the College's Grievances Resolution Procedures

Stage 1: Raise the concern		
	Details	Comment
Step 1	Identify the concern	Clarify your concern: <i>"who, what, when, where and how"</i> Identify the outcome you are trying to achieve by raising your concern.
Stage 2	Raise the concern	The College believes that a concern is often best resolved closest to its source and encourages concerns to be raised with the relevant classroom teacher in the first instance. Depending on the nature and severity of an issue, and whether the classroom teacher has a conflict of interest, concerns may instead be raised directly with a member of the College Executive Leadership team. However, the member of the Executive Leadership team may decide to delegate responsibility for dealing with the concern to another appropriate staff member (eg Mentor or Classroom Teacher or LSWAC).
Step 3	Acknowledgement	Once a problem is raised, the College will record (either by way of an electronic file note or written correspondence) the details of the concern including your name and contact details. The College's focus will be on understanding the nature of the problem, the party or parties involved and the nature of any agreeable solutions.
Step 4	Outcome	Where an agreeable solution is available, this will usually be communicated in writing to you (being usually within three (3) business days of the outcome being reached). Where a mutually agreed outcome between the College and the person raising the concern is not appropriate, or possible, the staff member handling the concern will make a decision that best aligns with the College's procedures and legal obligations. This decision will be communicated in writing to you (being usually three (3) business days of the outcome being reached) and the communication will be kept on the relevant student's (and if appropriate, staff member's) file.

Stage 12: Make a formal complaint

	Details	Comment
Step 1	Make a complaint	If you are not satisfied with the way your concern has been handled, you may choose to make a formal written complaint. Complaints should ordinarily be made within one (1) calendar month of the initial concern first being raised with the College. A formal complaint should at first instance be addressed to the relevant Leader. If the complaint concerns the Principal, the complaint should be made to the Board Chair, in which case the Board Chair will manage the process outlined below. The relevant Leader will inform the Principal of the formal written complaint. You may also telephone Front Reception on 08 83344200 to arrange a meeting. Please note that if phoning to arrange a meeting, Front Reception staff will take your details and endeavour to confirm a meeting time as soon as it is practicable to do so.
Stage 2	Acknowledge receipt	The Leader will acknowledge receipt of the formal written complaint as soon as practicable (being usually within three (3) business days).
Step 3	Review of complaint	When dealing with a formal written complaint, the College's objective is to achieve a resolution by: • Clarifying the substance of the complaint, and the steps taken by the College to address the initial concern. • Identifying whether the complaint raises an issue regarding non-compliance with the College's procedures. • Identifying whether the complaint raises an issue that would be more appropriately addressed under the College's Reporting Harm of Children and Young People Procedure. • Communicating with you and relevant parent(s), student(s) and staff in an attempt to resolve the issue by agreement (where practicable). • Failing agreement, investigating the complaint and deciding appropriate outcomes in accordance with procedural fairness and natural justice principles.

		• The importance of confidentiality will be stressed to all parties and they will be warned of the consequences if there is a breach of confidentiality (for example, possible defamation action, initiation of a complaint for harassment). The Principal may delegate parts of the complaint-management process and seek the assistance of third parties, however any ultimate decision will still be made by the Principal. If the Principal or delegate arranges to speak with you, you may request to have someone else present as a support person. The support person can be a relative or friend, but please note that the role of a support person is to provide you with support and not to act as an advocate.
Step 4	Outcome	The Principal or delegate will aim to communicate the outcome of a formal written complaint in writing within fifteen (15) business days, where practicable. The Principal will promptly report any formal written complaints, and relevant outcomes, to the College Board. This is part of the cyclical review and risk management process at the College.

Stage : Possible outcomes and review

	Details	Comment
Step 1	Outcome if complaint is upheld or sustained	The following are possible outcomes depending on the nature of the complaint: • a meeting to form a resolution between the parties • any other action as deemed appropriate by the Leader
Stage 2	Outcome if complaint is not upheld or sustained	If a complaint is not upheld, or sustained, (e.g. there is insufficient evidence) but some issues come out of the investigation that are required to be addressed then possible outcomes include: ➤ relevant training for staff; ➤ monitoring of behaviour of staff; ➤ individual counselling for the respondent; ➤ review and/or change of College processes and procedures; ➤ any combination of the above. The Leader is primarily responsible for initiating whatever outcome is determined.
Step 3	Review	If the issue remains unresolved, or the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, the complainant may direct the issue to the Principal for further consideration.
Step 4	Other complaints	Complaints concerning the Principal should be raised directly with the Loreto College Board Chair.

Document Control

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