



# Parents-Carers - Complaints and Grievances Guidelines

*St John's College takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015).*

## Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at St John's College so that parents and other members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our School
- ensure that all complaints regarding St John's College are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

*See also St John's College: Complaints and Grievances Policy*

## Scope

This policy relates to complaints brought by parents, carers, or other members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school. In some

limited instances, the Principal may need to refer the complainant to the School's governing body i.e. the Board, where there may be different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions.

## Procedures

St John's College welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication with our families and are committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately. We recognise that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

We value and encourage open and positive relationships with our school community. We understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our school.

*When addressing a complaint, it is expected that all parties will:*

- raise and discuss issues in a courteous and respectful manner
- acknowledge that the goal is to achieve an outcome that is in the affected person's best interests and acceptable to all parties
- act in good faith and respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- recognise that all parties, including the broader school community, have rights and responsibilities that must be balanced
- recognise that the school may be subject to legal constraints on its ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

*Preparation for raising a concern or complaint*

St John's College encourages parents, carers or members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to:

- carefully consider the issues you would like to discuss
- remember you may not have all the facts relating to the issues that you want to raise

- think about how the matter could be resolved
- be informed by checking school policies and procedures.

### Complaints process

St John's College staff are always willing to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to your child's teacher, leadership staff or the Principal or nominee. Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to make a direct complaint to the Principal.

If you would like to make a formal complaint, in most cases, and depending on the nature of the complaint raised, the school will first seek to understand the issues and will then convene a resolution meeting with the aim of resolving the complaint together. The following process will apply:

1. Complaint received: Please either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with the Principal or nominee, to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the issues are. We can discuss your complaint in a way that is convenient for you, whether in writing, in person or by phone.
2. Information gathering: Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the Principal or nominee may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may also involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.
3. Response: Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the Principal or nominee to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. If after the resolution meeting we are unable to resolve the complaint together, we will work with you to produce a written summary of the complaint in the event you would like further action to be taken. In some circumstances, the Principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.

4. Timelines: The school will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within 48 hours), and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, the school may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. We will endeavour to complete any necessary information gathering and hold a resolution meeting or respond in writing where appropriate within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, the school will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

### Resolution

Where appropriate, St John's College may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- an apology or expression of regret
- a change of decision
- a change of policy, procedure or practice
- offering the opportunity for student counselling or other support if appropriate
- other actions consistent with school values that are intended to support the student, parent and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, you may be asked to attend a meeting with an independent third party, or participate in a mediation with an accredited mediator, to assist in the resolution of the dispute.

### Escalation

If a parent or community member is not satisfied that their complaint has been properly resolved by the school, or if their complaint is about the Principal, then the complaint should be referred to the school's governing body i.e. the Board. St John's College may also refer a complaint to the Board if it is believed that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

references

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy (Vision Mission Values and Shared Expectations)
- Student Engagement and Wellbeing
- Code of Conduct School Community
- Complaints and Grievances Policy