

## Complaints Management Policy

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## 1. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that a fair and efficient complaints management process is readily available to the Canterbury College community to raise concerns or dissatisfaction relating to the College’s educational and operational functions.

The objective of this policy is to set out the principles guiding Canterbury College in managing complaints whilst ensuring that:

- complaints will be taken seriously, dealt with fairly and objectively and will be timeously addressed;
- the nature of the complaint will inform the formality with which the complaint will be managed;
- parties to the complaint will be heard and/or may provide relevant information in relation to the complaint;
- confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as far as reasonably practicable and in line with the Canterbury College Privacy Policy;
- reprisal or victimising behaviour towards any person associated with the complaint will not be tolerated;
- Support and/or access to support will be provided for persons affected by the complaint where reasonable.

## 2. Definitions, Terms, Acronyms

Canterbury College / College	Canterbury College Ltd or any controlled entities of Canterbury College Ltd including the Canterbury Early Learning Centre and Canterbury Taipans Sporting Club, unless specifically stated otherwise.
Complaint	An implied or express statement of dissatisfaction where a response is sought, reasonably expected or legally required.
Complainant	The person or organisation making the complaint
ELT	Executive Leadership Team – comprised of Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of Business and Infrastructure, Head of People and Integrity, Head of Senior School, Head of Junior School and Head of Teaching and Learning.
Respondent	The person against whom the complaint has been made
Visitor	Another parent, lessee, an external provider, trainer, official guest, or a tradesperson present on the Canterbury College premises or engage in a Canterbury College – related event, function or presentation.

### 3. Policy Scope

#### 3.1 People to whom this Policy applies

This policy applies to Canterbury College employees, contractors, volunteers, parents / carers, students, persons undertaking work experience as well as members of the wider community.

#### 3.2 Complaints that fall under this Policy

Canterbury College welcomes feedback and encourages individuals who feel impacted by an issue involving the College to raise their concerns or file a formal complaint regarding matters involving the College. Complaints may relate to:

- actions or inactions by the College, its staff, or students that may have been incorrect;
- instances of perceived unfair or discourteous behaviour by the College, its staff, or students;
- concerns regarding student or staff conduct that may violate the College's behaviour policies;
- issues related to learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning;
- concerns about communication practices with students or parents;
- matters involving financial matters including invoicing and payments;
- general administrative issues;
- non-compliance with College policies or procedures, except as specified in clause 3.3.

Student complaints may be brought by students, or by parents / carers on behalf of their children, as appropriate in the circumstances.

#### 3.3 Complaints that do not fall under this Policy

Certain complaints relate to topics that are covered by specific policies and procedures as follows:

- complaints regarding non-compliance with and concerns relating to child protection will be managed in accordance with the Anglican Child Safe Policy and ASC Child Safe Response Procedures
- concerns relating to the education and training services provided to international students will be managed in line with the International Students Complaints and Appeal Policy;
- staff grievances will be dealt with in accordance with the Staff Grievance, Conflict and Complaint Resolution Policy;
- complaints regarding decisions made under the Student Behaviour Policy must be raised in accordance with that policy;
- matters involving student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to the Principal, who will involve the Police as appropriate;

- whistleblowing is excluded from this policy and may be an alternative to making a complaint.

### 4. Policy statement

Respectful and reasonable complaints, along with constructive feedback, play an integral part in the feedback and accountability process. Canterbury College acknowledges that it provides an opportunity to review and improve the quality of services and operations.

Canterbury College is committed to ensuring a safe environment for students and staff but acknowledges that students and their parents / carers or the broader community may be dissatisfied with the services provided or decisions made. Canterbury College will handle complaints in a responsive, efficient, consistent and fair manner, giving due consideration to the issues raised.

### 5. Roles and Responsibilities

#### 5.1 Canterbury College

Canterbury College has the following responsibilities:

- raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints, including the development and implementation of this Policy and related Procedures;
- clearly supporting and promoting the Policy and Procedure and ensuring that it is readily accessible to the stakeholders in the Canterbury Community;
- following the Procedures when receiving and managing a complaint;
- encouraging and facilitating respectful discussions to resolve complaints with as little formality and disruption as appropriate, and implement fitting remedies;
- taking the necessary steps to protect a party to the complaint from reprisals or victimising conduct;
- providing support to complainants and staff, as appropriate;
- providing training to relevant employees;
- recording complaints in the Complaints Register capturing sufficient information to ensure complaints are monitored and resolved as best as possible;
- ensuring complaints are handled confidentially;
- informing the school's insurer when appropriate and regularly providing the Board with a high-level overview of complaints received;
- working within the timeframes set for responses, taking into account that staff members may not be available during term breaks.

#### 5.2 All parties to the dispute

All parties to the dispute are expected to adhere to the following principles:

- apply and comply with the College's Complaints Handling procedures;

- lodge the complaint as soon as possible after the issue arises;
- maintain confidentiality and privacy in line with the Canterbury College Privacy Policy;
- provide complete, clear and factual information in a timely manner;
- ensure the information submitted is factual and true;
- refrain from making frivolous or vexatious complaints;
- act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner;
- support the common goal to reach a mutually beneficial resolution;
- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced;
- maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties;
- avoid any form of victimisation or reprisal against parties to the dispute or associated persons;
- understanding that the timeframes set for responses may be impacted due to term break.

### 5.3 Employees receiving and / or managing complaints

Employees receiving and / or managing complaints have the following roles and responsibilities:

- act in accordance with the College's Complaints Management Policy;
- refer the complainant to the schools Complaint Management Policy and provide additional information as necessary;
- maintain confidentiality as far as reasonably practicable;
- keep appropriate records;
- forward complaints to more senior employees, including the Principal, if it involves issues that require the involvement of more senior employees;
- Avoid any form of victimisation or reprisal against parties to the dispute or associated persons.

### 5.4 Support

Canterbury College takes pride in the diversity of the College community and acknowledges that cultural and / or linguistic barriers may prevent or hamper the willingness of community members to submit a complaint.

Complainants may request support in the form of interpreters or scribes to assist them in formulating and submitting complaints. Every effort will be made to source interpreters in a timely manner.

Complainants are entitled to be supported through the process and attend meetings with a support person. It should be noted that the support person is not to be an authorised representative.

### 5.5 Other actions

Complaints made under this Policy do not limit the complainant's ability to take actions they consider appropriate in the circumstances, such as contacting a statutory authority, contacting a legal practitioner for advice or another action required or authorised by law.

## 6. Complaints Management Procedure

### 6.1 Purpose

These procedures provide support and set out how Canterbury College accepts, manages and reviews complaints submitted by employees, contractors, volunteers, parents / carers, students, visitors as well as members of the wider community in line with the Complaints Management Policy.

Canterbury College implements a four-stage complaints management process consisting of an informal and formal process.

All meetings will be conducted with mutual respect and the shared goal of resolving the complaint amicably. Attendees have the right to pause a meeting at any time should they be treated with disrespect or aggression.

Employees will take meeting notes at each meeting and send a follow up email to all attendees to clarify and record what was discussed.

Employees managing a complaint must make notes of conversations (face to face and telephonically) regarding the complaint.

*Stage 1 is not appropriate for complaints relating to visitors. Please refer to Stage 2.*

The stages are set out below.

### 6.2 Stage 1 – Self-resolution between the complainant and respondent

Where a complainant feels comfortable doing so, they are encouraged to discuss their complaint with the employee or volunteer directly involved with a view of resolving the matter. This would typically include the classroom teacher, activity coordinator, Head of Faculty (SS), Assistant Head of Junior School or Assistant Head of Senior School.

The complainant must contact the employee either by email or telephone with details of the complaint and a request to arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint.

The employee will:

- confirm that the complaint does not fall under another policy. Where the complaint falls under another policy (e.g. relates to child protection) the employee will refer the complainant to that policy together with a link and inform their ELT member;
- revert to the complainant within two (2) business days and with a proposed meeting date within the following week;
- inform their line manager and ELT member of the complaint.

Where the matter can be resolved between the staff member and the complainant, the staff member will:

- record the resolution;
- email a copy of the resolution to the complainant with the employee's line manager and ELT member.

The ELT member will determine whether:

- Action is required, including but not limited to support or further training;
- The complaint and resolution need to be placed in the personnel file.

Where the matter cannot be resolved, or the complainant did not feel it appropriate to discuss directly with the employee, it will be escalated to Stage 2.

6.3 Stage 2 – Escalation of complaint to Senior and/or Executive Leadership level

When escalating a complaint to this stage, the complainant may raise their complaint with a member of the leadership team either verbally or in writing by email or post.

Complaint relates to	Who to contact	Email	Postal Address
Senior School (Pastoral Care, Behaviour matters, Wellbeing)	Head of Senior School	<a href="mailto:hoss@canterbury.qld.edu.au">hoss@canterbury.qld.edu.au</a>	Attention [Contact] PO Box 616 Beenleigh Queensland 4207 Australia
Senior School (Teaching and Learning matters)	Head of Teaching and Learning	<a href="mailto:hotl@canterbury.qld.edu.au">hotl@canterbury.qld.edu.au</a>	
Junior School (Pastoral Care, Behaviour matters, Wellbeing, Teaching and Learning matters, Early Learning Centre and Outside School Hours Care)	Head of Junior School	<a href="mailto:hojs@canterbury.qld.edu.au">hojs@canterbury.qld.edu.au</a>	
Business and Infrastructure (Finance, IT, Facilities, Food Services, Taipans, Learn to Swim, Contractors)	Head of Business and Infrastructure	<a href="mailto:hobi@canterbury.qld.edu.au">hobi@canterbury.qld.edu.au</a>	
People and Integrity (People and Culture, Risk and Compliance, Care Central)	Head of People and Integrity	<a href="mailto:people@canterbury.qld.edu.au">people@canterbury.qld.edu.au</a>	
Cocurricular program, service and leadership (or any of the above as appropriate)	Deputy Principal	<a href="mailto:deputyprincipal@canterbury.qld.edu.au">deputyprincipal@canterbury.qld.edu.au</a>	
Visitors			

The complainant must provide the following information (where available):

- names of the parties involved;
- nature of their concern;
- any specific dates and times relevant to the complaint;
- what steps the complainant has taken to resolve the matter and the outcome of those steps.

On receipt of the complaint, the ELT member will:

- confirm receipt of the complaint within three (3) business days and request additional information if required;
- confirm whether the complaint falls within the remit of the Complaints Management Policy at Stage 2;
- delegate the investigation and/or the handling of the complaint to the most appropriate senior leader in the organisation, where appropriate.

The leadership team member will arrange a meeting with the complainant, their support person and the respondent as soon as reasonably practicable, but no later than 14 business days after receipt of the complaint. This meeting will focus on resolving the complaint, or where this is not possible:

- gathering further information;
- developing a plan to satisfactorily resolve the complaint. This could include scheduling further meetings or timeframes in which certain actions need to be completed etc;
- explaining that the outcome will be based on a 'balance of probabilities' assessment.

Where the complaint is satisfactorily resolved at this stage, the leadership team member will respond in writing to the complainant, confirming the agreed outcomes and that the matter has now been closed. The College will not share the details of the steps taken against the respondent.

Where the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of this stage, or if they believe that this Stage is not appropriate regarding their complaint, they need to escalate their complaint to Stage 3.

### Visitors

Where the complaint relates to a visitor to the College, the leadership team member delegated with the task will document the concerns and, unless the matter involves a criminal investigation, will forward the complaint to the organisation that employs the visitor who has been named in the complaint. If the matter does relate to a criminal investigation, direction will be sought from the Police.

The leadership team member will brief the Principal as soon as practicable. The Principal will consider the nature of the complaint and determine whether this may impact any future visits to the College by the person named in the complaint.

### 6.4 Stage 3 – Escalate the complaint to the Principal

The complainant may escalate their complaint to the Principal via:

Email: [principal@canterbury.qld.edu.au](mailto:principal@canterbury.qld.edu.au)

Mail: Attention: The Principal  
PO Box 616  
Beenleigh Queensland 4207  
Australia

Escalation to the Principal is only appropriate in instances where the complaint:

- has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 2 OR
- is about a member of the leadership team.

The complainant must provide the following information (where available):

- names of the parties involved;
- nature of their concern;
- any specific dates and times relevant to the complaint;
- what steps the complainant has taken to resolve the matter and the outcome of those steps.

On receipt of the complaint, the Principal will:

- confirm receipt of the complaint within three (3) business days and request additional information if required;
- confirm whether the complaint falls within the remit of the Complaints Management Policy at Stage 3;
- advise the ELT member dealing with the complaint in Stage 2 that the matter has been escalated and obtain their records.

The Principal will arrange a meeting with the complainant, their support person and the respondent as soon as reasonably practicable, but no later than 14 business days after receipt of the complaint. This meeting will focus on resolving the complaint, or where this is not possible:

- gathering further information;
- developing a plan to satisfactorily resolve the complaint. This could include scheduling further meetings or timeframes in which certain actions need to be completed etc;
- explaining that the outcome will be based on a 'balance of probabilities' assessment.

Where the complaint is satisfactorily resolved at this stage, the Principal will respond in writing to the complainant, confirming the agreed outcomes and that the matter has now been closed.

Where the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of this stage, or if they believe that this Stage is not appropriate regarding their complaint, they need to escalate their complaint to Stage 4.

### 6.5 Stage 4 – Escalating the matter to the Board of Directors

Escalation to the Board is only appropriate in instances where:

- a) The complainant wants to escalate a complaint that has been dealt with by the Principal in Stage 3 OR
- b) The complaint is about the Principal.

**Any other correspondence with the Board will not be dealt with.**

The complainant may escalate their complaint to the Board via email at [boardchair@canterbury.qld.edu.au](mailto:boardchair@canterbury.qld.edu.au)

On receipt of the complaint, the Board Chair will:

- confirm receipt of the appeal within five (5) business days and request additional information if required.
- confirm whether the appeal falls within the remit of the Complaints Management Policy as Stage 4;
- where the complaint relates to a) above, advise the Principal that the matter has been escalated and obtain their records.

The Board Chair will arrange a meeting with the complainant, their support person and the respondent as soon as reasonably practicable, but no later than 14 business days after receipt of the complaint. The meeting may be held by phone or videoconferencing.

This meeting will focus on resolving the complaint, or where this is not possible:

- gathering further information;
- developing a plan to satisfactorily resolve the complaint. This could include scheduling further meetings or timeframes in which certain actions need to be completed etc;
- explaining that the outcome will be based on a ‘balance of probabilities’ assessment.

The Board Chair will consider all the evidence presented to them and come to a decision. The Board Chair’s decision will be final and binding on the complainant and the College.

No further appeal or review actions are available, and their decision is final.

The complainant will be informed in writing of the Board Chair’s decision, advising of any actions the College has are required to implement, and confirming that the matter has now been closed

### 6.6 Ongoing monitoring and review

The ELT will review the Complaints Management Register on a quarterly basis. An overview report will be provided to the Board on an annual basis setting out the:

- number of complaints;
- reoccurring issues resolution times;
- effectiveness of dispute resolution processes.

Where an ELT member identifies a complaint or a resolution of note, they will share it with the remainder of the ELT to incorporate it into the College’s quality improvement plan.

### 7. Review

This policy and its associated procedures, quick reference guides and protocols will be reviewed every two years. Canterbury College, however, reserves the right to review this policy and procedures at any time.

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