



COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that student, parent and employee complaints and disputes are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective and fair way.

2. Scope

Students, parents and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the College's policies relating to sexual harassment, workplace bullying, workplace health and safety, resolving employee concerns, anti-discrimination and privacy.

3. Policy Statement

Calvary Christian College (the College) is committed to ensuring that complaints are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective and fair way, and views complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process.

4. Definitions

Concern	An issue which is raised informally in order to highlight, improve or change a situation. A concern is raised through a conversation in person, a phone call or an email. A concern may not require a meeting in person. A concern is generally resolved at this first level of contact. A concern can escalate into a complaint.
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the College, related to the College's services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.
Informal Complaint	A complaint about a matter that is likely to be simple, straight forwards, easily manageable, or minor, where a simple or quick resolution is appropriate such as a discussion of the matter with a relevant staff member.
Formal Complaint	A complaint about a matter that is serious, complex or may pose a threat to the health and safety of any person. Examples include serious allegations or breaches of policy, complaints against a senior staff member, including the Principal or an information complaint and informal complaint that could not be resolved informally. Assessment of the complaint is required by the Principal and CEO, Governance Manager or College Council Chairperson should the complaint be against the Principal.
Complainant	The person, organisation or their representative making the complaint.
Respondent	The person who is referred to in a complaint by a complaint as the person responsible for their concerns or who can best respond to their concern.



5. Complaints that may be Resolved under this Policy

The College encourages students, parents/carers and employees to lodge promptly any complaints regarding:

- the College, its employees or students having done something wrong
- the College, its employees or students having failed to do something they should have done
- the College, its employees or students having acted unfairly or impolitely
- issues of student or employee behaviour that are contrary to their relevant Code of Conduct. Student behavioural expectations are outlined in the Responsible Behaviour Plan, including inappropriate staff contact as reported by a student
- issues related to learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- issues related to communication with students or parents or between employees
- issues related to school fees and payments
- general administrative issues
- issues relating to non-compliance with a process outlined in College policies or procedures, for example the Child Protection Policy, Discrimination Policy, or Privacy Policy.

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

6. Issues Outside this Policy

The following matters are outside the scope of this policy and should be managed as follows:

- concerns where resolution has not been attempted at the local level (i.e. with the persons immediately involved)
- child protection concerns or risks of harm to children should be dealt with in accordance with the law and the College's Child Protection Policy
- student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the Student Anti Bullying Policy and Responsible Behaviour Plan
- student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the Responsible Behaviour Plan.
- employee complaints related to their employment should be directed to their supervisor.
- student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to the Principal who will involve the Police as appropriate.
- disputes between College Council members which should be dealt with in accordance with the College Council Constitution.
- formal legal proceedings should be managed as appropriate in the circumstances



7. Complaints Handling Principles

The College is committed to managing complaints according to the following principles:

- complaints will be taken seriously, dealt with fairly and objectively, without judgement and addressed in a reasonable timeframe
- complaints should be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible, having regard to the nature of the complaint
- interested parties to the complaint (for example, the complainant and any respondent) will be heard and/or may provide relevant information in relation to the complaint
- confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- the complainant and any respondent will be offered support as appropriate
- victimising behaviour towards a complainant, respondent or other people associated with the complaint, will not be tolerated
- complainants that lodge a complaint on reasonable grounds will not suffer any other reprisals on the basis of the lodging the complaint
- procedural fairness will be ensured wherever practicable, confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- the College will give reasonable progress updates.

8. College Responsibilities

The College has the following role and responsibilities:

- develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the College's Complaints Handling Policy and associated policies and procedures
- appropriately communicate the College's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures to students, parents/carers and employees
- ensure that the complaints handling procedures are readily accessible by staff, students and parents/carers
- upon receipt of a complaint, manage the complaint in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy
- ensure that appropriate support is provided to all parties to a complaint
- take appropriate action to prevent victimisation or action in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them
- appropriately implement remedies
- appropriately train relevant employees
- keep records
- conduct a review/audit of the Complaints Register from time to time



- monitor and report to the College Council on complaints that have significant impact on business
- report to the College's insurer when that is relevant
- refer to the College Council immediately any claim for legal redress.

9. All Parties to a Dispute

The complainant and respondent both have the following role and responsibilities:

- apply and comply with the College's Complaints Handling Policy and applicable associated policies
- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner
- expect that the complaint will be dealt with fairly and objectively
- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner
- not provide deliberately false or misleading information
- not make frivolous or vexatious complaints
- act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner
- acknowledge the common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- act in a non-threatening manner
- to be appropriately supported
- recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced
- maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
- not victimise or act in reprisal against any party to the dispute or any person associated with them.

10. Employees Receiving Complaints

Employees receiving complaints have the following role and responsibilities:

- act in accordance with the College's Complaints Handling Policy
- refer the complainant to the College's Complaints Handling Policy and provide additional information as necessary
- inform the party lodging the complaint of how complaints can be lodged, when they should be lodged and what information is required
- provide the complainant with information about any support or assistance available to assist them in lodging their complaint



- forward complaints to a member of the Executive Leadership Team, if the complaint cannot be resolved at the initial level if it involves serious issues that require the involvement of more senior staff
- maintain confidentiality
- keep appropriate records
- not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

11. Process for lodging a Complaint

A complaint can be submitted to the Governance Manager via email (governance@calvarycc.qld.edu.au) or 07 3287 6222.

12. Implementation

The College is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints at the College, including by the development and implementation of this policy and via the clear support and promotion of the policy. This policy is publicly available on the College’s website.

The College is also committed to regular training of staff on the implementation of this policy. Training occurs annually.

13. Complaints Register

The College will maintain a complaints register with details such as the date, source and description of complaints, the actions taken, outcome and the date the complaint was closed.

The complaints register will be stored securely.

To safeguard confidentiality and maintain the integrity of the complaint process, access to the entire complaints register will be limited to the Principal and the Governance Manager.

The Principal may authorise the sharing of specific, relevant entries from the complaints register with other designated staff members (such as the Executive Leadership Team), provided measures are taken to protect the confidentiality of all parties involved, particularly ensuring that respondents to a complaint do not gain inappropriate access to information about the allegations against them.

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Appendix A

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT PROCESS

1. Receiving Complaint

- Upon receiving a complaint, the receiver is to notify the relevant member of the Executive Leadership Team and the following Complaints Management Process is to be actioned.
- Complaints can be lodged through various methods, including:
 - Phone
 - Email
 - In-person (by appointment)
- If the complainant is unsure where to direct their complaint, they can contact the Governance Manager for guidance.
- If the complainant is uncomfortable directing the complaint to the most appropriate staff member, or wants to make a formal complaint, they can submit a complaint by email governance@calvarycc.qld.edu.au
- Where an anonymous complaint is lodged, the College will follow the Complaints Handling Policy, when there is sufficient information to do so.
- The nature of the complaint will determine who facilitates the Complaints Management Process.
- Supporting documents - Complaints Handling Policy.

2. Acknowledging Complaint

Complaint acknowledgements are to be actioned within an appropriate timeframe and –

- to be in writing, outlining the next steps and where possible the estimated timeframes
- assess the complaint, using the definitions of informal and formal complaints in this policy, and refer the complaint to the informal or formal complaints process.

3. Registration and Support

- The Governance Manager will promptly enter it onto the complaints register, regardless of whether it proceeds through the informal or formal process.
- The Governance Manager will offer support to the complainant as appropriate, which may include assistance with completing forms or understanding procedures.
- If a student is a complainant, respondent or victim, or the child of a complainant, respondent or victim of a matter being managed through this policy, the school may offer the student support where appropriate e.g. discussing suitable adjustments with parents/carers.

4. Informal Complaints Handling Process

- The informal process is designed to resolve issues promptly and collaboratively at the local level.
- It may involve constructive discussion and negotiation between the complainant and the relevant staff member(s).



- If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, it will be escalated to the formal process.

5. Formal Complaints Handling Process

- The formal process begins with the assessment of the complaint by a designated staff member (e.g., Principal or Governance Manager).
- The staff member may gather additional information through investigation, interviews, or evidence review.
- The Principal will determine appropriate action, which may include
 - i. Mediation
 - ii. Disciplinary measures
 - iii. Implementation of policy changes
 - iv. Referral to external agencies (e.g., police)
 - v. Provision of written updates to the complainant throughout the process
 - vi. Other actions the Principal determine as appropriate in the circumstances.

6. Complaint Closure

- The complaint register will be updated with the date the complaint is closed and a brief summary of the outcome.
- The complainant will receive written notification of the outcome and any actions taken where appropriate.

7. Appeals Process

- Complainants may appeal the outcome of a complaint by writing to:
 - i. the Principal (for complaints not previously managed by the Principal)
 - ii. the College Council Chairperson (for complaints previously managed by the Principal).