



**ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE**

# Complaints Handling Guide

## Complaints Handling Guide

St Patrick's College welcomes feedback from all members of the College community and takes all complaints or concerns that may be raised seriously. This Complaints Handling Guide is designed to assist you to understand our complaints handling process.

### What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to St Patrick's College, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

### St Patrick's College's Commitment

St Patrick's College is committed to handling complaints effectively and efficiently. To manage complaints effectively, we have established a Complaints Handling Program in line with both the international complaints handling standard (ISO 10002:2014 Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations) and the Australian/New Zealand complaints handling standard (AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations).

Our program includes the establishment of an online complaints management system which allows us to effectively capture, manage and report on complaints. Regular analysis of complaints received and the implementation of rectification action, where deficiencies are identified, are key to the College's commitment. All complaints will be lodged on our internal complaints management system, including those that are resolved informally, so that we are able to identify emerging issues and take appropriate action. Our internal complaints handling process is available at no cost.

### Informal Complaints Resolution

Most issues causing concern in schools can be handled quickly and in an informal manner through discussions with relevant Teachers, Coordinators or Directors.

### How Do I Make a Formal Complaint?

If you have been unable to resolve a matter informally, or simply wish to make a formal complaint you can do so by contacting the College Complaints Manager (Deputy Principal) by the following means:

1. Sending an email to [complaints@spc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:complaints@spc.nsw.edu.au)
2. Writing a letter to the College addressed to the 'Complaints Manager'
3. Telephoning the College and asking to speak to the 'Complaints Manager'.

Any complaint regarding the abuse, assault, neglect or ill-treatment of a student of the College should be directed to the Principal or Deputy Principal. Any complaint regarding the misconduct of a College staff member, volunteer, teacher on placement at the College, or contractor, should be directed to the Principal. This includes any abuse, assault or ill-treatment of a student of the College, including behaviour that causes psychological harm. The Principal is the College Senior Child Safety Officer.

Any complaint relating to the Deputy Principal, Principal or a member of the College Board should be directed to the Regional Director of Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA), Eastern Region by telephoning (03) 94263200 or writing a letter to PO Box 91 Richmond VIC 3121.

Complaints relating to child safety matters will be dealt with in accordance with our policies and our legal obligations to protect children, including reporting matters to the Police and relevant agencies, as appropriate. It is our commitment to ensure that every child and young person under our care is kept safe and free from all forms of harm and abuse.

Any complaint made by a College staff member or volunteer will be managed in accordance with our Internal Grievance Policy and Guidelines, or Child Protection Policies, as appropriate.

All other formal complaints will be managed in accordance with the following procedure.

Our Complaints Handling Process is as follows:

**Step 1** - All formal complaints are screened by our Complaints Manager, the Principal or the EREA Regional Director, as appropriate. Complaints relating to Privacy will be referred to the College Privacy Officer. Complaints relating to the carrying out of College roles and responsibilities as a Teacher Accreditation Authority (TAA) will be referred to an Authorised Delegate of the TAA.

**Step 2** - All valid complaints will be acknowledged in writing as soon as practicable, and in any event within 10 business days. They will be allocated a status, priority and target resolution date. It is our policy, where possible, to commence an initial investigation and make a preliminary determination within 10 business days of acknowledging the complaint.

**Step 3** - An investigation into the issues raised will be conducted

**Step 4** - Following the determination, if appropriate, a response will be provided to the complainant. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

**Step 5** - If the initial response is not acceptable, the matter will be reviewed internally by the Principal or the Principal's delegate, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. Ordinarily, the Principal or their delegate seek to resolve all disputes within 20 business days of the acknowledgement of the complaint. The matter will be closed if the response of the Principal, or their delegate, is accepted. Where appropriate, the matter may be escalated to the EREA Regional Director. The Principal will review any unresolved Teacher Accreditation Authority (TAA) complaints that are not resolved by an Authorised Delegate. The Principal is the Prime Authorised Delegate of the TAA.

**Step 6** - All complaints received will be entered into our Complaints Register and, where appropriate, a corrective action will be taken to address any underlying processes which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.

**Step 7**- If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality applies with respect to both information relating to the person making the complaint, and, if relevant to a person against whom a complaint is made. The College is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process. Personally identifiable information about a complainant will only be made available for the purpose of addressing the complaint and (unless the complainant consents) will be actively protected from disclosure.

### **Vexatious Complaints**

False or vexatious complaints made by students or parents of the College may be regarded as a breach of the College's Conditions of Enrolment. All complaints must be made and resolved appropriately and in good faith.