



“ALL TO ALL”

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Complaints and Appeals – resolving grievances

St Paul's International College is committed to a safe and supportive environment, characterised by fairness, mutual trust, respect and reconciliation. Any parent, student or community member who has a complaint or grievance has the right to have this addressed.

The College's policy for dealing with complaints and grievances includes processes for raising and responding to matters of concern identified by parents and/or students. These processes incorporate, as appropriate, principles of procedural fairness.

Students are made aware during their orientation of the process of raising concerns. These are outlined in their orientation Booklets and in Boarding House information.

Parents or members of the community may raise concerns with the College at any time through email, in writing or by telephone/FAX. Initial contact is made through the College Secretary. Grievances are then communicated to relevant executive members of staff with due regard to privacy and confidentiality.

The College undertakes to respond to such matters promptly and with due regard to the seriousness of matters raised. Formal responses or notifications are forwarded by relevant members of the Executive staff or by the College Director where appropriate.

Our Policy in detail

1) Purpose

- a) The purpose of the College's Complaints and Appeals Policy is to provide a student with the opportunity to access procedures to facilitate the resolution of a dispute or complaint.
- b) The internal complaints and appeals processes are conciliatory and non-legal.

2) Complaints against other students

- a) Grievances brought by a student against another student will be dealt with under the College's Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct.

3) Informal Complaints Resolution

- a) In the first instance, the College requests there is an attempt to informally resolve the issue through mediation/informal resolution of the complaint.
- b) Students should contact the year coordinator or their Boarding Supervisor, or any member of the College staff they feel comfortable to discuss the problem with in the first instance to attempt mediation/informal resolution of the complaint.
- c) If the matter cannot be resolved through mediation, the matter will be referred to the head of Welfare and the College's internal formal complaints and appeals handling procedure will be followed.

4) Formal Complaints Handling Procedure

- a) The process of this grievance procedure is confidential and any complaints or appeals are a matter between the parties concerned and those directly involved in the complaints handling process.
- b) The student must notify the school in writing of the nature and details of the complaint or appeal.
- c) Written complaints or appeals are to be lodged with the Head of Welfare.
- d) Where the internal complaints and appeals process is being accessed because the student has received notice by the school that the school intends to report him/her for unsatisfactory course attendance, unsatisfactory course progress or suspension or cancellation of enrolment, the student has 3 days from the date of notification in which to lodge a written appeal.
- e) Internal complaints and appeals processes are available to students at no cost.
- f) Each complainant has the opportunity to present his/her case to the College Director.
- g) Students may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at all relevant meetings.
- h) The formal grievance process will commence within 10 working days of the lodgement of the complaint or appeal with the Head of Welfare.
- i) Once the College Director has come to a decision regarding the complaint or appeal, the student will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the outcome.
- j) If the grievance procedure finds in favour of the student, the College will immediately implement the decision and any corrective and preventative action required.

- k) The College undertakes to finalise all grievance procedures within 20 working days.
- l) For the duration of the appeals process, the student is required to maintain enrolment and attendance at all classes.

External Appeals Process

- a) If the complaints procedure does not find in favour of the student or the student is dissatisfied with the result of the complaints procedure, he/she will be informed of the external complaints and appeals process available to them at no cost.
- b) The external body used for the College's external complaints and appeals processes is the Wollongong Catholic Education Office which can be contacted by phoning 0242530800. This is accessible by **local students and parents**. **Overseas students** may call the *Overseas Students Ombudsman*. The Overseas Students Ombudsman offers a free and independent service for overseas students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by their private education or training provider. See the Overseas Students Ombudsman website www.oso.gov.au or phone 1300 362 072 for more information.

5) Definitions

- a) Working Day – *any day other than a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday during term time*
- b) Student – *a student enrolled at the College or the parent(s)/legal guardian of a student where that student is under 18 years of age*
- c) Support person – *a friend/teacher/relative not involved in the grievance* [lawyers and/or education agents are not acceptable support persons at this stage of the complaints handling process]