

Catholic Ladies' College



Complaints Handling Policy

clc.vic.edu.au

19 Diamond St, Eltham
Victoria 3095, Australia
03 9439 4077

ABN 44 058 164 891

Under the Stewardship of
Mary Aikenhead Ministries



LOVE HOPE COMPASSION JUSTICE



Catholic Ladies' College Ltd
(ACN 058 164 891) (ABN 44 058 164 891)

Complaints Handling Policy

Catholic Ladies' College (the College) is a Mary Aikenhead Ministry in the tradition of the Sisters of Charity. We seek to develop in each member of our community a contemporary understanding and application of the charism of Mary Aikenhead, the spirituality of the Sisters of Charity, the mission and vision of Mary Aikenhead Ministries and their values of justice, love, compassion and hope.

In responding to this call, the College is a Christ-centred community established to educate, in partnership with parents, women of faith, integrity, individuality and compassion, confident of their own worth as women and wholly involved in the transformation of society.

Background

The College is committed to building a community that features positive and respectful relationships. Within this community, relationships are founded on the gospel values of justice, compassion, love and hope. Such relationships support the learning and development of students and value the innate dignity of each person.

A timely and professional response to complaints is an effective means of encouraging communication, building trust and resolving issues for the betterment of all concerned.

The College understands that from time-to-time concerns arise regarding aspects of our programs and activities and that it is important that all members of the community have the opportunity to be heard.

Positive, clear and effective procedures and processes for managing complaints can assist in building strong relationships, reducing anxiety and promoting a settled and positive learning environment for students.

The College Codes of Conduct for Parents/Carers and Students each outline the expectations of behaviour for members of our community.

This Policy outlines the processes to be followed for raising and managing Complaints relating to the College.

Purpose

To provide a clear, fair and transparent framework for members of the College community to raise complaints and for those complaints to be managed in a consistent and respectful manner

Scope

This policy is for parents/guardians/carers (Parents), students, visitors and other members of the College community. It applies to matters relating to the College or the behaviour of any person within the College including employees, volunteers, contractors, families and students, subject to the exclusions below.

Matters outside the Scope of this Policy:

This policy does not apply to:

- critical incidents, emergency management, criminal offences, or the imposition of School Community Safe Orders
- the conduct of the clergy or other persons involved in religious ministry



- workplace or employment-related complaints by College staff (including contractors and volunteers), which are managed under the *CLC Internal Staff Grievances and Dispute Resolution Policy*
- concerns or allegations about the safety or abuse of children and young people, which must be managed under the *CLC Policy Child Safety and Wellbeing* or the *CLC Reportable Conduct Policy* (or speak to the Principal or a Child Safety Officer at the College)
- 'Protected Disclosures' relating to specific legislation, which are managed under the *CLC Whistleblower Policy*.

Guiding Principles

In receiving and responding to complaints, the following guiding principles will inform and direct College actions:

- all complaints will be taken seriously and be responded to in a respectful, thorough and timely manner
- Complainants have the right to be anonymous, however, the College's ability to investigate or respond may be limited, e.g. such complaints may not be attended to and will not receive a response
- Staff members and volunteers will be informed of formal complaints that are made about them, subject to privacy and confidentiality considerations
- All parties involved have the right to be heard and to procedural fairness
- Confidentiality, privacy, respect, access, dignity and impartiality underpin the complaints resolution process
- The complaints resolution process seeks where appropriate, to restore respectful and positive relationships
- The best interests of the College community and of the individual will be considered
- Recordkeeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations will be complied with at all times.

Definitions

College Community: the collective group of individuals and resources that make up the social, academic, educational and cultural environment of the College. The College community is a Christ-centred and a place in which all individuals uphold the College values, education charter attributes, College mission and vision

A complaint is a general term used in this policy to describe a concern, grievance or expression of dissatisfaction with an action, decision, service or behaviour at the College

The Complainant is the individual or third party raising the complaint

Parent: includes parents/guardians/carers

The Subject of the complaint is the individual(s), or organisation against which a complaint is made

Staff: an individual working within the College environment including:

- employees directly engaged by the College
- contracted service providers
- volunteers at the College



Providing Feedback to Catholic Ladies' College

The College encourages open communication and feedback and has procedures in place to ensure that complaints will be listened to and managed professionally, respectfully, confidentially and in a timely manner.

Feedback may be provided through:

- formal surveys
- scheduled Parent feedback forums
- meetings with the Principal, staff leaders or other staff members
- secure online feedback form via our internal Parent Portal CLC Connect.

Most concerns can be handled quickly and efficiently by addressing the issue informally with the appropriate College staff member. Due to teachers' classroom and supervision duties, a complainant's first contact is best made by email, with a request for either a phone conference or face-to-face meeting.

Where concerns cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint may be made and will be managed in accordance with Appendix 1: Complaint Handling Procedure.

Who to Contact to Make a Formal Complaint

The nature of the complaint will determine who is the most appropriate person or body to manage the matter. Where possible, complaints should be raised first with the person most directly involved, with all parties acting in good faith to achieve a respectful and satisfactory outcome. The table below indicates the relevant staff member as the first point of contact.

Once a complaint is raised with the appropriate contact, it will be managed in accordance with the Complaint Handling Process outlined in Appendix 1: Complaint Handling Procedure.

Communication about....	Initial contact (via email recommended)	Secondary contact
A specific subject, Assessment Task or class work	Subject teacher concerned	Learning Leader
A specific teacher	The teacher concerned	Deputy Principal or Assistant Principal Learning and Teaching dp@clc.vic.edu.au
Student's work progress over a number of subjects, her lack of focus or motivation, peer relationships	Homeroom Teacher	Year Level Team Leader or Assistant Principal Student Wellbeing or College Counsellor
Student Wellbeing	Homeroom Teacher	Year Level Team Leader or Assistant Principal Student Wellbeing or College Counsellor
VCE rules	VCE Leader vce@clc.vic.edu.au	Assistant Principal Learning and Teaching dp@clc.vic.edu.au
Fees and charges	Accounts Receivable Parent Liaison fees@clc.vic.edu.au	Business Manager businessmanager@clc.vic.edu.au
Train or bus travel incidents	Head of Admissions registrar@clc.vic.edu.au	Head of Students



Communication about....	Initial contact (via email recommended)	Secondary contact
First Aid requirements	First Aid Manager attendance@clc.vic.edu.au	Year Level Team Leader or Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing
Staff member	Principal principal@clc.vic.edu.au	
Other complaint	Please ask Reception to direct you to the appropriate person	

Specific Complaint Categories

Some complaints require specific reporting pathways, as outlined below:

Misconduct or serious misconduct

All allegations of misconduct or serious misconduct by a teacher or staff member should be reported to the Principal at principal@clc.vic.edu.au.

Complaints about teachers can also be reported to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) – the regulator in relation to the registration and investigation of serious misconduct (including conduct which is of a physical or emotional nature) of all teachers in the state of Victoria. If unsure whether the complaint constitutes serious misconduct by a teacher, contact the VIT on 1300 888 067 or vit@vit.vic.edu.au.

In some cases, certain actions which involve physical or emotional misconduct, such as unlawful assault or threats to the person, may constitute a criminal offence. These types of offences should be reported to and investigated by the police. Initial consultation with the Principal may help to determine the appropriate course of action in these circumstances.

Complaints against the Principal of Catholic Ladies' College

In the case of a complaint involving the Principal, contact the Board Chair at boardchair@clc.vic.edu.au

Complaints against the clergy or other persons involved in religious ministry

Complaints involving clergy or other persons engaged in religious should be directed to the Professional Standards unit of the Vicar General's Office in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, 383 Albert Street, East Melbourne. Visit www.melbournecatholic.org or contact 03 9926 5677.

Complaints in relation to Information Sharing Schemes

The College is a prescribed Information Sharing Entity (ISE) that may share information under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS). The College, as an ISE, may receive complaints from individuals in relation to its conduct as an ISE under the CISS or FVISS. It may also receive a complaint from another ISE. The following information is recorded where a complaint is received under the CISS or FVISS:

- the date the complaint was made and received
- the nature of the complaint
- the action taken to resolve the complaint
- the action taken to lessen or prevent the issue from recurring
- the time taken to resolve the complaint
- further action taken if the complaint was not resolved.

Privacy laws may prohibit information being provided to the complainant of any specific action that has been taken in relation to individuals about whom the complaint has been raised. The College



will ensure that all records are maintained in accordance with its obligations under the [Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards](#) and the *CLC Privacy Policy*.

Outcomes of Complaints

Following investigation and resolution, outcomes may include:

- an apology – either verbal or written
- mediation – with an internal or external mediator
- an official warning
- disciplinary action
- a behavioural contract (in the case of a student)
- pastoral or spiritual care
- an understanding that the behaviour will not be repeated
- a change in policy or procedure.

Complaint Escalation

Internal Escalation

If the matter cannot be resolved at the College, or if the complaint is about the Principal of the College, complainants may contact the Board Chair at boardchair@clc.vic.edu.au

External Escalation

If the complaint is unable to be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, but the matter is however finalised, the complainant has the right to seek alternative independent or other advice or contact other entities such as the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC), or the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). Complaints related to the minimum standards for school registration can be referred to the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

Withdrawal of a Complaint

A complaint can be withdrawn at any stage during the complaint management procedures by notifying the Principal in writing.

Anonymous complaints

The College endeavours to address and respond to all complaints including those made anonymously. Anonymous complaints will be recorded in the same manner that all other complaints are recorded but the level of action or response may be limited by the information provided. If the complainant wishes to remain anonymous, it is at the Principal's discretion what, if any, action will be taken.

Related Documents

CLC Staff (Bullying) Policy

CLC Staff Internal Grievances and Dispute Resolution Policy

CLC Privacy Policy

CLC Student Positive Relationships Policy: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Community Safety Orders

CLC Whistleblower Policy

**Review Schedule**

Stage	Date	Ratified	Ratified by
Initiated	2016	2016	
Review 1	July 2017	July 2017	
Review 2	September 2018	September 2018	
Review 3	April 2019	May 2019	
Review 4	July 2021	July 2021	
Review 5	October 2022	October 2022	
Review 7	June 2026	June 2026	Executive

Refer Appendix 1: Complaint Handling Procedure



Appendix 1: Complaint Handling Procedure

The following steps can guide the procedure in making a complaint about issues arising at the College:

1. Clarify the issue

- Be clear about the topic or issue to be discussed
- Gather all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue
- Think about what an acceptable outcome would be
- Refer to the Complaints Handling Policy.

2. Make the complaint

- Contact the relevant person (e.g. classroom teacher) by email outlining your concerns
- Meet via phone or in person with the relevant person/s if required
- Arrange meeting times or phone calls through reception 9439 4077
- Allow a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address the complaint.

3. Process for Dealing with Complaints

The College will record the details of all complaints including the name and contact details of the persons making the complaint. The College will then refer the complaint to the most appropriate person to undertake an inquiry. There will be many occasions that this will be someone other than the Principal. The staff member conducting the inquiry may conduct a preliminary inquiry or communicate with the parent to discuss the matter further.

If the scope of the inquiry is beyond the capacity or jurisdiction of the College, the matter will be referred to the Mary Aikenhead Education Ltd and the parent will be informed of the referral.

4. Support Person at Meetings

Parents or other Community members discussing complaints with the Principal may be accompanied by a support person. The support person can be a family member, a friend or a professional with knowledge of the student. Any person acting in a professional capacity on behalf of the Parents must provide their occupational details and full name prior to the meeting being held. It is at the Principal's discretion if an external professional is a participating member of any College meeting. The support person may encourage and facilitate sharing of Parents knowledge, perception and issues. The support person should support a positive working relationship between all parties. The support person does not speak on behalf of Parents when discussing complaints with the Principal. In exceptional circumstances, and as negotiated with the Principal, the support person may be able to speak for the Parents.

Any inquiry conducted by the College will be conducted in a timely, efficient and confidential manner, ensuring the fair principles on natural justice are applied for all. Parents will be provided with an anticipated timeframe for a resolution. The staff member conducting the inquiry will record the details of the inquiry.

5. Escalate to the Principal or Deputy Principal

- If the complaint remains unresolved, request an appointment, through reception, to discuss the complaint with the Principal or Deputy Principal(s)
- The Principal may be represented by another senior staff member. The meeting time may occur outside classroom hours.



6. Expectations of Complainants

The College requests and expects that the complainant will:

- raise the complaint as soon as possible after the issue has arisen
- communicate and respond in ways that are constructive, fair and respectful
- provide accurate, complete and factual information about the complaint
- be respectful and observe confidentiality
- act in good faith
- have realistic and reasonable expectations about possible outcomes/remedies.

Under no circumstances should a Parent approach another student in the care of the College to discuss a complaint or school-related issue.

Complainants are to be respectful, confidential and courteous. Where communication becomes unreasonable, threatening or discourteous, the College may pause or terminate the discussion and arrange an alternative time or process to ensure respectful engagement.

Conclusion

These procedures are designed to provide a clear and consistent approach to managing complaints at the College. By following these steps, concerns can be addressed in a timely and constructive manner, ensuring procedural fairness for all parties.

The College will continue to review and improve its complaints management practices to support a safe and respectful learning environment.