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1. Policy Statement

Mandurah Baptist College is committed to fostering positive relationships and resolving concerns or complaints promptly and fairly, with confidentiality and procedural fairness. We recognise that students and parents/guardians may sometimes have complaints about decisions, actions, or omissions they find unacceptable. While many issues can be resolved through discussion, some may require further steps.

The College is dedicated to providing a culturally safe environment where all cultural groups feel respected and heard without fear of discrimination.

2. Scope

This Complaints Handling Policy applies to all Mandurah Baptist College community members, including students, parents, guardians, staff, volunteers, and external stakeholders. It covers the processes for raising, managing, and resolving complaints related to the College's operations, services, and staff actions or behaviour, ensuring that all concerns are addressed promptly, fairly, and culturally sensitively.

The policy excludes employment-related grievances by staff, which are addressed through the College's internal grievance resolution procedures.

3. Rationale

The College's Complaints Handling Program aims to be in line with:

- School Registration Standard 9 – Complaints (meeting Section 159(1)(k) of the School Education Act 1999).
- Principles 6 and 9 of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, using the Office of Child Safety's "Complaints Handling Guide: Upholding the Rights of Children and Young People".
- the Australian/New Zealand complaints handling standard (AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organisations).

4. Definitions

4.1 Complaint: A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to Mandurah Baptist College about its services or operations, decisions, actions, or those of its staff or about the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. Complaints are managed through the Formal Complaints process (Refer below).

4.2 Concern: A concern is an expression of worry or doubt over an important issue for which reassurances are sought. Concerns are managed through the Informal Resolution process (Refer below).

4.3 Staff: Staff includes all teaching and non-teaching staff, volunteers, contractors, and external providers.

4.4 Natural Justice: Natural justice or procedural fairness refers to the common law duty to observe procedural fairness or natural justice when a decision is made that affects a person's rights, interests, or legitimate expectations directly or immediately. When a decision deprives a person of some right or interest or the legitimate expectation of a benefit, they are entitled to know the case sought to be made against them and to be allowed to reply to it.

4.5 Rules of procedural fairness require:

- a hearing appropriate to the circumstances,
- lack of bias,
- evidence to support a decision, and
- an inquiry into matters in dispute.

4.6 Resolution: Resolution aims to seek a satisfactory outcome for both parties.

4.7 Dispute: A dispute is an unresolved complaint, whether internally or externally.

4.8 Unresolved Complaint: An unresolved complaint is one that has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant and may be escalated by the complainant as a dispute.

4.9 Business Day: A Business Day means 8.00am to 4.00pm from Monday through to Friday, except for Public Holidays in Western Australia.

5. Our Commitment

Mandurah Baptist College is committed to an effective, efficient, and fair complaints management process. We will:

- Welcome concerns and complaints from our College community who are dissatisfied with our services, decisions, actions, or those of its staff.
- Resolve concerns and complaints in a way that considers the best interests of all students, reflects our College values, and promotes the restoration of relationships between all members of the College community.
- Have a simpler child friendly language complaints process for children and young people.
- Address each complaint in an equitable, objective, and unbiased manner.
- Treat all complaints received in accordance with our Privacy Policy. Information is only shared with those who need to know.
- Treat complainants with respect and provide them with clear explanations of our actions and decisions wherever the law or College Policy allows.
- Recognise feedback and complaints as opportunities to build knowledge and improve our services and performance.
- Always be courteous and professional.
- Respond to complaints promptly and thoroughly.

- Not tolerate any form of victimisation or adverse consequences shown towards complainants.
- Effectively capture, manage, and report on complaints.
- Meet reporting, record keeping, privacy, and employment law obligations.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Board

The Board is responsible for:

- Supporting the Principal in the implementation of the Complaints Handling Policy.
- Dealing with complaints in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy.
- Reporting complaints directly received by the Board to the Principal to deal with in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy, when applicable.

6.2 Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementing the Complaints Handling Policy.
- Using complaint information to identify trends and drive improvement.
- Referring complainants to the Board Chair or external agencies if their complaint remains unresolved.

6.3 Staff

All staff are responsible for responding to complaints in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy.

Staff involved in the complaints management process are responsible for:

- Ensuring their actions are in the best interest of students, reflecting College values and restoring relationships in the College community.
- Dealing effectively and efficiently with complaints in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy
- Ensuring complaints are correctly recorded as per the Complaints Handling Policy
- Ensuring continuous improvement occurs as a result of feedback from complaints.

7. Training and Awareness

7.1 Staff

- New staff, volunteers, and casuals receive complaints handling training during induction.
- All staff must comply with this policy when they become aware of or are dealing with any complaints.
- All staff receive Child Protection and Complaints Handling training to ensure they handle complaints professionally and appropriately.

7.2 Students

- Students participate in the review of the Students Complaints Policy.
- The Student Complaints Policy is available on the College website.

- The Protective Behaviours Curriculum assists in equipping students to raise concerns and teach them about their rights.
- Student School Surveys are used regularly to seek student feedback about College Policies.
- The Student Code of Conduct, signed at the time of their enrolment and accessible on the College website includes information about how to raise concerns.

7.3 Parents/Guardians and College Community

- Awareness is raised through communication and College newsletters.
- The Complaints Handling Policy is accessible and available on the College website.
- Parent School Surveys are used regularly to seek feedback from the College community to determine the level of satisfaction with services and College Policies.

8. Culturally Safe Complaints Handling

Mandurah Baptist College provides a safe and open environment and welcomes feedback. The College respects and values diversity.

As there is no single right way to respond to diversity, the College is open to learning, understanding and responding to diverse cultures, beliefs, experiences, abilities, and backgrounds.

9. Student Concerns or Complaints

The College will take students reporting problems and concerns seriously. The College will promptly acknowledge any concerns or complaints and treat the students with respect and understanding.

Staff will follow this Policy's complaints process and procedures when receiving student complaints.

Students can make use of alternative formats in expressing a concern or making a complaint:

- By talking to any staff member they are comfortable with, trust, or feel safe to speak to.
- By completing the student complaint form available on the College website.
- By writing it down if they find it easier.
- By emailing it to a staff member.
- Through their parents/guardians.
- Through someone else talking on their behalf.

Staff will follow College Policies and fulfil all applicable legal obligations, depending on the nature of the student's concern or complaint.

The College will support students in addressing any issues raised.

A student may need a person to complain on their behalf but should also be allowed to participate directly, to the extent they desire. In expressing a concern and/or making a

complaint themselves, a student may need/want support from an appropriate person.

Students will be given a choice on how they wish to be kept updated on the progress of their complaint.

Students are told about what information must be reported, how the College will protect their privacy and confidentiality and be made aware of the limits of confidentiality as the process progresses.

Once resolved, an appropriate staff member will discuss the outcome with the student. Follow-up may be required depending on the nature of the issue.

Refer to the College Website for a copy of the [Student Concerns or Complaints](#)

10. Staff Concerns or Complaints

This Policy does not apply to complaints made by staff that are employment related.

Staff should follow the [Internal Grievance Resolution Procedure](#) outlined in the Human Resources Program.

The internal grievance resolution procedures address work-related problems, conflicts in the workplace and internal complaints about the work environment.

11. Child Safety Complaints or Allegations

Mandurah Baptist College takes seriously its commitment to student safety and wellbeing. We provide a safe environment where students are protected from all forms of harm.

Complaints about or allegations of child abuse, grooming, or other harm, whether involving former or current staff or students, another person on College grounds, or during school-related activities are handled differently by the College. This is due to the additional confidentiality and privacy requirements surrounding these matters.

Child safety-related complaints are referred to the Principal.

If the complaint concerns a sensitive matter regarding the Principal, the complaint can be sent to "The Board Chair" at boardcomplaints@mbc.wa.edu.au or in writing to "The Board Chair" at Mandurah Baptist College, PO Box 4116, Mandurah North WA 6210".

12. Managing Child Safety Complaints or Allegations

The Principal will immediately respond to student safety incidents, complaints or allegations of grooming, child abuse, and breaches of the codes of conduct in the best interests of students and according to College Policies and Procedures.

Parents and guardians can access this procedure and copies of the Staff and Student Codes of Conduct via the College website.

Incidents will be reported promptly to the appropriate authorities by following College Policies and Procedures.

Depending on the nature of the student safety incident, the Principal will, if required by law, report the incident to the Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS), the Police and/or other appropriate authorities.

The Principal will nominate appropriate staff to assist in coordinating responses to student safety incidents.

The Principal will also ensure that support is available to any student, staff member and family members impacted by the incident. The College ensures they are informed about advocacy and support services available to assist them.

Refer to the College Website for a copy of *Managing Child Safety Complaints or Allegations*: ([Managing-Child-Safety-Complaints-or-Allegations](#))

13. The Role of the Director General

The Director General of the Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that the College observes the School Registration Standards, including the standard of its complaints handling system. Any student, parent or community member is entitled to contact the Director General with concerns about how the College has dealt with a complaint. Information is available on the Department of Education website ([Non-government-school-concerns](#)). While the Director General may consider whether the College has breached the School Registration Standards, they do not have the power to intervene in a complaint or override the College's decision.

14. Confidentiality and Privacy

The complaints handling process is confidential, and any concerns, complaints or disputes are a matter between the parties concerned and those directly involved in the complaints handling process.

Confidentiality applies to information about the person making the complaint and, if relevant, the subject of the complaint. The College is committed to maintaining confidentiality throughout the complaints process.

Unless allowed by law for legal reasons, personally identifiable information about a complainant will only be shared to address the complaint and will be actively protected from disclosure unless the complainant gives consent.

15. Informal Resolution

Most issues causing concern can be managed quickly and informally. Parents/Guardians will, where appropriate, raise their concerns directly with the staff member most closely concerned with the issue.

The staff member may be able to resolve the issue quickly. Staff may be contacted by parents/guardians in person, by telephone or by email.

Parents/Guardians may ask for assistance in expressing their concerns.

Even though concerns are resolved informally and not recorded as complaints, staff must log the details of the concern and resolution in SEQTA. This enables organisational reviews and analyses to identify improvements and take appropriate remedial action.

If the staff member is unable to resolve the concern, escalation of the issue will be required. The issue will then be recorded and managed as a formal complaint.

16. Formal Complaints

16.1 Accessibility

Complaints can be made by any of the following means:

- contacting the College and asking to speak to the relevant staff member as per the Complaints Flowchart.
- accessing the online complaints form available on the College website at: [Complaints Handling Policy](#).
- sending an email to the Head of Primary traceyr@mbc.wa.edu.au or the Head of Secondary joannem@mbc.wa.edu.au.
- write a letter to the College addressed to "The Head of Primary or The Head of Secondary, Mandurah Baptist College, PO Box 4116, Mandurah North WA 6210".

Anonymous complaints received will be dealt with at the Principal's discretion as to what action to take, if any, depending on the nature and validity of the complaint. Although it may not be possible to obtain sufficient details when a complaint is made anonymously, they are still accepted, recorded, evaluated and actioned to the greatest extent feasible.

If the complaint concerns a sensitive matter regarding the Principal, it can be made in writing and addressed to "The Board Chair, Mandurah Baptist College, PO Box 4116, Mandurah North WA 6210" or the complainant could email boardcomplaints@mbc.wa.edu.au

16.2 Responsiveness

The College will:

- acknowledge complaints promptly. Formal complaints are acknowledged within five (5) business days from receipt.
- inform complainants of the progress of their complaint.
- assess and finalise each complaint as quickly as possible. The formal complaints process will commence within five (5) business days of receiving the complaint.
- use its best endeavours to resolve the complaint as soon as practicable or within 30 business days, where possible, depending on the nature of the complaint.
- resolve complaints as soon as practicable at the first point of contact wherever possible.

17. Internal Complaints Handling Procedure

Step 1 – The complainant contacts the College and asks to speak to the relevant staff member –

- If the complaint is regarding teaching / academic standards – they will be referred

to the Classroom Teacher for Primary School or to the Head of Learning Area for Secondary School.

- If the complaint is regarding student safety and wellbeing or behaviour management – they will be referred to the Classroom Teacher for Primary School or to the Head of Year for Secondary School.
- If the complaint is regarding a particular Teacher – They will be referred to the Head of Learning Area for Secondary School and either the Dean of Early Learning or Dean of Upper Primary for Primary School.
- If the complaint concerns the Principal – they will be referred to the Board Chair. The Board Chair may elect to refer the matter back to the Principal for attempted resolution, if appropriate.
- If the complaint concerns a sensitive matter regarding the Principal, it can be made in writing and addressed to "The Board Chair, Mandurah Baptist College, PO Box 4116, Mandurah North WA 6210." or complainants could email boardcomplaints@mbc.wa.edu.au.
- If the complaint concerns a sensitive matter regarding a Board member or the Board and the complainant is a staff member, the complaint should be referred to the Principal.
- If the complainant is anyone other than a staff member and the complaint concerns a sensitive matter regarding a Board member or the Board:
 - it can be made in writing and addressed to "The Board Chair", or "The Board Vice Chair" (if regarding the Board Chair), Mandurah Baptist College, PO Box 4116, Mandurah North WA 6210." **or**
 - it can be emailed to the Board Chair, email: boardcomplaints@mbc.wa.edu.au
If the complaint is regarding the Board Chair it should be addressed to the Board Vice Chair.

Step 2 – The complainant will be sent a response within five (5) business days, explaining how the matter will proceed. The relevant staff member will investigate the issue raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination. It is our policy, where possible, to resolve all complaints within 30 business days. The complainant will be informed of the outcome of the complaint, including action taken or proposed.

Step 3 – If the complainant is not satisfied with the process or the outcome, they can request for their complaint to be referred to the Head of School for Secondary or Primary. The Head of School will then refer the matter to the Principal if further follow-up is required.

Step 4 – Internal reviews: If the Head of Primary or Secondary refers the matter to the Principal, the Principal will review the dispute internally, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Principal or their delegate aims to resolve all disputes within 30 business days from the date the review process is initiated. The matter will be closed if the response of the Principal or their delegate is accepted.

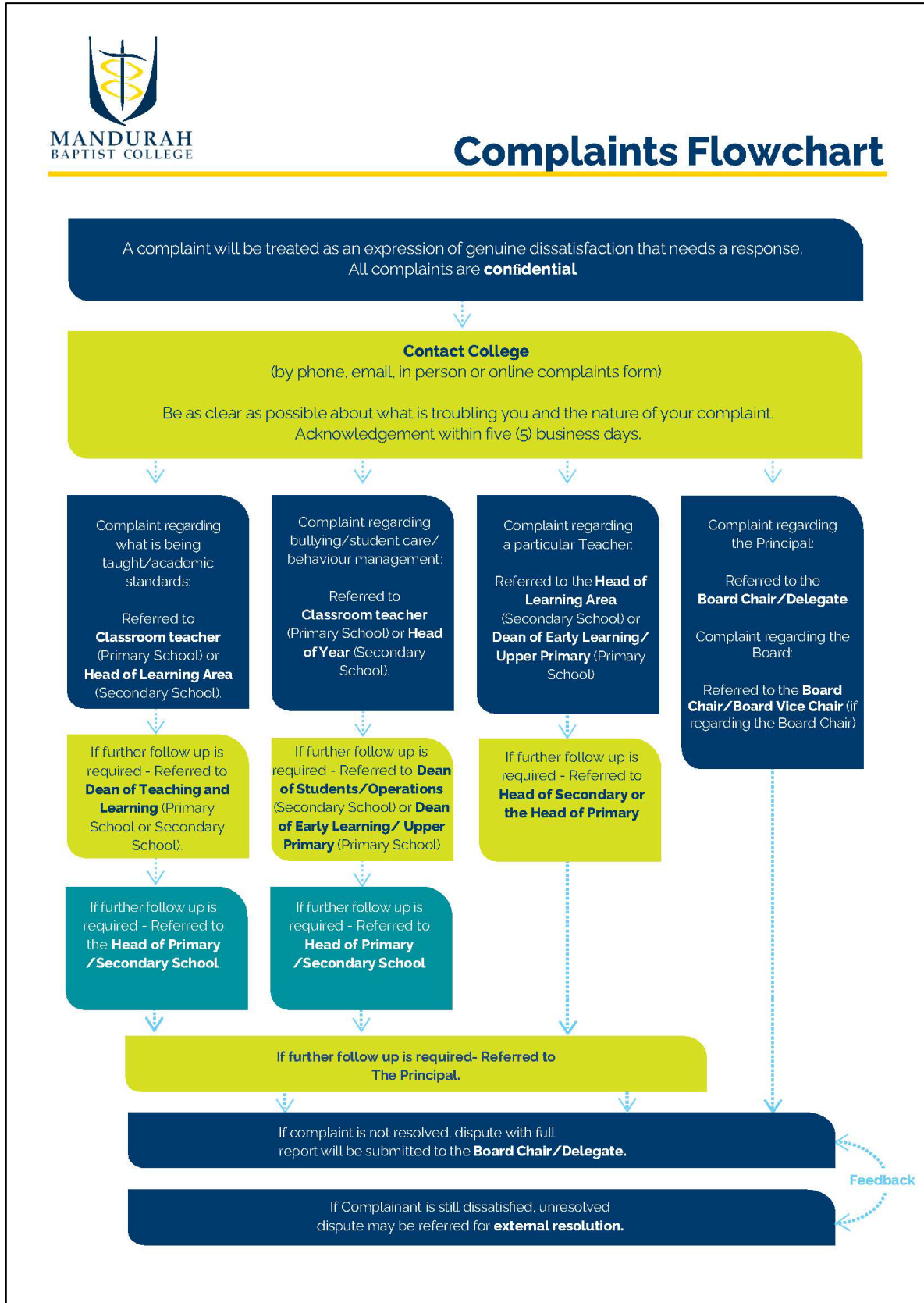
Step 5 - All complaints received by or referred to the Principal will be entered into our Complaints Register (Tickit on Demand) and, where appropriate, remedial action taken to

address any underlying processes that the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.

Step 6 – If complainants are not satisfied with the outcome, they have the right to request a review of the process by submitting a dispute with the Principal. The Principal will refer the dispute to the Board Chair. It is our policy, where possible, to resolve all disputes within 30 business days.

The Board Chair will request a full report from the Principal and examine matters thoroughly before responding. The board's decision will be conveyed to them directly, completing the internal complaints handling process.

Step 7 – If the matter remains unresolved, external resolution alternatives may be pursued.



18. Principles of Procedural Fairness

Conflicts of interest are managed to ensure a fair process and outcome for the complainant and the subject of the complaint.

The College will act fairly during the investigation and in its decision making. This means that:

- both the complainant and the subject of the complaint will be given the opportunity to be heard, in person or in writing as appropriate and to respond to the allegations and/or evidence offered by the other,
- issues or facts that are disputed are investigated,
- the investigator is free from bias or the perception of bias and, in particular, is not 'judge in his or her own cause',
- any complaint outcome is supported by the evidence, necessitating a finding on the balance of probabilities in the event of a dispute of fact,
- the complaint outcome is finalised by an adjudicator, who may also be the investigator, who is free from bias or the perception of bias and
- the outcome is consistent with College Policies.

Procedural fairness is concerned with the procedures used by a decision maker rather than the actual outcome reached.

18.1 Resolution

The College will:

- advise complainants of outcomes as soon as possible after a decision is made.
- inform complainants of the reason for decisions wherever the law and our Policies allow.
- advise complainants of their right to request a review of the process by submitting a dispute to the Principal.

Where possible complaints should be managed and resolved at the first point of contact. This may be more easily done on occasion however, in a case where the matter needs to be referred on, it is important that this is done in a manner that is consistent with the Internal Grievance Handling Procedure.

Following an appropriate investigation, conducted without bias or the perception of bias, the College will offer a response, for example to correct the problem and prevent it happening in the future. Care should be taken to not give complainants explicit information on what action has been taken but rather provide an assurance that action has been taken.

There will be occasions where a complainant is not satisfied and wants to take the matter further. The next step would usually involve the complainant requesting consideration and review of the matter by e.g. the Principal or the Board Chair. (Refer to steps 4 and 6 in the Internal Complaints Handling Procedure.)

18.2 Disputes

Disputes, where possible, will be resolved within 30 business days.

The Principal refers any disputes (Refer to step 6 in the Internal Complaints Handling Procedure), to the Board Chair. The Board Chair will request a full report from the Principal and examine matters thoroughly before responding.

The decision of the Board will be conveyed to the complainant directly.

If the complainant is dissatisfied, the Board Chair may offer a meeting between the complainant, the Principal and the Board Chair. The complainant has a right to bring a support person who is not involved with the complaint.

If the matter remains unresolved, complainants are welcome to pursue external resolution alternatives:

- complainants may be offered mediation, conciliation or arbitration in an attempt to resolve the dispute. The Board Chair has no further involvement until the person facilitating the dispute resolution reports back.
- any student, parent or community member is entitled to contact the Director General with concerns about how the College has dealt with a complaint. Refer to - The Role of the Director General - above.

19. Record Keeping

Proper records of complaints are crucial for future reference or potential legal cases. The college stores these records according to its Records Management Policy.

Formal complaints received by staff other than the Principal will be recorded in SEQTA.

All formal complaints addressed to the Principal will be recorded in our online complaints management system, Tickit on Demand.

The following details, if relevant and available, are recorded in SEQTA and Tickit on Demand:

- name and contact details of the person making the complaint and relationship to the College - parent/guardian, student, member of the College community etc.
- nature of the complaint – whether it be about curriculum, student learning, pastoral care, facilities, and resources.
- the subject of the complaint (person the complaint is against).
- details of the complaint and what action the complainant recommends we take.
- dates received, acknowledged, and closed.
- details of action taken, including any remedial action for improvement.
- results of investigation and date investigation completed.
- complaint investigator and position/role at the College.
- resolution agreed with or offered to the complainant.
- any escalation required – date of referral for review, name, and position of the reviewer (e.g. Board Chair).
- outcome of the review of the dispute.
- date review finalised and review resolution agreed with or offered to the complainant.
- any documentary evidence.

All the available information relevant to a complaint must be recorded.

A Complaints Register is kept in Tickit on Demand for all complaints the Principal receives.

20. Monitoring Effectiveness and Continuous Improvement

The College is committed to continuous improvement and actively monitors the quality and effectiveness of our complaints handling program through ongoing reviews and analysing complaints to identify trends or systemic failures.

The Principal communicates any opportunities for improvement or remedial actions to the responsible person or areas.

School Surveys are used at regular intervals to seek feedback from the College community to determine the level of satisfaction with services and College Policies.

The complaints handling program will be formally reviewed biennially or as required to meet legal requirements.

21. Related School Policies

- Codes of Conduct
- Child Protection Policies and Procedures
- Responding to Complaints and Allegations against Staff Procedure
- Student Complaints Form and Policy
- Managing Child Safety Complaints or Allegations
- Records Management Policy
- Supporting Students Affected by Abuse Procedure