



COOLUM BEACH CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

knowledge · wisdom · love

Complaints Handling Policy

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.	
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.	
Status:	Approved	Supersedes: December 2023
Authorised by:	Board Chair	Date of Authorisation: December 2024
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2017• Australian Education Regulations 2013• Fair Work Act 2009• Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)• Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)• Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)• Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)• Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)• Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)• Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)• Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) <p>Choose those appropriate from list below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coolum Beach Christian College Enterprise Bargaining Agreement or equivalent• Coolum Beach Christian College Work Health and Safety Policy• Coolum Beach Christian College Sexual Harassment Policy• Coolum Beach Christian College Disability Policy• Coolum Beach Christian College Workplace Bullying Policy• Coolum Beach Christian College Privacy Policy	
Review Date:	Annually	Next Review Date: December 2025
Policy Owner:	School Governing Body	

Policy Statement

Coolum Beach Christian College is committed to ensuring that student, parent and employee complaints are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, and effective and fair way.

Coolum Beach Christian College views complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process.

Coolum Beach Christian College acknowledges the right of students, parents and employees to complain when dissatisfied with an action, inaction or decision of the school and the school encourages constructive criticism and complaints.

Coolum Beach Christian College recognises that time spent on handling complaints can be an investment in better service to students, parents and employees.

Definitions

Complaint An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the school, related to the school's services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.²

Informal Complaint

A complaint about a matter that is likely to be simple, straight forward, easily manageable, or minor, where a simple or quick resolution is appropriate such as 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 informal complaint that could not be resolved informally. Assessment of the complaint is required by <<add role or roles e.g. a relevant member of the senior leadership team>>.

Complainant

The person, organisation or their representative making a complaint.³

Respondent

The person who is referred to in a complaint by a complainant as the person responsible for their concerns or who can best respond their concern.

Complaints Handling Principles

Coolum Beach Christian College will manage complaints according to the following (which include principles of procedural fairness):

- 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

Complaints that may be Resolved under this Policy

Coolum Beach Christian College encourage students, parents and employees to lodge promptly any concerns regarding sexual harassment, child protection, discrimination, workplace bullying and privacy breaches as well as more general complaints that include areas such as:

- the school, its employees or students having done something wrong
- the school, its employees or students having failed to do something they should have done
- the school, its employees or students having acted unfairly or impolitely
- issues of student or employee behaviour that are contrary to their relevant Code of Conduct
- 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 school policies or procedures, for example the child protection policy, discrimination policy, or privacy policy.

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

Issues Outside this Policy

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

- Child protection concerns or risks of harm to children should be dealt with in accordance with the law and the school's Child Protection Policy.
- Student bullying complaints should be dealt with under the Student Bullying Policy.
- Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the Behaviour Management Policy.
- 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.
- Formal legal proceedings.
- Complaints relating to the education and training services provided by the school to an overseas student should be dealt with in accordance with the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 and National Code and the school's Overseas Student's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Process.

Complaints Handling Principles

Coolum Beach Christian College is committed to managing complaints according to the following principles:

- complaints will be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible
- complaints will be taken seriously
- anonymous complaints will be treated on their merits, complaints will be dealt with fairly and objectively and in a timely manner
- Coolum Beach Christian College will determine the appropriate person to deal with the complaint in the first instance. Complaints should be resolved with as little formality and disputation as possible
- mediation, negotiation and informal resolution are optional alternatives
- procedural fairness will be ensured wherever practicable, including the right of interested parties to the complaint to be heard
- confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- all parties to the complaints will be appropriately supported
- Coolum Beach Christian College will give reasonable progress updates
- appropriate remedies will be offered and implemented
- provide a review pathway for parties to the complaint if warranted
- complainants, respondents and people associated with them will not be victimised as a result of lodging the complaints and they will not suffer any other reprisals
- the school will keep records of complaints
- the school's insurer will be informed if a complaint could be connected to an insured risk.

Responsibilities

Coolum Beach Christian College

The school has the following role and responsibilities:

- develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the school's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures
- appropriately communicate the school's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures to students, parents and employees
- ensure that the Complaints Handling procedures are readily accessible by staff, students and parents
- upon receipt of a complaint, manage the complaint in accordance with the Complaints Handling procedures
- 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 governing body on complaints
- report to the school's insurer when that is relevant
- refer to the school's governing body immediately any claim for legal redress.

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 procedures
- lodge the complaint as soon as possible after the issue arises
- expect that the complaint will be dealt with fairly and objectively; in a timely manner; with procedural fairness wherever practicable; that confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible
- 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
- act in a non-threatening manner
- to be appropriately supported
- acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- 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.

Employees Receiving Complaints

Employees receiving complaints have the following role and responsibilities:

- act in accordance with the College's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures
- 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
- provide the complainant with a copy of the College's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures
- maintain confidentiality
- keep appropriate records
- to forward complaints to more senior employees, including the Principal, as appropriate
- not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

Implementation

Coolum Beach Christian College is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints at the school, including by the development and implementation of this policy and related procedures, and via the clear support and promotion of the policy and procedures.

Coolum Beach Christian College is also committed to appropriately training relevant employees (especially senior staff) on how to resolve complaints in line with this policy and the related procedures.

Coolum Beach Christian College will keep appropriate records of complaints, will monitor complaints and their resolution and will report on a high-level basis to the school Board on complaint handling at the school.

Coolum Beach Christian College will act to encourage students, parents and employees to contribute to a healthy school culture where complaints are resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible.

Complaint Register

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

The complaint register will be stored securely.

All complaints shall be entered onto the complaint register as soon as practicable after the complaint is received. The complaint register will not contain complaints about the Principal. Records of complaints about the Principal will be maintained by the Board with access restricted to the Board.

To safeguard confidentiality and maintain the integrity of the complaint process, access to the entire complaint register will be limited to the Principal and the Principal's Executive Assistant, and Board.

The Principal may authorise the sharing of specific, relevant entries from the complaint register with other designated staff members (such as the senior 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.

Complaint Handling Procedure

Coolum Beach Christian College existing Complaints Handling Procedure. Located on the College website or in MyCool under staff links > Policies and Procedures.



Complaints Procedure

Purpose and Scope

The purpose is to ensure that student, parent and employee complaints or disputes are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective and fair manner.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is defined as an expression of concern regarding any aspect of the College's operations, including but not limited to teaching, facilities, administration, or student welfare (which include principles of procedural fairness)

Definitions

Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the school, related to the school's services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. ¹
Informal Complaint	A complaint about a matter that is likely to be simple, straight forward, easily manageable, or minor, where a simple or quick resolution is appropriate such as 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 informal complaint that could not be resolved informally. Assessment of the complaint is required by <<add role or roles e.g. a relevant member of the senior leadership team>>.
Complainant	The person, organisation or their representative making a complaint. ²
Respondent	The person who is referred to in a complaint by a complainant as the person responsible for their concerns or who can best respond to their concern.

¹ Standards Australia, Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2018, NEQ), s.4.3

² Standards Australia, Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2018, NEQ), s.4.2

3. Informal Resolution

3.1. Staff Complaints:

Step 1: Staff members are encouraged to discuss any concerns directly with the individual(s) involved or their immediate Line Manager.

Step 2: If the issue is not resolved, the staff member should seek advice from their Line Manager, Human Resources officer, or Principal.

3.2. Parent Complaints:

Parents have access to the Complaints Handling Policy via the College website.

Step 1: Parents are encouraged to initially discuss their concerns with the relevant teacher, Head of College, or Principal.

Step 2: If the matter remains unresolved, the parent should contact the college office to arrange a meeting with Head of Sector, or Principal.

4. Formal Complaint Process

4.1. Submission of a Formal Complaint:

Step 1: If the issue cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint should be submitted in writing to the Principal. The complaint should include:

- A clear statement of the issue.
- Relevant facts and evidence.
- The desired outcome or resolution.
- A complaint relating to the Principal can be sent to the chairman@cbcc.qld.edu.au
- All other complaints should be sent to the Principal kmcallister@cbcc.qld or business@cbcc.qld.edu.au

4.2. Acknowledgment:

The college will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 5 working days, outlining the next steps and anticipated timelines.

5. Investigation

5.1. Investigation Process:

The Principal will investigate or appoint an impartial investigator to review the complaint. This may involve:

- Gathering written statements from the complainant, respondent, and any witnesses.
- Reviewing relevant documents, policies, and records.
- Principles of procedural fairness.
- Allow due process to all parties.
- Make findings
- Communicate findings and recommendations.

5.2. Confidentiality:

All complaints will be handled confidentially, with information shared only on a need-to-know basis.

6. Outcome and Response

6.1. Resolution:

- Depending on the findings of the investigation the appropriate persons (Board/Principal/Leadership team member) will action necessary remedial action.
- The Principal will determine the outcome and any necessary remedial action.
- The complainant will receive a written response outlining the findings, conclusions, and any actions to be taken within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.

6.2. Appeal:

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal in writing to the Board of the College within 15 working days of receiving the response. The appeal must state the grounds for dissatisfaction.

Appeals should direct their emails to chairman@cbcc.qld.edu.au

7. Appeal Process

7.1. Review:

The Chairman will review the appeal and may appoint himself or a Board member as independent person or panel to consider the case. This person or panel will not include anyone directly involved in the investigation of the original complaint.

- Gathering written statements from the complainant, respondent, and any witnesses.
- Reviewing relevant documents, policies, and records.
- Principles of procedural fairness.
- Allow due process to all parties.
- Make findings
- Communicate findings and recommendations.

7.2. Outcome:

The Board Chair will provide a final written decision to the complainant within 20 working days of the appeal being lodged. The decision of the Board Chair is final.

8. Record Keeping

The college will maintain records of all complaints and their outcomes in a Complaints Register. These records will be stored securely and used for monitoring and improving the college's practices.

9. External Complaints

If a complainant is not satisfied with the internal process, they may escalate their complaint to external bodies such as the local education authority or an Non State Schools Accreditation Board - NSSAB.

10. Monitoring and Review

This procedure will be reviewed by the college leadership annually to ensure it remains effective and compliant with relevant regulations.