



COOLUM BEACH CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

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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. ¹	
Scope:	Students, parents and staff, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual staff, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements.	
Status:	Approved	Supersedes: December 2026
Authorised by:	Board Chair	Date of Authorisation: June 2026
References:	• <u>Education (Accreditation of Non-State College s) Regulations 2017</u> • <u>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 and National Code</u> • <u>Standards Australia, AS 10002:2022 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2018 NEQ)</u> Choose those appropriate from list below • Coolum Beach Christian College Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy • Coolum Beach Christian College Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy • Coolum Beach Christian College Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure • Coolum Beach Christian College Work Health and Safety Policy • Coolum Beach Christian College Sexual Harassment Policy • Coolum Beach Christian College Student Discrimination & Disability Policy • Coolum Beach Christian College Workplace Bullying Policy • Coolum Beach Christian College Privacy Policy • <u>Coolum Beach Christian College Child Safe Standards – Statement of Commitment</u> • Coolum Beach Staff Code of Conduct Policy	
Review Date:	Annually	Next Review Date: December 2027
Policy Owner:	College Governing Body	

¹ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2017, s.7

Policy Statement

Coolum Beach Christian College acknowledges the right of students, parents/guardians, staff and others to complain when dissatisfied with the College 's services, including an action, inaction or decision of the College. The College encourages constructive criticism and complaints. Coolum Beach Christian College is committed to ensuring that complaints received are handled in a responsive, efficient, consistent, effective, transparent and fair way.

Coolum Beach Christian College will ensure staff can recognise, receive, and appropriately refer complaints to the informal or formal complaints procedure.

Coolum Beach Christian College recognises that time spent on handling complaints can be an investment in better service to students and parents/guardians and a better culture for staff, and views complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process.

Coolum Beach Christian College promotes a safe, inclusive and culturally responsive environment for all students, ensuring their safety and wellbeing are prioritised. Coolum Beach Christian College is committed to students exercising their right to speak up and participate in College processes and decisions that affect them.

Coolum Beach Christian College recognises that some complaints may raise issues of child protection or reportable conduct involving workers. These matters will be managed in accordance with relevant legislation and the College 's i.e. Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy and [Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy, including compliance with the *Reportable Conduct Scheme*.

College 's statement of commitment to student safety and wellbeing.

Definitions

Complainant	The person, organisation or their representative making a complaint. ¹
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the College , related to the College 's services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. ²
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 or allegations of reportable conduct involving a worker. Assessment of the complaint is required by [add role or roles e.g. a relevant member of the senior leadership team].
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.
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.
Worker	Has the same meaning as section 8 of the <i>Child Safe Organisations Act</i> 2024. A worker is a person who performs work of any kind for the College, including staff, volunteers, contractors, subcontractors, consultants, labour-hire workers, governing body members, and religious leaders.

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 complaint 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

¹ Standards Australia, AS 1002:2022 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2018, NEQ), s.4.2

² Standards Australia, AS 1002:2022 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2018, NEQ), s.4.3

Coolum Beach Christian College encourages students, parents and staff 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 College, its staff or students having done something wrong
- the College, its staff or students having failed to do something they should have done
- the College, its staff 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 staff
- issues related to College fees and payments
- general administrative issues.
- issues relating to non-compliance with a process outlined in College policies or procedures, for example the child protection policy, discrimination policy, or privacy policy. ⁵
- issues of student or staff behaviour that are contrary to the relevant code of conduct, including inappropriate staff conduct as reported by a student.

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

⁴ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 s.16(2)(a)

⁵ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 s.16(5)

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 College's Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy.
- Allegations that may constitute reportable conduct involving a worker (as defined under the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)) will not be managed solely under this policy and must be managed in accordance with the College's [include name of relevant policy e.g. Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy or and the College's obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, including notification to the Queensland Family and Child Commission within legislated timeframes.
- 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 Framework.
- Employee complaints related to their employment should be directed to their Line Manager.
- Student or staff violence or criminal matters should be directed to the Principal who will involve the Police as appropriate.
- Formal legal proceedings should be managed as appropriate in the circumstances.
- Complaints relating to the education and training services provided by the College to an overseas student should be dealt with in accordance with the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 and National Code and the College's Overseas Student's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Process.
- Disputes between board members, should be dealt with in accordance with the Constitution, Board Charter.
- 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 College's Overseas Student's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Process.

Responsibilities

College

The College has the following roles and responsibilities:

- develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the College's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures
- appropriately communicate the College's Complaints Handling Policy to students, parents and staff
- ensure that the Complaints Handling Policy and processes are readily accessible by staff, students and parents
- upon receipt of a complaint, manage the complaint in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy
- ensure that appropriate support is made available 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 staff
- keep records
- conduct a review of the Complaints Register at regular intervals
- report to the College's insurer when relevant.

All Parties to a Dispute

The complainant and respondent both have the following roles and responsibilities:

- comply with the College's Complaints Handling Policy
- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner
- not provide deliberately false or misleading information
- not make frivolous or vexatious complaints or retaliatory complaints
- act in good faith and maintain a mutually beneficial relationship of trust and cooperation
- act in a calm, courteous and non-threatening manner
- acknowledge that the 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.

Staff Receiving and/or Managing Complaints

Staff receiving and/or managing complaints have the following roles and responsibilities:

- act in accordance with the College's Complaints Handling Policy
- refer the complainant to the College's Complaints Handling Policy and processes and provide additional information as necessary
- maintain confidentiality as far as possible
- keep appropriate records
- forward complaints to more senior staff, including the Principal, if the complaint cannot be resolved at the initial level or if it involves serious issues that require escalation
- identify and escalate matters that may involve child safety concerns or reportable conduct by a worker, in accordance with the College's Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy
- not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

Implementation

The 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 via the clear support and promotion of the policy. *Access to the policy is via MyCool, and College Website*

The College is also committed to regular training of staff on the implementation of this policy.

The College is committed to ensuring that all staff are appropriately trained to effectively carry out their responsibilities. Relevant training will be provided as part of staff induction for all new employees.

Additional the policy and procedures are available on college website and MyCool.

Complaint Register

Coolum Beach Christian College will maintain a complaint register with details such as the date, source and description of complaints, the staff 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 [include another relevant role if appropriate e.g. the Principal's EA].

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.

Related Legislation, Policies & Other Resources

- *Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)*
- *Disability Services Act 2006 (Qld)*
- *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)*
- *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)*
- *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*

- Coolum Beach Christian College Parent Code of Conduct
- Coolum Beach Christian College Staff Code of Conduct
- Coolum Beach Christian College Statement of Commitment to Student Safety and Wellbeing
- Coolum Beach Christian College Student Code of Conduct
- Coolum Beach Christian College Volunteer Code of Conduct
- *QFCC Guidelines for Implementing the Child Safe Standards in Queensland*

Complaint Handling Procedure

Complaints Handling Procedure.

1. Lodging a Complaint

- a) Complaints can be lodged with the most appropriate staff member at the local level, for example, the initial contact point for many complaints is the student's relevant classroom teacher.
- b) Complaints about the Principal must be lodged with the Board
chairman@cbcc.qld.edu.au
- c) Allegations of *reportable conduct* by the Principal can be lodged with the Board.
- d) In addition to 1.a) and c) allegations of reportable conduct by a worker or the Principal can be made directly to the Queensland Family and Child Commission.
- e) Complaints can be lodged through various methods, including:
 - i. Email
 - Students – speakup@cbcc.qld.edu.au
 - Students reportbullying@cbcc.qld.edu.au
 - CBCC Community – Kmcallister@cbcc.qld.edu
 - ii. In writing to – 2 Arcoona Road Coolumb Beach 4573
 - iii. In-person (by appointment)
- f) If the complainant is unsure where to direct their complaint, they can contact the Business Services Office for guidance.
- g) If the complainant is uncomfortable directing the complaint to the most appropriate member at the local level, or wants to make a formal complaint, they can submit a complaint by:
 - i. Completing the online complaint form (available on the school website)
 - ii. Using the anonymous reporting system
 - iii. Other method e.g. report to member of the executive
- h) Where an anonymous complaint is lodged, the school will follow the complaints handling policy, when there is sufficient information to do so.

2. Acknowledgement, Assessment and Referral

The staff member receiving the complaint will:

- a) acknowledge the complaint within Two (2) business days, outlining the next steps and where possible the estimated timeframes.
- b) assess the complaint, using the definitions of informal and formal complaints in this policy, and refer the complaint to the informal or formal complaints process.
- c) as part of the assessment, the staff member must consider whether the complaint raises a potential reportable conduct allegation involving a worker.
- d) where this threshold may be met, the matter must be immediately escalated and managed under the school's Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy, including consideration of notification obligations to the Queensland Family and Child Commission.

3. Registration and Support

- a) The recipient of the complaint will promptly enter it onto the complaints register, regardless of whether it proceeds through the informal or formal process.
- b) The recipient of the complaint will offer support to the complainant as appropriate, which may include assistance with completing forms or understanding procedures.

If a student is a complainant, respondent or victim, or the child of a complainant, respondent or victim of a matter being managed through this policy, the school may offer the student support where appropriate e.g. discussing suitable adjustments with parents/caregivers.

4. Informal Complaints Handling Process

- a) The informal process is designed to resolve issues promptly and collaboratively at the local level.
- b) It may involve constructive discussion and negotiation between the complainant and the relevant staff member(s).
- c) If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, it will be escalated to the formal process.

5. Formal Complaints Handling Process

- a) The formal process begins with the assessment of the complaint by a designated staff member (e.g., a member of the senior leadership team or the board chair for complaints against the principal)
- b) The staff member may gather additional information through investigation, interviews, or evidence review. The staff member may consult with appropriate members of the student's or the family's community
- c) The staff member will determine appropriate action, which may include:
 - i. Mediation
 - ii. Disciplinary measures
 - iii. Implementation of policy changes
 - iv. Referral to external agencies (e.g., police)
 - v. Provision of written updates to the complainant throughout the process
 - vi. Other actions the Principal determine as appropriate in the circumstances.

6. Complaint Closure

- a) The complaint register will be updated with the date the complaint is closed and a brief summary of the outcome.
- b) The complainant will receive written notification of the outcome and any actions taken where appropriate.

7. Appeals Process

- a) Complainants may appeal the outcome of a complaint by writing to:
 - i. the Principal (for complaints not previously managed by the Principal,)
 - ii. the Board Chair (for complaints previously managed by the Principal, or complaints about the Principal).