

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Policy 1021

Rationale

Grace Christian College is a Christian College where individuals should feel safe to express their points of view openly, honestly, constructively and in a spirit of love. St Paul's analogy of the church as a human body (1 Corinthians 12:12-27) serves well as a picture of all members actively working together for the common good.

From time to time concerns regarding educational, behavioural or college environment issues may arise. Where possible the school encourages such concerns to be identified and resolved speedily and informally; the complaints policy is designed to apply when that proves more difficult and a formal process is required.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles, guidelines and procedures governing the school's approach to the resolution of complaints.

General Statements

- This policy can be accessed on the school's web site on the policies page, in the Parent Handbook, by requesting a copy from the school office
- The grievance procedure provides guidelines for raising an unresolved issue or complaint and having it considered seriously. It is essential, therefore, that before the process begins all parties participating are familiar with the process
- It is recognised that individuals in the college community are at different stages of maturity and that this could affect their readiness and/or willingness to engage the procedural steps.
- Informal resolution of a grievance is encouraged and is always the preferred option. This is reached when the outcome is satisfactory to all. The formal process is set in motion where the informal process reaches an unsatisfactory outcome.
- The grievance procedure may not result in a change to, or reversal of, a decision or action. Sometimes the only achievable outcome may be the enactment of forgiveness and restoration of relationships. Sometimes it may be an understanding to follow or improve guidelines or procedures in the future.

General Guidelines

- Constructive conflict helps everyone learn, grow and change for the better. Where both parties agree to seek a positive resolution, positive outcomes are likely to result
- Confidentiality must be maintained through all stages of the process.
- Raising the issue directly, and as soon as possible, with the person concerned is encouraged
- Communication should be open and honest, focusing on the issue and not the person. This includes listening carefully and respectfully while the other person is talking, and exercising responsibility and mutual respect: respect by staff for parents' special relationships with their children; respect by parents for staff as professionals.
- When an issue is discussed in a student's hearing, it is important that the student understands that you have confidence that the issue will be resolved confidentially at the college level. Criticism of the college or teachers does not support the child's education as it undermines trust and confidence.
- Complaints will be dealt with as quickly as possible. The timing of the response will depend on the type of investigation involved and who has the authority to resolve it. The school Board meets monthly so complaints that require a Board resolution or consideration may take 3 - 4 weeks to receive an answer.

Grievance Procedure for Students

Students who have a complaint or grievance can approach any staff member with their concerns. If the complaint involves bullying, abuse of any kind including sexual, physical, or verbal abuse, damage to property (either personal or

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school) or an operational concern, the staff member will report the complaint to the Assistant Principal. The Assistant Principal will conduct an investigation.

If the student's complaint falls within the operational management of the staff member, (for example - minor disagreements between students that a classroom teacher generally manages) the staff member will put in place strategies to resolve the issue.

If the student believes the issue remains unresolved, they can directly approach the assistant principal or principal to have the issue further investigated.

Recess and Lunchtimes

If a student wants to report a complaint or grievance in regard to an incident that occurs in the school grounds while they are at recess or lunch they can do the following:

- 1) Speak to the staff member on Yard duty
- 2) If they are unable to find the Yard Duty staff, or if it is an emergency or they feel unsafe, they can go directly to the staff room and knock and the door and speak to a staff member directly, or they can go to the school office in the Administration building and speak to the Office staff.

Students will be regularly reminded of the complaints process in the classes and at the school assembly.

Grievance Procedure for Staff, Parents and other adults

If someone has a concern, an unresolved issue or a complaint, they are requested to follow the following procedures:

Step 1. Check you have all the facts

Step 2. Arrange a meeting with the relevant staff member, student or parent to discuss the concern, issue or complaint.

Step 3. Aim for resolution

Step 4. Document the concern/issue/complaint

Step 5. Communicate ongoing progress within the group, if applicable

If the issue is not resolved satisfactorily:

- Request a meeting with the Principal
- Document the issue
- Agree on outcomes
- Monitor progress and outcomes

If the issue is still not resolved satisfactorily:

- The Principal in conjunction with those involved will provide a written report to the College Board Chairperson outlining perceptions, action taken, procedures followed to date, outcomes achieved, and any recommendations.
- Chairperson to consider appropriate action
- Chair to advise Principal and complainant of action/decision in writing

Referring a complaint or grievance to the School Board

A complaint that is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant can be referred to the school Board.

- The complaint must be in writing.
- The complaint should be emailed to the School Board secretary at secretary@gcc.vic.edu.au or mailed to the school and addressed to the Board Secretary.
- The secretary will respond by email with an acknowledgement on receiving the complaint.
- The complaint will be dealt with as quickly as possible. However, as the school Board meets monthly complaints that require a Board resolution or consideration may take 3 - 4 weeks to receive an answer.
- Complaints that concern safety of students, staff or other stakeholders will have their consideration expedited.

Complaint Agencies

If a complainant has taken their complaint to the school Board and are not satisfied with the Board's response they are able to approach other bodies with their complaint. The initial body they should contact is the Victorian Qualifications and Registration Authority (VRQA).

Implementation

The Chairperson of the Board and the Principal are responsible for the implementation of this policy.

ENDORSEMENT

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Last Review	April 2026
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Endorsed by	Grace Christian College Wodonga Board
Endorsed on	20/4/2026
Board Chairman	Matthew Hood
Signature	
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