



Collingwood College

Complaints Policy

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Review By: Sam Luck

**Help for non-English speakers**

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school office.

Phone: [\(03\) 9417 6681](tel:(03)94176681)

Email: collingwood.co@education.vic.gov.au

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide an outline of the complaints process at Collingwood College so that students, parents and members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our school
- ensure that all complaints and concerns regarding Collingwood are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

Scope

This policy relates to complaints brought by students, parents, carers, or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our college. In some limited instances, we may need to refer a complainant to another policy or area if there are different processes in place to manage the issue including:

- Complaints and concerns relating to fraud and corruption will be managed in accordance with the department's [Fraud and Corruption Policy](#)
- Criminal matters will be referred to Victorian Police
- Legal claims will be referred to the Department's Legal Division
- Complaints and concerns relating to child abuse will be managed in accordance with our *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures*

Policy Implementation

Collingwood College welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication with our staff and families and are committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately. We recognise that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

We value and encourage open and positive relationships with our school community. We understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our school.

When addressing a complaint, it is expected that all parties will:

- raise and discuss issues in a courteous and respectful manner
- acknowledge that the goal is to achieve an outcome that is in the affected student's best interests and acceptable to all parties
- act in good faith and respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- recognise that all parties, including the broader school community, have rights and responsibilities that must be balanced
- recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

Complaints and Concerns Process for Students

Collingwood College acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. Collingwood College encourages our students to raise issues or concerns as they arise so that we can work together to resolve them.

Students with a concern or complaint can raise them with a trusted adult at school, for example, with their classroom teachers, Year Level Coordinators, wellbeing staff, Koorie Education Support Officers, and Education Support staff. This person will take your concern or complaint seriously and will explain to you what steps we can take to try to resolve the issue and support you.

Students can also ask a parent, carer or another trusted adult outside of the school, to talk to us about the issue instead. Information about our parent/carer complaints and concerns process is outlined further below.

Other ways students can raise a concern or complaint with us include:

- talking to another student about their concern and any suggestions for resolving it
- participating in student forums and Attitudes to School Survey (Years 4-12)

Further information and resources to support students to raise issues or concerns are available at:

- [Report Racism Hotline](#) (call 1800 722 476) – this hotline enables students to report concerns relating to racism or religious discrimination
- [Reach Out](#)
- [Headspace](#)

- [Kids Helpline](#) (call 1800 55 1800)
- [Victorian Aboriginal Education Association](#) (VAEI)

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

Collingwood College encourages parents, carers or members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to:

- carefully consider the issues you would like to discuss
- remember you may not have all the facts relating to the issues that you want to raise
- think about how the matter could be resolved
- be informed by checking the policies and guidelines set by the Department and Collingwood College (see Further Information and Resources section below).

Support person

You are welcome to have a support person to assist you in raising a complaint or concern with our school. Please advise us if you wish to have a support person to assist you, and provide their name, contact details, and their relationship to you.

Raising a concern

Collingwood College is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to your child's teacher, and/or the principal. Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed.

The complainant should telephone, write or arrange to visit:

- The student's teacher about learning issues and incidents that happened in their class or group
- Year Level Co-ordinator/Learning Community Leader (Secondary School), Leading Teacher (Primary) or International Students' Co-ordinator
- The Assistant Principal
- The principal about issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or very complex student issues.

If you would like to make a complaint, in most cases, depending on the nature of the complaint raised, our school will first seek to understand the issues and may then convene a resolution meeting with the aim of resolving the complaint together.

Where required Collingwood College will provide a professional interpreter to assist with the process.

Making a complaint

Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, parents or community members may wish to make a formal complaint to the principal or relevant regional DET staff.

If you would like to make a formal complaint, in most cases, depending on the nature of the complaint raised, our school will first seek to understand the issues and will then convene a resolution meeting with the aim of resolving the complaint together. The following process will apply:

1. **Complaint received:** Please either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with the principal, to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the issues are. We can discuss your complaint in a way that is convenient for you, whether in writing, in person or over the phone.
2. **Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the principal, or nominee may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may also involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.
3. **Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the principal to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. If after the resolution meeting we are unable to resolve the complaint together, we will work with you to produce a written summary of the complaint in the event you would like to take further action about it. In some circumstances, the principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.
4. **Timelines:** Collingwood College will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within two school days) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, Collingwood College may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. We will endeavour to complete any necessary information gathering and hold a resolution meeting where

appropriate within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, Collingwood College will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

Please note that unreasonable conduct (e.g. vexatious complaints) may need to be managed differently to the procedures in this policy.

Resolution

Where appropriate, Collingwood College may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- an apology or expression of regret
- a change of decision
- a change of policy, procedure or practice
- offering the opportunity for student counselling or other support
- other actions consistent with school values that are intended to support the student, parent and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, Collingwood College may also ask you to attend a meeting with an independent third party or participate in a mediation with an accredited mediator to assist in the resolution of the dispute.

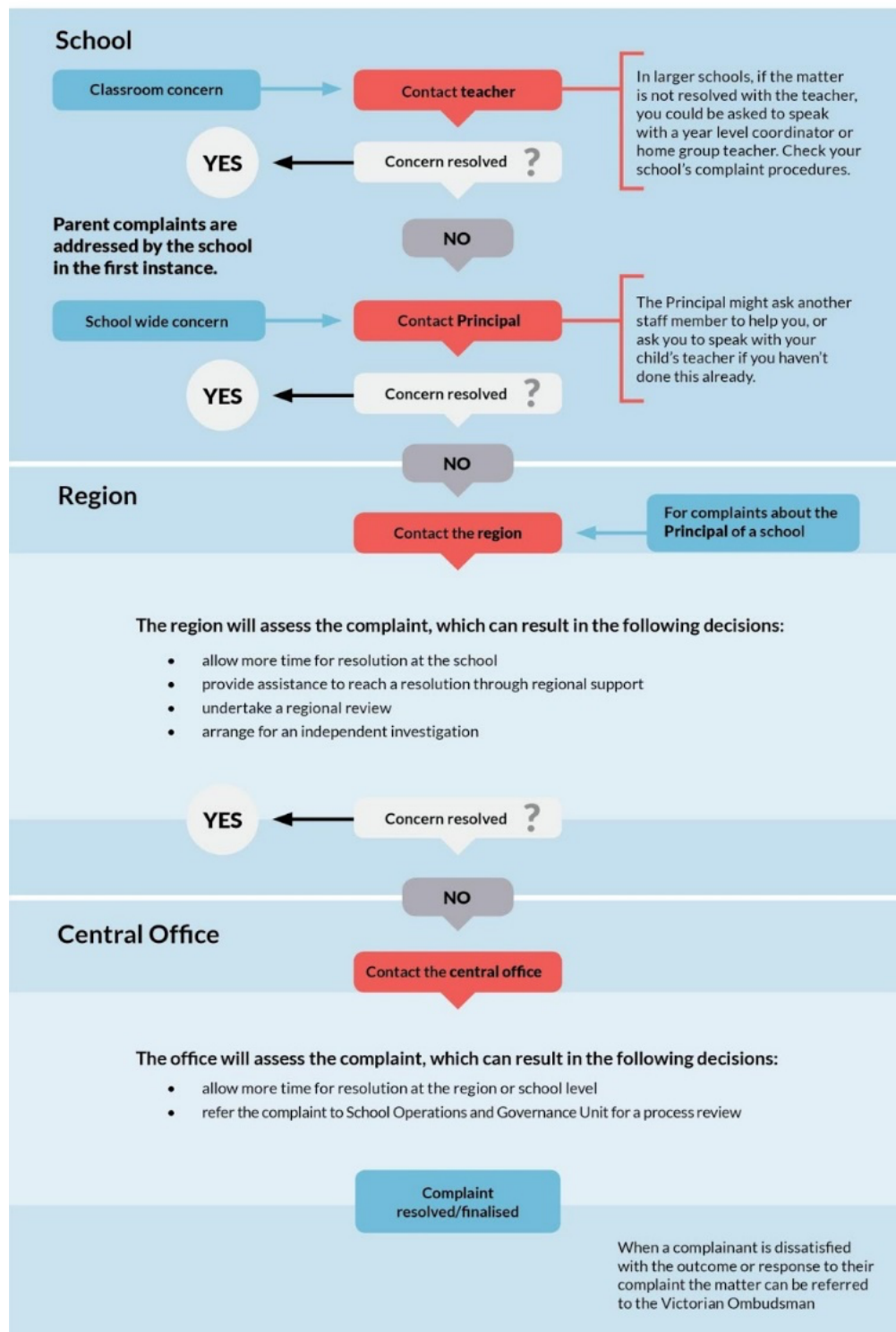
Escalation

If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been resolved by the school, or if your complaint is about the Principal and you do not want to raise it directly with them, then the complaint should be referred to the Regional Office by contacting the department's regional offices on [1800 338 663](tel:1800338663) or email enquiries@education.vic.gov.au

Collingwood College may also refer a complaint to the Regional Office if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

For more information about the Department's parent complaints process, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Raise a complaint or concern about your school.](#)

PARENT COMPLAINT FLOWCHART



Record keeping and other requirements

To meet Department and legal requirements, our school must keep written records of:

- Serious, substantial or unusual complaints
- Complaints relating to the Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, to meet regulatory requirements - refer to Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes for further information

Our school also follows Department policy to ensure that record-keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints or concerns.

Communication

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our college website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Referenced at least annually in the school newsletter
- Discussed at student forums
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Further Information and Resources

Related School Policies/Documents:

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safe Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Processes
- Digital Learning Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

- Yard Duty and Supervision Policy

Related Department of Education and Training Policies

The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):

[Complaints - Parents](#)

The Department's parents' website:

- [Raise a complaint or concern about your school](#)
- [Report racism or religious discrimination in schools](#)

Policy Review and Approval

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or earlier as required following an incident or changes to DET policy.

Data to inform this review will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- regular student bullying surveys
- regular staff surveys
- assessment of other school-based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented
- Attitudes to School Survey
- Parent Opinion Survey

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with students, staff and parents and at School Council.

Policy last reviewed	March 2023
Approved by	Sam Luck, Principal
Consultation (Recommended)	School Staff February 2023. School Council March 2023
Next scheduled review date	March 2025