

GRIEVANCE POLICY



PREAMBLE

St Columba College is an Anglican & Catholic College committed to working with students, parents and staff in a manner which upholds the importance of building and maintaining positive relationships. An integral part of this process is providing an environment where each community member is recognised and respected as a unique individual with rights and responsibilities. Our Christian heritage provides the basis for our philosophy of seeking to provide opportunities for people to resolve problems in a pro-active and mutually acceptable manner. As such, we have a clearly stated method and structure for the resolution of grievances.

1. Aims

- Create a College environment where a lived reality of the Gospel message, 'To love your neighbour as yourself', is experienced.
- For all College members to recognise that reconciliation is an integral part of restoring relationships and building community.
- Provide clear structures for the resolution of grievances.
- Provide clear expectations in relation to managing possible conflict.

2. Role of the College Council

- Ensure that a Grievance Policy and Procedures are in place.
- Review the Grievance Policy and Procedures on a regular basis.
- Support the Principal in ensuring that resources are in place to support grievance procedures.

3. Role of the Principal

- Ensure that the Grievance Policy and Procedures are implemented appropriately within the College.
- Provide information to students, staff and parents in relation to the procedures contained within the Grievance Policy.
- Review the policy and procedures from time to time with the College Executive - providing direction to the College Council.

4. Role of Staff

- Ensure that the Grievance Policy and Procedures are understood and implemented where appropriate.
- Provide information to students in relation to the Grievance Policy and Procedures.
- Actively engage with the grievance procedures in relation to resolving problems with students, parents and other staff members.

5. Role of Students

- Seek the support of teachers when needed to ensure that grievances are appropriately dealt with.
- Follow the procedures that are laid out in the policy in relation to addressing grievances.
- Act responsibly in relation to the resolution of problems that may occur with peers, teachers or other staff.

6. Role of Parents

- Actively engage in promoting a positive environment by seeking to resolve difficulties in a positive and proactive manner.



- Act in a manner which is conducive to the building of relationships.
- Ensure that problems/concerns/grievances are dealt with according to the procedures outlined in the Guidelines for Problem Resolution.

7. Definition of Grievance

For the purposes of the College's Policy and Procedures, a 'grievance' refers to a situation where an individual believes, that a student, teacher, parent or any member of the College community has acted outside of the normal policies or practices that the College promotes and expects.

8. Guidelines for Grievance Resolution

In general if a problem exists within the College community the best way to attempt resolution is for the individuals concerned to discuss and to seek resolution directly with one another. If a resolution is not possible at that level, then it is important to seek support.

9. Outcomes

The College will do its best to address and satisfactorily resolve grievances in a mutually acceptable way. However, it is not always possible to resolve all problems in a manner where there is mutual acceptance of the outcome.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

1. Parent/s seeking resolution of a problem that relates to their child and a teacher/staff member

1.1 If a problem exists between a child and a teacher/staff member, the following process should take place:

- Arrange a time to speak with the teacher who you believe can best resolve the problem. Normally this will be the child's class or subject teacher.
- If the problem is not resolved, advise the teacher that you will speak with the relevant Head of Section.
- Arrange a time to speak with the Head of Section as soon as possible in order that the grievance is dealt with.
- If the problem is not resolved, advise the Head of Section that you will be speaking with the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- Arrange a time to speak with the Principal or Deputy Principal as soon as possible.
- At any point in the process student/s or adult/s may consult with a College Counsellor or Chaplain for support.
- If upon reflection you feel the problem has not been resolved, then a letter could be written to the Chairperson of the St Columba College Council outlining your concerns.

1.2 It is important that all meetings are approached in a manner that is conducive to finding resolution. Therefore it is expected that offensive or abusive language, harassment, physical intimidation or violence will not be an aspect of any communication. The College reserves the right to exclude people who use any form of intimidation.



College responses to this situation may include

- *Providing opportunities for individuals to meet with a Teacher, Head of Section, Principal or Deputy Principal.*
- *Providing opportunities for students to access counselling where appropriate.*
- *Providing an opportunity for mediation between the parties where deemed appropriate by the College Principal, or College Council where appropriate.*
- *Reporting the situation to the Police and/ or Family SA.*

2. Serious Problems between Adults/Parents* within the College

2.1 If a serious problem exists between adults/parents* within the College community and it is likely that the matter will cause an issue during the course of the school day, then it is appropriate that the College be notified:

- Make someone in authority i.e. Principal, Deputy/Head of Section aware that a serious problem exists.
- Seek support from the College Chaplains, the Deputy Principal, or the Principal to initiate mediation if appropriate.
- Work with a College Counsellor or Chaplain to find a way to resolve the issue as appropriate.
- While on College property, all those involved should avoid discussing the issue with other adults/parents*.

Possible College responses to this situation may include

- *Providing mediation assistance when and if appropriate.*
- *Speaking individually with adults/parents* concerned with a view to help resolution to the situation.*
- *Providing counselling support or referral to other agencies or authorities.*
- *If necessary, instruction to those involved to leave the premises.*

In a situation where problems between adults result in 'problem behaviours' being displayed during school hours and on College property, the result may include the following:

- *The adult(s) concerned being excluded from College premises, and/or attending College functions.*
- *Appropriate legal proceedings being implemented.*

3. Problems between Students

3.1. Where problems exist between students, it is important that the issues are addressed and that appropriate support procedures are in place.

Students are encouraged to:

- Speak with someone (parent, counsellor, or teacher) to work through a possible strategy to try to resolve the situation.
- Speak directly to the person who the problem exists with (if it is safe and practical to do so).
- If the problem is not resolved seek the support of a teacher, counsellor or the Head of Section.
- Arrange a time for a parent to speak with an appropriate person.
- It is imperative that **A PARENT DOES NOT CONFRONT SOMEONE ELSE'S CHILD - RESOLUTION BETWEEN STUDENTS MUST BE MEDIATED BY COLLEGE AUTHORITIES.**



- If the problem relates to a serious act of violence or ongoing serious harassment, we encourage parents to report the situation to the usual legal authorities i.e. the police.

*in this context adults/parents refers to:

1. Primary caregivers to students.
2. Any adult on the College site.

Possible College responses to this situation may include

- *Providing opportunities for the student to meet with the Counsellor.*
- *Providing a structure where students can speak with Pastoral/Class Teachers and Pastoral Coordinators.*
- *Providing an opportunity for students to meet in a 'mediated' situation with all the students involved.*
- *Reporting the situation to the Police, Family SA and/or other agencies.*

4. Students who have a grievance with a Staff Member

4.1 If a student has a grievance with a staff member, the following process should take place:

- Arrange a time to speak with the teacher who you believe can best resolve the problem. Normally this will be your class/pastoral care or a subject teacher.
- Advise your parent(s) of the concern.
- If the problem is not resolved, arrange a time to speak with the Head of Section or the Head of Curriculum and Learning.
- If the problem is not resolved, advise the Head of Section that you will be speaking with the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- Arrange a time to speak with the Principal or Deputy Principal as soon as possible.
- At any point in the process student/s or adult/s may consult with a College Counsellor or Chaplain for support.
- If upon reflection you feel the problem has not been resolved then a letter could be written to the Chairperson of the St Columba College Council outlining your concerns.

5. Grievance between Staff and Members

NB: A separate staff policy on 'Grievance Procedures' articulates the process for resolution of grievances between staff members.

6. Associated Document/s

- Student Behaviour Management
- Child Protection Policy
- Staff Grievance Policy
- Drug Policy
- Student Driving Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy