



EDMUND RICE EDUCATION
AUSTRALIA

St Joseph's College Complaints Handling Guide

St Joseph's College welcomes feedback from all members of the College community and takes all complaints or concerns that may be raised seriously. This Complaints Handling Guide is designed to assist you to understand our complaints handling process.

What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to St Joseph's College, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

St Joseph's College's Commitment

St Joseph's has embraced the principles of restorative practice which has the specific goal in mind: to support and facilitate the building of healthy relationships. It has been proven that when individuals live in healthy and life giving relationships with significant others, there is abundant personal growth, capacity for character building and a high level of achievement in all areas of endeavour. This practice will underpin the complaint handling procedure.

St Joseph's College is committed to handling complaints effectively and efficiently. To manage complaints effectively, we have established a Complaints Handling Program in line with both the international complaints handling standard (ISO 10002:2014 Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations), and the Australian/New Zealand complaints handling standard (AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations).

Our program includes the establishment of an online complaints management system which allows us to effectively capture, manage and report on complaints. Regular analysis of complaints received and the implementation of rectification action, where deficiencies are identified, are key to the College's commitment. Our internal complaints handling process are available at no cost.

Informal Complaints Resolution

The vast majority of issues causing concern in schools can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. In most cases these issues can be resolved through informal discussions with appropriate staff members. Even if an issue is able to be resolved informally, all staff are required to log issues through our complaints management system so we are able to identify any systemic issues arising, and take appropriate rectification action.

How Do I Make a Formal Complaint?

If you have been unable to resolve a matter informally, or simply wish to make a formal complaint you can do so by any of the following means:

1. Sending an email to complaints@sjc.vic.edu.au
2. Writing a letter to the College addressed to "The Complaints Manager".
3. Telephoning the College (03 5226 8100) and asking to speak to your child's Head of House or Year Level Coordinator.

All formal complaints will be logged into our online complaints management system and managed in accordance with the following procedure.



Our Internal Complaints Handling Process

Step 1 - All formal complaints are logged through our online complaints management system where they are screened by one of our Complaints Officers, the Complaints Manager, or, in the case of a complaint directly related to conduct by the Principal, Deputy Principal or Member of the School Board, the EREA Regional Director.

Step 2 – All valid complaints will be acknowledged in writing as soon as practicable, and in any event within 10 business days. They will be allocated a status, priority and target resolution date. It is our policy, where possible, to commence an initial investigation and make a preliminary determination within 10 business days of acknowledging the complaint.

Step 3 – The Complaints Officer shall conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination.

Step 4 - Following the determination, if appropriate, the Complaints Officer shall formulate a resolution and provide a written response to the complainant. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

Step 5 - If the initial response is not acceptable the matter will be reviewed internally by the Principal or the Principal's delegate, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Principal or their delegate seek to resolve all disputes within 20 business days of the acknowledgement of the complaint. The matter will be closed if the response of the Principal, or their delegate, is accepted. Where appropriate, the matter may be escalated to the EREA Regional Director.

Step 6 - All complaints received will be entered into our Complaints Register and, where appropriate, a corrective action request will be made to address any underlying processes which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.

Step 7 - If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality applies with respect to both information relating to the person making the complaint, and, if relevant to a person against whom a complaint is made, as well as any witnesses, management and the complaint handler. The College is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process.

Personally identifiable information about a complainant will only be made available for the purpose of addressing the complaint and (unless the complainant consents) will be actively protected from disclosure.

No Repercussions

It is essential that there be no repercussions for making a complaint or acting as a witness in an investigation. A person must not be disadvantaged or victimised because he or she has made, or intends to make, a complaint or has acted as a witness or intends to do so. Any appearance or allegation of discriminatory treatment or victimisation will be investigated.

Impartiality

Impartiality in the complaints handling process is critical. Every complaint made will be managed from an impartial point of view. This means that no assumptions will be made, no conclusions will be drawn and no action will be taken, until all the relevant information has been collected and considered fully.



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Procedural fairness

It is also critical that the rule of procedural fairness be observed. When a complaint is dealt with through the formal process, the person handling the complaint will observe the rules of procedural fairness. This requires:

1. the person about whom the complaint is made ('the respondent') is fully informed of the allegations made against him or her;
2. the respondent is given a hearing that is, an opportunity to respond to the allegations, and to raise any matters in his or her defense;
3. the allegations are properly investigated, all parties heard and relevant submissions considered;
4. irrelevant matters are not taken into account;
5. the person making the complaint ('the complainant') is not involved in determining the outcome of the complaint
6. handling process;
7. the decision-maker acts fairly and without bias; and
8. the parties to the complaint are kept informed throughout the process.

Additional Information

For more information, contact:

- a) Policy Custodian
- b) College Psychologists
- c) College Complaints Manager
- d) College Complaints Officers
- e) EREA Regional Director
9 The Vaucuse (PO Box 91),
Richmond, Vic, 3121
Phone: +61 3 9426 3200
Email: info@erea.edu.au
www.erea.edu.au
- f) VIEU, Victorian Independent Education Union
120 Clarendon St Southbank,
Vic 3025
9254 1860
www.vieu.org.au
- g) Equal Opportunity Commission
3/380 Lonsdale St
Melbourne Vic 3000
Enquiries: 9281 7100
www.eoc.vic.gov.au