



COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

Salesian College Sunbury is an inclusive Catholic Faith Community in the spirit of St John Bosco.

- We are a welcoming COMMUNITY that fosters an atmosphere of joy and optimism.
- We strive for engagement in LEARNING for which we are collectively responsible.
- We promote the pursuit of EXCELLENCE in all aspects of life.
- We are inspired by our FAITH to serve others and develop as resilient, thoughtful and caring citizens of the world.

Central to these values is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

INTRODUCTION

Salesian College Sunbury (the College) values and encourages 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. A timely and professional response to complaints is an effective means of encouraging communication, building trust and resolving issues for the betterment of all concerned.

Positive, clear, and effective procedures for resolving complaints between the school and community members can assist in building strong relationships, dispelling anxiety and ultimately providing students with a settled and happy learning environment.

PURPOSE

This policy seeks to ensure that the College manages and responds to complaints in a way that:

- promotes the health, safety and wellbeing of students
- ensures consistent and fair complaints management
- improves the outcomes of complaints with a focus on collaboration and resolution
- meets its legal and regulatory obligations

SCOPE

This policy relates to formal complaints raised by students, parents/guardians/carers or members of our school community. It applies to all matters relating to the College, or the behaviour of any person within the school including employees, volunteers, contractors, families, students, subject to the below exclusions.

In the day to day running of a school, students, parents/guardians/carers may also have queries, concerns or areas requiring clarification. These matters are not considered complaints, and the College encourages its staff to work collaboratively with students, parents/guardians/carers and members of the school community to resolve informally with the wellbeing of the student at the centre. If a matter is unable to be resolved in this manner, then it may escalate to a complaint under this Policy and Complaint Handling Procedure.

Matters outside scope of this policy

This policy does not relate to matters where there are existing rights (and processes) for review. This includes matters relating to criminal activities, fraud and corruption, legal claims, privacy, suspensions and expulsions, critical incidents, emergency management, criminal offences, the School Community Safety Order (SCSO) Scheme, the conduct of the clergy or other persons involved in religious ministry

and employment matters. Please see below details for further information regarding the process for specific matters.

Misconduct or serious misconduct

All complaints of alleged misconduct or serious misconduct by a teacher, staff member or volunteers should be reported to the College Principal.

Complaints about teachers can also be reported to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) - the regulator in relation to the registration and investigation of serious misconduct (including conduct which is of a physical or emotional nature) of all teachers in the state of Victoria. If unsure whether the complaint constitutes serious misconduct by a teacher, contact the VIT on 1300 888 067 or vit@vit.vic.edu.au.

In some cases, certain actions which involve physical or emotional misconduct, such as unlawful assault or threats to the person, may constitute a criminal offence. These types of offences should be reported to and investigated by the police. Initial consultation with the Principal may help to determine the appropriate course of action in these circumstances.

Child Abuse (including sexual offences)

Child abuse includes any instances of physical or sexual abuse (including grooming), emotional or psychological harm, serious or significant neglect and family violence involving a child.

Complaints of alleged child abuse (including sexual offences) of children or school students should be reported to the Principal.

There are legal obligations on all adults to report child abuse to police once a reasonable belief is formed that a sexual offence may have been committed against a child. Failure to disclose a sexual offence against a child is a criminal offence under section 327 of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) (Crimes Act) and applies to all adults (18 years of age and over) in Victoria.

Communication with children under 16 years of age by teachers, staff or any other person to prepare or groom a child for future sexual activity is a criminal offence under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act and must be reported to the police. The offence of grooming applies to any person aged 18 years or over and does not apply to communication between people who are both under 18 years of age.

Complaints relating to reportable conduct

Legal obligations are imposed on the College Board to report to the Social Services Regulator (SSR) and investigate allegations of reportable conduct, where those allegations are based on a person's reasonable belief that reportable conduct or misconduct involving reportable conduct has occurred. Reportable conduct includes the following:

- sexual offences against, with or in the presence of a child
- sexual misconduct against, with or in the presence of a child
- physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child
- behaviour that causes significant psychological or emotional harm
- significant neglect.

Complaints relating to a reportable conduct allegation which meets the requisite threshold and which involves a College employee (which amongst others, can include a teacher, Principal, volunteer or contractor) must be reported.

Complaints of reportable conduct in relation to an employee (other than the Principal) at the College should be reported to the Principal. Complaints of reportable conduct involving the Principal should be reported to the College Board. Further information can be found in the College's Reportable Conduct Policy.

Complaints against the clergy or other persons involved in religious ministry

If the complaint relates to the clergy or other persons involved in religious ministry at the College, the complainant should contact the professional standards office of the Salesians of Don Bosco via psa@salesians.org.au

Information Sharing

The College is a prescribed Information Sharing Entity (ISE) that may share information under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS). As an ISE, the school may receive complaints from individuals in relation to its conduct as an ISE under the CISS or FVISS. It may also receive a complaint from another ISE.

The following information is recorded where a complaint is received under the CISS or FVISS:

- the date the complaint was made and received
- the nature of the complaint
- the action taken to resolve the complaint
- the action taken to lessen or prevent the issue from recurring
- the time taken to resolve the complaint
- further action taken if the complaint was not resolved

Anonymous complaints

Whilst the College will endeavour to address and respond to all complaints, it may not be possible to fully address complaints that are made anonymously or without sufficient detail being provided to enable a review or resolution of the matter. To ensure procedural fairness, respondents have a right to know the particulars of the allegations being made against them and be given an opportunity to respond to them.

Where possible, complainants are encouraged to give their names and to be reassured that we will deal with complaints professionally and in accordance with procedural fairness and confidentiality. If the complainant wishes to remain anonymous, it is at the Principal's discretion what, if any, action will be taken. Anonymous complaints will be recorded in the same manner that all other complaints are recorded.

POLICY COMMITMENTS

- The College is committed to building a school community that features positive and respectful relationships that support the learning and development of students and value the innate dignity of each person.
- The College will promote the education and wellbeing of students and collaboration with their families and other members of the school community through a clear and accessible complaints process.
- The College is committed to empowering our students to participate and, where possible, be a part of decision making that impacts their educational journey. Positive outcomes can be achieved when everyone works together in good faith and in a respectful way.
- The College is committed to managing all complaints in a way that is culturally safe and sensitive to the diverse circumstances of students and their families, as well as providing support to vulnerable students and families.
- The College will take all complaints seriously and respond in a timely manner. All complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days.
- The College will abide by the principles of procedural fairness. Complainants will be offered the right to a support person (where required).

Providing feedback to the College

Feedback from the school community is important to us. There are many avenues to provide feedback to school staff outside of this policy. These include:

- annual formal parent/guardian/carer surveys
- formally scheduled parent/guardian/carer feedback forums
- meetings with the Principal or other staff members to express concerns

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND REPORTING

Roles	Responsibility	Reporting requirement (if applicable)
Consideration of a complaint made to the College	Principal may seek advice and direction from Risk & Compliance Manager and/or Board Sub-committee Chair	Principal to record complaints in complaints register
Consideration of a complaint made or escalated to the Board Chair	Principal and Board Chair may seek legal and/or insurance advice	Board Chair will notify Board Members
Consideration of a complaint about the Principal	Escalation to College Board	Board Chair to notify Member

DEFINITIONS

See Glossary of Terms for a complete set of definitions

Complaint

A formal expression of dissatisfaction with an action taken, decision made, service provided or handling of an issue.

Complainant

The person or persons who have raised a complaint with the school.

Head of Entity

In accordance with section 3 of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.), the head of an organisation is the person who is "primarily responsible for an organisation's compliance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme. Except for in limited circumstances, the head of entity will be the chief executive officer of the entity (however described) or if there is no chief executive officer, the principal officer of the entity (however described) or if there is no chief executive officer or principal officer, a person or position nominated by the entity and approved by the SSR" .

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Supporting documents

Complaints Handling Procedure

Related policies

Bullying Prevention Policy

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Child Safety and Wellbeing Recordkeeping Policy

Code of Conduct - Parent/Guardian/Carer

Privacy Policy

PROTECT - Identifying and Responding to Abuse - Reporting Obligations Policy

Reportable Conduct Policy

School Community Safety Order Scheme Internal Review Process

Student Exclusion Policy

Whistleblower Policy

Glossary of Terms

Legislation and standards

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

Crimes Act 1958

Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017

POLICY INFORMATION

Responsible director	Principal
Policy owner	College Board
Approving authority	College Board
Assigned board committee	Governance
Committee Approval date	15/05/2026
Board Approval date	25/05/2026
Next Board Review date	25/05/2028
Publication	Schoolbox; Website

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned framework	MS4-Student_Care; CA8-Complaints Handling
Superseded versions	2016 v1.0