



Purpose

Flinders Christian Community College recognises that parent involvement in their children's education is critical to children's development and learning. The College seeks to foster positive relationships with parents and families and develop strong school community partnerships. This policy seeks to address and bring resolution to issues of concern or complaint that may arise from time to time in this partnership.

Scope

This policy relates to Flinders Christian Community College staff and the concerns and complaints raised by its student and parent group, and the wider community.

This policy does not apply to matters about which there are existing rights or statutory obligations (and processes for) investigation, review and appeal. If, at any stage, it becomes apparent that the concern or complaint relates to such matters, the relevant procedures should be implemented immediately.

This policy is not applicable where a complainant has employed another party to represent them such as a solicitor. In these circumstances, the concern or complaint should be referred to the College's legal representative for their assessment. However, a complainant making a formal complaint is entitled to an advocate who can be a friend or colleague or a person provided through an appropriate support agency who does not receive a fee for service.

Definitions

Concern – an issue of interest (because of its importance and effect) which is raised in order to improve, effect intervention or change a situation

Complaint – an expression of grievance or resentment where the complainant is seeking redress or justice

Parent – in relation to a child, includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child, including parental responsibility under the Family Law Act 1975 of the Commonwealth and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides

Policy Statement

The College maintains that concerns and complaints, when they arise, are best addressed by students, parents, teachers, principals and support staff working in partnership. The College will endeavour in all instances, to bring resolution to a concern or complaint, in a timely, courteous, efficient, fair and prompt manner. Due process and where appropriate, the principles of natural justice will apply.

The College expects that all parties will, when addressing concerns and complaints:

- Maintain the confidentiality of all parties
- Limit communication to those people who need to be informed in order to resolve the complaint.
- Acknowledge that their common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- Act in good faith and in a calm and courteous manner
- Show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced

The College undertakes that parents or caregivers and their students who attend the College will not be adversely affected or treated in a prejudicial way, for expressing concerns and complaints.

Procedure

Concerns and complaint covered by these procedures

These procedures cover concerns and complaints about:

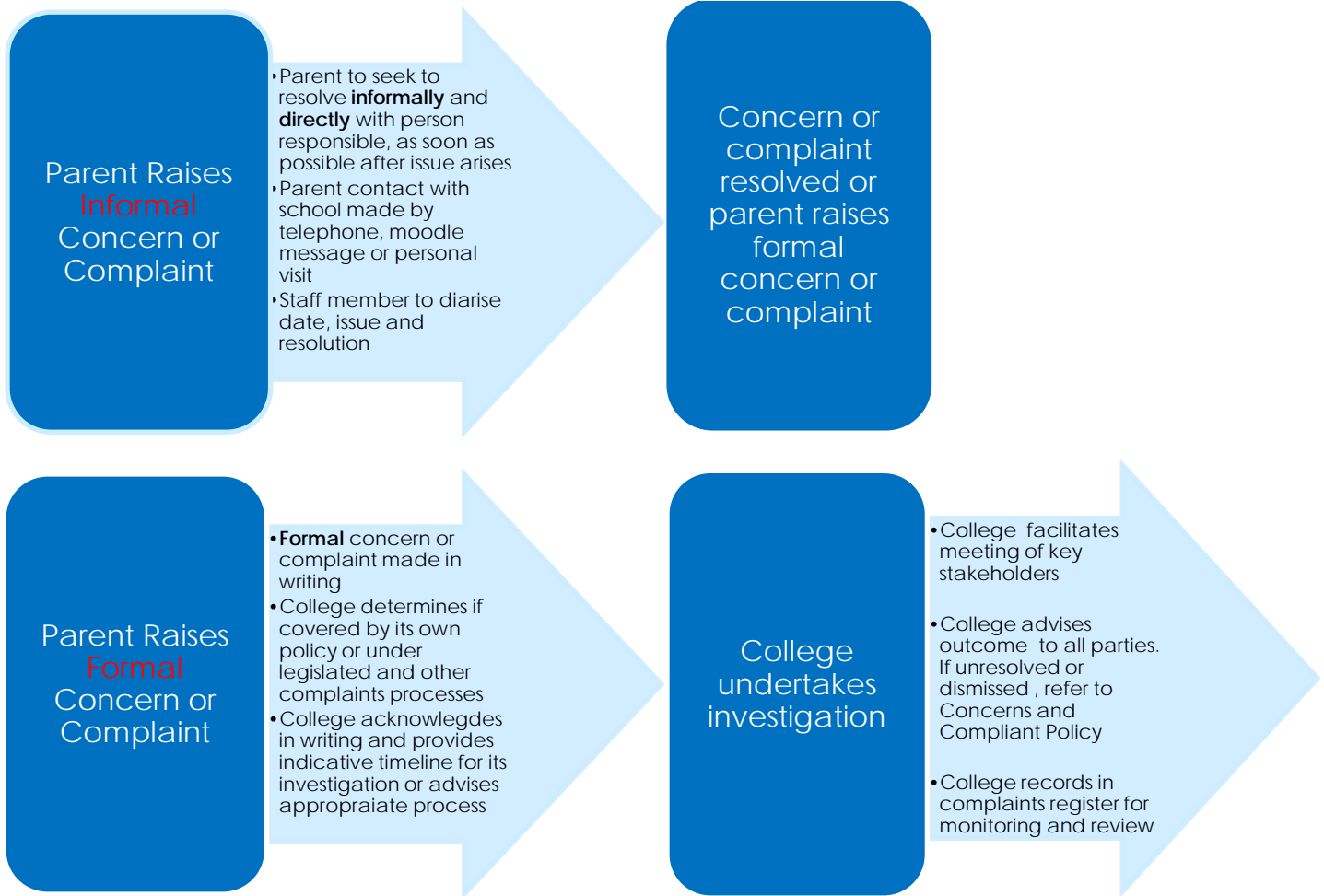
- General issues of student behaviour
- Incidents of bullying or harassment
- Incidents relating to child safety
- Learning programs, assessments and reporting of student learning
- Communication with parents
- School fees and payments
- General administrative issues
- Any other school-related matters

Who to Contact at Campus

The following is a guide to who to contact at campus when a concern or complaint is raised. Please contact the College if you are unsure of the appropriate person to help you.

Area of Concern	Who to Contact at Campus
Individual classroom learning issues and behaviour	Student's subject teacher or Home Group teacher
Students from several classes/groups across a year level	Year Level Coordinator or Section Head in Primary
Curriculum programs, assessment and reporting	Head of Teaching and Learning in sub school
Complex student issues including bullying	Head of School
Child Safety concerns	Child Safety Officers
Pastoral Care	School Wellbeing team
Fees, charges and tax invoices	Finance Office
Extracurricular activities, camps and excursions, minor issues relating to staff	Deputy Principal
Complex issues relating to staff	Campus Principal
Complaint relating to Campus Principal	Executive Principal
Complaint relating to Executive Principal	FCCC Board of Governance

Concerns and Complaints Flowchart



Communication of an Investigation

Where a formal investigation of a complaint is undertaken and concluded by the College, the College will:

- Respond in writing to all parties involved, taking into account any relevant privacy requirements.
- Give a brief description of the concern or complaint, the date when it was made and the form in which it was received
- Detail action taken about the complaint, including how the complaint was investigated and by whom
- Describe the outcome of the complaint investigation, including advising if the complaint is resolved, unresolved or dismissed and the reasons why this outcome has been reached
- Make recommendations for future actions or changes that relate to the resolution of the complaint reached by the College
- Where a complaint is unresolved, advise course of action available to complainant

Anonymous complaints

The College recognises that all complaints should be investigated where deemed necessary. However anonymous complaints raise natural justice issues for respondents who have a right to know the particulars of the allegations made against them. The Campus Principal should determine the extent to which an anonymous complaint received by the school shall be investigated.

Unreasonable complainant conduct

Unreasonable complainant conduct is behaviour that:

- Is clearly and significantly outside the expectations of confidentiality, cooperation, courtesy and respect
- Calls for staff resources and time unjustified by the nature or significance of the complaint
- Is vexatious (that is, an action or complaint that is brought without merit, often to cause annoyance to the other person)
- Is orientated towards conflict

The Campus Principal or Executive Principal can determine if a complainant's conduct is unreasonable. If so determined, the complaint process will cease and the complainant will be advised accordingly.

Documentation and Register of Complaints

The College will maintain, keep confidential and store appropriately all documentation relating to a formal complaint, in line with College policy and legislative requirements.

Formal complaints and outcomes will be recorded in a complaints register maintained at each campus. Quarterly reviews of the complaint register will be undertaken to inform continuous improvement.

Outcomes

The College will communicate the outcomes of concerns and complaints to all parties involved, taking into account any relevant privacy requirements.

Complaint resolved

A complaint is considered to be resolved when the complainant and the College agree on an appropriate response or remedy.

Complaint dismissed

A complaint can only be dismissed:

- After it has been investigated
- If an investigation has determined that the complaint cannot be substantiated

Appeal against decision

A decision can only be appealed if:

- The case was not heard on its merits
- New evidence supports further investigation

Complaint unresolved

A complaint is considered unresolved if the complainant does not agree on a course of action and/or remedy, or if the remedy cannot be implemented. In such cases, the College will involve an independent consultant or third party to assist in auditing the decision.

It may not always be possible to fully resolve all complaints to the complainant's satisfaction. This could happen if the complainant has unrealistic expectations about the outcome of their complaint, or if the College policies or regulations are contrary to their views.

If the complaint remains unresolved at the completion of the College procedures or if the complainant is dissatisfied with the manner in which the complaint was handled, they are free to seek further independent arbitration of the issue.

Communication of Policy

This policy will be communicated to the College community via:

- College Intranet
- Staff Handbook
- Newsletters
- College Website

Implementation of Policy

This policy will be implemented through:

- Staff briefings and professional development activities and training
- School community information evenings.