Policy Name	Complaints and Grievances Policy and Procedures	**Date approved**	31 March 2023
Policy Owner	Principal	**Date of next review**	31 March 2026
Approved by	Principal	**Version**	2

Introduction

Trinity Grammar School, Kew (the **School**) is committed to providing students with an education of the highest possible quality. However, from time to time, parents, students, visitors or other members of the Trinity community may have concerns, complaints or grievances that they wish the School to address. Complaints will be treated seriously and sensitively having regard to the requirements of confidentiality and fairness.

Wherever possible, grievances should be resolved through a process of discussion, cooperation, mediation or conciliation. All complainants are expected to participate in good faith. The School will aim to achieve an outcome that minimises any potential detriment to ongoing relationships.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy/procedure is to ensure that there are proper processes in place for managing serious or significant complaints and concerns.

Scope

This policy primarily applies to students and parents/carers.

Visitors, neighbours or other members of the wider School Community may also use this mechanism to resolve a complaint.

The Staff Issues Resolution Policy contains the complaints and grievances handling procedure for any staff related issues.

Guiding Principles

Complaints and grievances will be handled having regard to the following principles:

- The wellbeing of the student is the overriding principle (where the matter relates to a student/child);
- Complaints and grievances will be handled in a procedurally fair manner, by:
    - treating complaints seriously and sensitively;
    - treating parties to a dispute respectfully and fairly, and giving them the opportunity to express their concerns and respond to any matters put to them;
    - allowing a complainant to be accompanied or assisted by a support person;
    - maintaining a written record of any formal complaints;

  - advising a complainant of the outcome of the matter, and the reasons for any decision made, in writing;
  - maintaining confidentiality to the greatest extent possible, having regard to the School's legal obligations;
  - resolving complaints in a timely manner;
  - ensuring that the complainant is not treated unfavourably for having made a complaint; and
  - ensuring that no party is discriminated against in the handling of the complaint/grievance.
- Grievances are resolved at the lowest possible level;
- Informal processes are used when practicable and appropriate;
- Vexatious, trivial or previously finalised issues are not pursued.

Complaints Handling

Members of the School Community and visitors to Trinity can reasonably expect that complaints and grievances made under this policy will be handed in the following way:

- the guiding principles stated above will be strongly adhered to;
- all written complaints will be acknowledged within one working day;
- where appropriate, an investigation or review will be conducted to assist in the resolution of the complaint. The timeframe regarding this will be dependent on the complexity of the matter, however, the paramount objective will always be to seek to resolve the matter in a timely manner. This timeframe will be communicated with the complainant, respecting that different approaches may be required for each individual matter;
- at any point of the complaint process, the complainant may be supported by a support person. The complainant should inform the staff member dealing with their complaint if they want to include a support person in the complaint process and provide the name of the support person and their relationship to the complainant;
- a register of written complaints and resolutions will be kept by the School and used to implement continuous improvement (in the case of students, these matters will be recorded in a Record of Contact);
- Potential outcomes could comprise:
  - a change of decision;
  - a change of policy, procedure or practice;
  - offering the opportunity for student counselling or other support;
  - acceptance and understanding of the School's position once context is provided;
  - an apology is provided.
- The result of the School's considered review of the complaint will be advised to the complainant either verbally or in writing, appropriate to the nature of the complaint and the agreed process with the complainant.

Procedure to be followed by students

The following process is to be followed for student complaints or grievances:

1. If you have a concern or complaint, it should be raised with your form teacher or class teacher in the first instance.

2. If the complaint is more substantial or, if a solution has not been found through discussion under 1 above, the matter should be raised with the Head of Year, Chaplain or School Counsellor.

3. If the matter cannot be resolved under 2 above, raise the matter with:
    - Head of Junior School Head; or
    - Deputy Principal, Head of Senior School.

4. If the matter has not been resolved under 3 above, the matter may be raised with the Principal, either by contacting the Principal's office directly, or by sending an e-mail to principal@trinity.vic.edu.au.

5. Failing resolution, the student may request that the matter be referred to the Chair of School Council who, together with the School Council, is the final authority on matters concerning the School. If the complaint is against the Principal, the matter should be referred directly to the Chair of School Council.

6. In the unlikely event that the complaint has not been resolved through the steps above, students are able to request a review of process by the Victorian Institute of Teaching or the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority, or, in the case of the Early Learning Centre, by the Regional Children's Services Adviser at the Department of Education.

Procedure to be followed by parents/guardians/others

Parents/guardians are encouraged to make their own decisions about the appropriate level at which to raise their concern or to make a complaint. The following is offered as a guide:

1. If you have a concern or complaint that is relatively minor and capable of being resolved through discussion with a member of staff, raise the matter with the staff member. Make an appointment and let the staff member know in advance the matter that you want to discuss.

2. If the complaint is more substantial or, if a solution has not been found through discussion under 1 above, the matter should be raised with either:
    - the Deputy Head of Junior School – Administration or the Deputy Head of Junior School – Innovation & School Excellence (Junior School student matters);
    - the Head of Year or the Head of Faculty (Senior School student matters); or
    - the Director of the Early Learning Centre (ELC student matters).
    - The Director of Business (Schoolwide administration/policy matters)

3. If the matter cannot be resolved as per point 2 above, make an appointment to see the Head of the Junior School or the Deputy Principal, Head of Senior School.

4. If the matter has not been resolved under 3 above, the matter may be raised with the Principal, either by contacting the Principal's office directly, or by sending an e-mail to principal@trinity.vic.edu.au.

5. Failing resolution, the parent/guardian may request that the matter be referred to the Chair of School Council who, together with the School Council, is the final authority on matters concerning the School. If the complaint is against the Principal, the matter should be referred directly to the Chair of School Council.

6. In the unlikely event that the complaint has not been resolved through the steps above, parents are able to request a review of process by the Victorian Institute of Teaching or the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority, or in the case of the Early Learning Centre, by the Regional Children's Services Adviser at the Department of Education.

Privacy Complaints

The School is committed to protecting and maintaining the privacy of personal information it collects and holds. Complaints in relation to privacy should be address to the Privacy Officer at privacyofficer@trinity.vic.edu.au

Communication

This Policy will be published on the School website and made available to families on PolicyConnect.

Related Policies

Privacy Policy

References

VRQA Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration