

# Grievance Policy

**Policy No. 32**

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Creek Street  
Christian College





## **Introduction**

A timely and professional response to parent complaints is an effective means of encouraging communication, building trust and resolving issues for the betterment of all concerned. Positive, clear and effective processes for resolving grievances between the school and community members assists in the building of strong relationships, dispels anxiety, and ultimately provides students with an enhanced learning environment.

## **Purpose**

To develop and implement a process by which parents and community members can confidently raise concerns in the knowledge that they will be listened to and their concerns will be professionally managed in a timely, confidential and appropriate manner.

On occasion issues of grievance, concern, and /or conflict may arise within the college community. It is important that steps are taken to restore normal relationship as quickly as possible. Often issues arise as a result of inadequate communication or poor understanding of the whole situation or failure to find out all the relevant information. Most disagreements, miscommunications and differences of opinion can be resolved between those concerned before asking others to join in the discussion.

Gossip is an unproductive and unhelpful activity in an environment where people are united in seeking a peaceful environment for all members of the school community.

## **Policy**

Our school prides itself in clear and open communication. While we accept our responsibility to consult, and to communicate both clearly and effectively with the community, community members also have an obligation to read notices and newsletters, to attend information session and to seek clarification when required. There may still be times when members of the community disagree or are confused about the things we are doing. It is essential that the established process as outlined below is followed to resolve grievance.

## **Procedures**

- Try to establish the facts as clearly as possible , be wary of third hand information or gossip
- Parents should not discuss concerns in the wider community before consulting the school or a staff member to gain their perspective.
- Parents are not permitted to correct any children other than their own on the school premises.
- If the matter involves your child or an issue of everyday class operation, make an appointment to see their classroom teacher, detailing the reasons for the appointment.
- An appointment should be made with the principal to discuss issues involving school policy, operations beyond your child's classroom, concerns about staff, or grievances that are probably not easily resolved

- The Principal will provide the concerned community member with a copy of this Grievance Policy unless the matter is easily and satisfactorily resolved
- All grievances are to be kept confidential
- Community members may be accompanied by another person , in a support role, at appointments involving grievances
- The Principal may request another member of staff to be present during any meetings regarding grievances
- All formal discussions and processes involving grievances will be documented using the headings: Name and Date, Parent or Student concern, Action to be Taken.
- The Principal and Senior Management Team will exercise their judgement on whether or not they will take action on anonymous complaints
- The Principal may provide community members with appropriate contact names and numbers of agencies who could assist if grievances are not resolved. These may include: Christian Schools Australia, Independent Schools Victoria or Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority.
- Relationships with parents are important to us
- Parents making complaints should ascertain the facts as best they can, and contact the college at their earliest convenience always giving the school the benefit of the doubt until discussed
- Parents are to maintain a positive opinion of the college in front of their children so that a harmonious relationship of trust can be maintained with students
- Parents visiting the school to make a complaint need to be aware that teachers are not always available during the day to see them. An appointment is the best procedure, being made through the admin staff.
- Parents making complaints are to be well-behaved, confidential and courteous at all times seeking to work with the college for a positive outcome which maintains relationship between our community members
- The investigating staff member may conduct a preliminary investigation and communicate with the parent to discuss further.
- If the scope of the investigation being conducted is beyond the capacity or jurisdiction of the college, the matter will be referred to the appropriate authority and the parent will be informed of the referral.
- Parents discussing complaints with a staff member may be accompanied by an advocate if they feel necessary.
- Staff will expect that all complaints will be discussed with them in a mature, calm and courteous manner. If this is not the case and /or staff feel intimidated or unsafe they must remove themselves or find another staff member to accompany them
- The investigating staff member is to record the details of the investigation
- At the end of the investigation appropriate action will be taken to resolve the issue

- All records of parent complaints, subsequent investigations and outcomes will be stored in the principal's office.
- All staff will be made aware of our school's complaints handling procedures and will be supported with training on how to minimise, respond to, and manage parent complaints.
- Parents in particular, need to ensure that they interact with staff in an appropriate manner. Staff need to be spoken to in a calm, non-aggressive manner. Parents should not send emails or make phone calls if they are angry or in an agitated state. Parents need to be mindful that good staff are an extremely valuable resource of any school and that we as a community need to do the best we can to retain quality professionals.
- Parents are asked to take the time to seek clarification, to ensure they are open to hearing another side, and those who seek to maintain relationship will receive the highest level of service and support from College staff.
- If a staff member feels they have been unfairly dealt with or harassed or intimidated they have the option of completing an Harassment Complaint Form in the Workplace Harassment Report Folder. These forms are held in the Principal's office so that a record of dealings with a difficult parent or community member can be kept. Appropriate authorities will be consulted as necessary.
- Appointments with the Principal can be made at any time not in conflict with her other commitments or a message can be left for her to contact a parent if it is a small matter and she is not immediately available. All parent concerns in relation to the whole school, another student or staff should be directed to the Principal with the aim of restoring relationships and finding expedient solutions.
- Our college chaplain may be able to offer biblical counsel at these times and is a resource available to parents, staff and students. Our basic goal in all situation is to bring resolution and clarity to conflict situation so that we can continue to work together to promote the good of the students and to foster the vision, mission and philosophy of the college.
- All complainants can expect to have their grievance responded to within a reasonable time allowing for a mutually suitable time for discussion with the Principal, and if necessary those involved, to be conducted. The aim would be to do so that same day or the following day.
- It would be expected that a response would be given in a timely manner thus enabling the incident to be resolved so all involved can have closure and move on .

### **Responsibilities**

The Principal is responsible with the Senior Management Team for ensuring that this policy and procedures are in place and operational. If there is an issue that is at a standstill in resolution the principal will have the authority to make the final decision.

**Review**

The Grievance Policy will be reviewed by the College Council as part of our Strategic Planning review cycle.

**Further Information**

Further details can be obtained from the College Principal or a member of the Senior Management Team.