

POLICY

NAME:	Complaint Management Policy 22 February 2022
UPDATE DUE:	22 February 2024, or more often as circumstances require

Commitment to child safety

All students who attend Camberwell Girls Grammar School (CGGS) have a right to feel and to be safe. The wellbeing and safety of all students in our care is our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse. The protection of students is the responsibility of everyone who is employed at, or is engaged by CGGS in child-connected work. To ensure the safety and best interests of all students, we take into account the needs of those with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and those with a disability.

Purpose

Camberwell Girls Grammar School recognises the importance of fostering supportive and respectful relationships with parents and families and developing strong partnerships within the community. It recognises there may be times when there are disagreements and issues of concern that may need to be resolved in a positive and professional way. The school is committed to resolving complaints fairly and promptly and in accordance with relevant legislation.

This policy sets out the framework where any complaints from parents, contractors and members of the community and external stakeholders will be dealt with.

Scope

The policy applies to parents, contractors and external stakeholders of the school community.

Exclusions

This policy does not cover

- Complaints from staff related to workplace discrimination, bullying, sexual harassment or other forms of harassment (refer to the Respectful Workplace Policy)
- Complaints, concerns or issues regarding child protection (refer to the Student Mandatory Reporting Policy)
- Complaints, concerns or issues brought up by a student against another student (refer to the Student Welfare Policy, the Student Behaviour Management Policy, the Complaints and Appeals Policy – International Students and the Behaviour Management Policy – International Students).

Policy Principles

1. CGGS recognises that the School community has a right to raise genuine issues of concern. It expects that the person raising the concern or complaint will:
 - raise matters promptly as soon as possible after the issue occurs
 - provide complete and factual information
 - maintain respect, privacy and confidentiality of everyone
 - act in good faith
 - acknowledge the common goal to achieve an acceptable and balanced outcome
2. CGGS is committed to resolving issues in the first instance through discussion and conciliation and encourages the aggrieved to speak directly with the relevant individual.
3. CGGS will endeavour to resolve matters as quickly as possible however realises the timeframe for resolution may depend on the complexity, nature and scope of the complaint.
4. CGGS is committed to the sensitive handling of any complaints and understandings that confidentiality is important.

Key Responsibilities

- The Governing Board is responsible for determining this policy, reviewing it on an annual basis, and responding to any appeals referred to by the Principal
- The Chair of CGGS School Council is responsible for receiving and managing complaints against the Principal or a member of CGGS School Council.
- The Principal holds overall accountability for ensuring that the system for managing complaints is effective and communicated
- The Chief Financial and Operating Officer is responsible for responding to general business service and operation complaints, tuition fee complaints and complaints from nearby residents.
- The Deputy Principal/Head of Senior School is responsible for all complaints regarding Senior School.
- The Head of Junior School is responsible for all complaints regarding Junior School.

Raising a Concern or Complaint

In the first instance a concern or complaint should be made directly to the school. The complainant should telephone, write to or email:

- The student's teacher or tutor about learning issues and incidents that happen in their class or group
- The Head of Year or Head of Wellbeing - if students from several classes are involved
- Deputy Head of Senior School – Teaching and Learning
- Deputy Head of Senior School – Co-Curricular Programs
- The Deputy Principal / Head of Senior School or Head of Junior School - about issues relating to staff members or complex student issues
- The Principal about issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or very complex student issues
- The Property Manager about issues relating to contractors and property management
- The person against whom the complaint is made

If a complainant is unsure who to contact in the first instance, please contact the Head of Senior School or Head of Junior School or the Chief Financial and Operating Officer (if not teaching related).

Most times a complaint will be resolved informally on the first point of contact. We encourage you to discuss with the class teacher or tutor or the property manager to attempt to resolve the issue. If unsuccessful, contact the Head of Junior School, the Deputy Principal/ Head of Senior School.

The Principal will be briefed about the complaint and the outcome of the process.

If the matter is not resolved following reasonable attempts, the complainant will be advised to make a formal complaint.

Complaint Resolution

Depending on the nature of the concern a formal complaint process may be adopted.

If a formal complaint is made, it should be directed in writing to the Head of Senior School, the Head of Junior School or the Principal. If it is of a business or property nature it should be directed to the Chief Financial and Operations Officer. The nature of the complaint should be detailed together with any steps taken to resolve the complaint. The complaint will be investigated, documented and outcomes will be discussed and communicated to the parties involved taking into account their privacy and confidentiality.

All formal complaints received will be noted and acted on promptly by the staff member who receives the complaint. The School will acknowledge the complaint and provide a timeline for investigation. The School will make every effort to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible however, if a complaint involves many students and/or a range of issues, the School may need more time to investigate and resolve it.

CGGS' complaint resolution procedure includes:

1. Receipt and clarification of the complaint
2. Deciding how to handle the complaint
3. Investigation of the complaint
4. Making a decision about the complaint
5. Review

It is expected that a formal complaint will be resolved when the complainant and the School agree on an appropriate response or remedy. A complaint may be dismissed, if after it has been investigated, the investigation has determined that the complaint cannot be substantiated.

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 School policy is contrary to their opinions.

Unreasonable Complaint Conduct is behaviour that:

- is victimising (complaints causes further disadvantage or in response to retaliation or threats)
- is vexatious (a complaint brought without merit, often to cause annoyance to another person)
- is oriented towards conflict or defamation
- is clearly and significantly outside the expectation of confidentiality, co-operation, courtesy and respect

The School will not tolerate this conduct.

Review of a Decision

A request for a decision to be reviewed should be made in writing to the Principal's Office setting out the grounds for a review. Upon receipt of the request, the Principal will determine the most appropriate way to review the decision. Once the review is complete, the Principal's decision will be communicated in accordance with privacy and confidentiality principles.

Communication of the Policy

The school publishes its Complaints Management Policy on the School's website.

Policy Implementation Documents

The Complaints Resolution Procedure and the Formal Complaint Form supports the implementation of this Policy.

Links to other Policies

- Privacy Policy
- Records Management Policy

Policy Review

The School is committed to the continuous improvement of its Complaints Management Policy and procedures. Unless otherwise stated, this policy remains in place until it is superseded by an amended version. This policy will be reviewed every two years or more often as circumstances require.

Next scheduled review date is February 2024.