



SECTION	<b>GENERAL – SUPPORT DOCUMENTS</b>				
ITEM:	<b>COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURES</b>			ITEM No:	<b>G-006.1</b>
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*These procedures should be read in conjunction with the College's Complaints Handling Policy G-006.*

## INTERPRETATION

All Brisbane Christian College documents, policies, procedures, guidelines, handbooks, codes of conduct and other documents are to be interpreted in a manner that is consistent with the Statement of Faith. the College may adopt, supplement, vary or rescind its documents, policies, procedures, guidelines, handbooks, codes of conduct and other documents it has adopted at any time in its absolute discretion by the provision of notice.

The College may update, amend, innovate, supplement, vary or replace its policies, rules or procedures at any time by the provision of notice to caregivers. Students will be treated as being bound by the policies, rules and procedures. As a condition of enrolment, caregivers undertake to ensure the student has understood the policies, rules and procedures (including as amended, innovated, supplemented, varied or replaced from time to time). In this document, 'policies, rules and/or procedures' means the College policies, rules and/or procedures available via the College website and/or parent portals and/or in publications that the College makes available, as updated, as amended, innovated, supplemented, varied or replaced from time to time.

If any part of this Policy, or part thereof, is, becomes or is declared by any judicial or other authority to be invalid, void, voidable, illegal or otherwise unenforceable, the provision, or part thereof, will be either:

- (a) severed from this Policy; or
- (b) read down,

in the manner that best achieves the purpose of the College without illegality, and the remaining provisions of this Policy shall remain in full force and effect unless the College in the College's discretion decides that the effect of such declaration is to defeat the original intention of the College in which event the College may update, amend, innovate, supplement, vary or replace this Policy by the provision of notice to caregivers.

## INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

The College invites students, parents and employees to contribute to our continuous improvement processes by providing feedback, raising concerns or lodging formal written complaints.

To ensure excellence and ongoing dynamic relationships with all College community members, the College respectfully requests that all concerns and/or formal written complaints follow the Complaints Handling Procedure as outlined. Following this procedure allows a structured approach to resolving any matters with as little formality and disruption as possible and focuses on God's love and grace by following a Biblical model to restore relationships. In implementing this procedure, leaders may at times, redirect your concern to an appropriate team member for initial follow up. The College Complaint Handling processes are informed by the College commitment to Child Protection, student wellbeing and cultural safety.

### 1. RAISING A CONCERN

*\*A concern (informal complaint) may be raised about a matter that is likely to be simple, straight forward, easily manageable, or minor, where a simple or quick resolution is appropriate; such as discussion of the matter with a relevant staff member.*

In the first instance, raise your concern via phone, email or in person with the person best positioned to resolve it. As a guide:

Learning Issues	Class teacher/Head of Department
Fees/Accounts Issues	Business Manager
General Welfare and Student Behaviour	Class Teacher/ Head of Year/Head of Pastoral Care
Health Issues	Student Services/First Aid Officer/Counsellor

Parents may make an appointment with their child's teacher or Head of Year to discuss issues of concern at any time. Discussing your concerns, reviewing facts and developing potential solutions together will ensure positive outcomes for students. The teacher will make a record of your concern and the agreed solutions. This record may be shared with the relevant Deputy Head of Campus and/or Head of Campus.

If you are unsure of who to contact with your concern, the Deputy Head of Campus will guide you in the right direction. Complaints about the College Principal must be lodged with the College Board.

In many cases, aligned with the College Value of *Together Developing Dynamic Relationships*, concerns are able to be addressed quickly. However, if your concern is not resolved through initial discussions, we invite you to elevate your concern to the Deputy Head of Campus to seek resolution. If the matter cannot be resolved by the Deputy Head of Campus, you may then elevate your concern to the Head of Campus. If the matter is still not resolved you may progress to lodging a formal written complaint.

### 2. LODGING A COMPLAINT

*\*A formal written complaint may be lodged for a matter that is serious, complex or may pose a threat to the health and safety of any person. Concerns (informal complaint) that have not been resolved informally*

*may also be lodged as a formal written complaint. Assessment of the complaint is required by the College Principal and/or the wider College Leadership Team.*

Formal complaints should be lodged with College Leadership Team, which include the College Principal, in writing using the **Formal Complaints Form (G-006.2)**. A complaint raised anonymously will be reviewed on merit, however, anonymity may limit achieving effective resolution for concerned parties.

When lodging a complaint please complete all sections of the Formal Complaint Form to provide:

- Name of person raising the complaint.
- Contact details of person raising the complaint.
- Factual details of the complaint, including other parties involved.
- Remedy being sought.

DO NOT:

- Make frivolous or vexatious complaints.
- Deliver the complaint in a threatening manner.
- Provide deliberately false or misleading information.

#### COMPLAINTS HANDLING PRINCIPLES:

- complaints will be taken seriously, dealt with fairly and objectively, without judgement and addressed in a reasonable timeframe;
- complaints should be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible, having regard to the nature of the complaint;
- anonymous complaints will be treated on their merits like any other complaint and will be dealt with fairly, objectively and in a timely manner;
- the College will determine the appropriate person to deal with the complaint in the first instance;
- mediation, negotiation and informal resolution are optional alternatives;
- procedural fairness will be ensured wherever practicable, including the right of interested parties to the complaint (for example, the complainant and any respondent) will be heard and/or may provide relevant information in relation to the complaint;
- confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible;
- all parties to the complaint will be appropriately supported;
- the College will give reasonable progress updates;
- appropriate remedies will be offered and implemented;
- a review pathway will be provided for parties to the complaint if warranted;
- complainants, respondents or other people associated with the complaint, will not be victimised as a result of lodging a complaint and they will not suffer reprisals;
- where conflicts of interest arise during the investigation, an impartial party will become part of the investigation;
- the College will keep confidential records of complaints;
- the College's insurer will be informed if a complaint could be connected to an insured risk.

**PLEASE NOTE:** *These complaint handling principles will also be applied to any concerns raised.*

### 3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, ASSESSMENT AND REFERRAL

Formal written complaints will be assessed by the College Principal and/or the wider College Leadership Team or referred to their delegate. The CLT member receiving the formal written complaint will acknowledge the complaint within 2 business days, outlining next steps and, where possible, an estimated timeframe will be provided to the complainant. The formal written complaint will be investigated and the assigned staff member may gather additional information through investigation, interviews or evidence review. The assigned staff member will determine the appropriate action, which may include:

- i) Mediation
- ii) Disciplinary measures
- iii) Implementation of policy changes
- iv) Referral to external agencies (e.g. police)
- v) Provision of written updates to the complainant throughout the process
- vi) Other actions the assigned staff member determines as appropriate in the circumstances.

The College will always attempt to offer a remedy that is fair to all parties and provide reasons for the decision. Where more than one person is involved in or affected by the complaint, similar remedies will be offered to all persons in the same situation. The complainant will receive written notification of the outcome and any actions taken as appropriate. A record of the complaint, meetings, date of resolution/s and summary of outcomes will be maintained by the College.

Please note all people involved in the complaint process have the right to be supported by an appropriate third party. Additionally, the recipient of a formal written complaint will offer support to the complainant as appropriate, which may include assistance with completing forms or understanding procedures. Where a student is a complainant, respondent or victim, or the child of a complainant, respondent or victim of a matter being managed through this process, the College may offer the student support where appropriate e.g. discussing suitable adjustments with parents/caregivers.

If a formal written complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction you may progress the matter to review.

### 4. REVIEW

If a party to a formal written complaint (including an unresolved concern subsequently lodged as a formal written complaint) is unsatisfied with the outcome, they may refer the matter in writing to the College Principal for review (for complaints not previously managed by the College Principal). The review will be conducted in accordance with the College Complaints Handling Policy and as determined to be appropriate in the relevant circumstances. This review may take an extended period of time and further information may be requested. The decision and outcome of the review will be communicated to the complainant.

If the complainant remains unsatisfied with the outcome, or for formal complaints previously managed by the College Principal or a complaint about the College Principal, the matter must be referred in writing to the College Board for review. The outcome of the Board review will be communicated to the complainant along with reasons for the decision/actions, usually via a face-to-face meeting. Please note, the Board will not investigate matters that have not followed the College Complaints Handling procedures.

If following Board review, resolution is still not obtained, this policy does not limit any lawful right for a complainant to lodge a complaint with an external jurisdiction where applicable.

## **5. FORMAL COMPLAINT RECORDS**

The College will record the following information:

- The name and contact details of the complainant;
- The date the complaint was lodged;
- How the complaint was lodged e.g. in person, via phone/email or letter;
- A brief description of the complaint, including names of other parties involved;
- The name and position description of the College employee with whom the complaint was lodged;
- The action the employee took upon receiving the complaint.

Records will be kept of communications with relevant parties and of any actions taken as the complaint resolution process is undertaken.

Records will be kept of the outcome or remedy that was agreed, and any recommendations for changes to College policy, procedures or operations.

Records will be held by the College in a secure system with limited access to ensure confidentiality.

## **6. MONITORING AND REPORTING**

The College will have a standing agenda item at the College Leadership Team meetings to identify common or recurring issues that may need addressing as well as to monitor the number of formal written complaints lodged for review by the College Principal and/or the College Board.

The College Leadership Team and the College Board will review this policy and procedure annually.

## **7. COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING**

The College Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures will be communicated to staff annually and to parents via the College HUB, and on the College website.

Employees identified as having responsibilities under these procedures may request additional training and support. Appropriate training will be made available to Board members as requested.

## **8. RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- G-006 Complaints Handling Policy
- G-006.2 Formal Complaints Form