



COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY (Parents & Students)

Title	Complaints Handling Policy (Parents & Students)
Category	College Operational
Policy Owner	Executive Committee
Approver	Board of Directors
Related Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2017</i> ● <i>Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017</i> ● <i>Australian Education Regulations 2013</i> ● <i>Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</i> ● <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)</i> ● <i>Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)</i> ● <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</i> ● <i>Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)</i> ● <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</i> ● <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</i> ● Carmichael College Disability Discrimination Policy ● Carmichael College Privacy Policy ● Carmichael College Bullying Prevention Policy ● Carmichael College Behaviour Management Plan ● Carmichael College Complaints and Grievance Form
Published Location	<p><i>Internal</i> - Dropbox > Carmichael College > Policies > Current > College Operational</p> <p><i>External</i> - Carmichael College website</p>

Revision Record					
Version	Approval Date	Approved By	Effective Date	Review Cycle	Next Review
2021	2021	Principal	January 2021	Annual	2022
January 2022	January 2020	Principal	January 2022	Annual	2023
January 2023	February 2023	Board of Directors	February 2023	Annual	January 2024

1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that staff complaints and disputes are dealt with in a responsive, effective and fair way.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 Carmichael College views complaints as part of an important feedback and accountability process.
- 2.2 Carmichael College acknowledges the right of students and parents/guardians to complain when dissatisfied with an action, inaction or decision of the College and the College encourages constructive criticism and complaints.
- 2.3 Carmichael College recognises that time spent on handling complaints can be an investment in better service to students and parents/guardians.

3. Complaints That May Be Resolved Under This Policy

- 3.1 Carmichael College encourages students and parents/guardians to lodge promptly any concerns regarding sexual harassment, child protection, discrimination and privacy breaches as well as more general complaints that include areas such as:
 - the College, its employees or students having done something wrong.
 - the College, its employees or students having failed to do something they should have done.
 - the College, its employees or students having acted unfairly or impolitely.
 - issues of student or employee behaviour that are contrary to their relevant code of conduct.
 - issues related to learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning.
 - issues related to communication with students or parents.
 - issues related to tuition fees and payments.
 - general administrative issues.
- 3.2 Student complaints may be brought by students or by parents on behalf of their children, as appropriate in the circumstances.

4. Issues Outside This Policy

- 4.1 The following matters are outside the scope of this policy and should be managed as follows:
 - Child protection concerns or risks of harm to children should be dealt with in accordance with the law and the College's Child Protection Policy.
 - Student bullying complaints should be dealt with in accordance with the Carmichael College Bullying Prevention Policy.
 - Student discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the Carmichael College Behaviour Management Plan.
 - Employee complaints related to their employment should be directed to their supervisor.
 - Student or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to the Principal who will involve the Police as appropriate.
 - Formal legal proceedings.

5. Complaints Handling Principles

5.1 Carmichael College is committed to managing complaints according to the following principles:

- Complaints will be resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible.
- Complaints will be taken seriously.
- Anonymous complaints will be treated on their merits.
- Complaints will be dealt with fairly and objectively and in a timely manner.
- Carmichael 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 to be heard.
- Confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible.
- All parties to the complaints will be appropriately supported.
- Carmichael College will give reasonable progress updates.
- Appropriate remedies will be offered and implemented.
- Provide a review pathway for parties to the complaint if warranted.
- Complainants, respondents and people associated with them will not be victimised because of lodging the complaints and they will not suffer any other reprisals.
- The College will keep records of complaints.
- The College's insurer will be informed if a complaint could be connected to an insured risk.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 The **College** has the following role and responsibilities:

- Develop, implement, promote and act in accordance with the College's Complaints Handling Policies.
- Appropriately communicate the College's Complaints Handling Policies to students, parents and employees.
- Ensure that the Complaints Handling Policies are readily accessible by staff, students and parents.
- Upon receipt of a complaint, manage the complaint in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policies.
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided to all parties to a complaint.
- Take appropriate action to prevent victimisation or action in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.
- Provide regular and good faith updates to all parties of any formal written complaint.
- Appropriately implement remedies.
- Appropriately train relevant employees.
- Keep records.
- Conduct a review/audit of the Complaints Register from time to time.
- Monitor and report to the governing body on complaints.
- Report to the College's insurer when that is relevant.
- Refer to the College's governing body immediately any claim for legal redress.

6.2 The **complainant and respondent** both have the following roles and responsibilities:

- Apply and comply with the College's Complaints Handling Policies.
- Lodge the complaint as soon as possible after the issue arises.
- Expect that the complaint will be dealt with fairly and objectively; in a timely manner; with procedural fairness wherever practicable; that confidentiality and privacy will be maintained as much as possible.
- Provide complete and factual information in a timely manner.
- Not provide deliberately false or misleading information.
- Not make frivolous or vexatious complaints.
- Act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner.
- Act in a non-threatening manner.
- To be appropriately supported.
- Acknowledge that a common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties.
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.
- Maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties.
- Not victimise or act in reprisal against any party to the dispute or any person associated with them.

6.3 **Employees receiving complaints** have the following roles and responsibilities:

- Act in accordance with the College's Complaints Handling Policies.
- Inform the party lodging the complaint of how complaints can be lodged, when they should be lodged, and what information is required.
- Provide the complainant with information about any support or assistance available to assist them in lodging their complaint.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Keep appropriate records.
- To forward complaints to more senior employees, including the Principal, as appropriate.
- Not victimise or act in reprisal against the complainant, respondent or any person associated with them.

7. Implementation

- 7.1 Carmichael College is committed to raising awareness of the process for resolving complaints at the College, including by the development and implementation of this policy and related procedures, and via the clear support and promotion of the policy and procedures.
- 7.2 Carmichael College is also committed to appropriately training relevant employees (especially senior staff) on how to resolve complaints in line with this policy and the related procedures.
- 7.3 Carmichael College will keep appropriate records of complaints, will monitor complaints and their resolution and will report on a high-level basis to the College Board on complaint handling at the College.
- 7.4 Carmichael College will act to encourage employees to contribute to a healthy College culture where complaints are resolved with as little formality and disruption as possible.

8. Procedure

- 8.1 **Stage 1** - If a student or parent/guardian has a concern, grievance or conflict, it should be communicated to the classroom teacher as soon as possible, either in writing or in person.
- 8.1.1 If a meeting is sought with the classroom teacher, it is recommended that the concern be clearly communicated in writing prior to the meeting. This helps to clarify the concern and allows time for the classroom teacher to consider the concern.
- 8.2 **Stage 2** – If the concern, grievance or conflict remains unresolved, it is recommended that the student or parent/guardian lodge a written request for further discussions by:
- 8.2.1 Completion of Complaints & Grievance Form which may be handed to Admin Reception.
- 8.2.2 Email principal@carmichael.qld.edu.au detailing concerns or forwarding an attached Complaints & Grievance Form.
- This information will be forwarded to the appropriate Head of Department (Secondary) or Year Level Coordinator (Primary and Secondary) for further investigation and discussion of your concerns and to seek resolution.
- 8.3 **Stage 3** – If the concern, grievance or conflict remains unresolved, the student or parent/guardian may contact the relevant Sub-School Coordinator listed below to discuss the concern and seek resolution.
- Head of Lower Primary (Years Prep - 2)
 - Head of Upper Primary (Years 3-5)
 - Head of Middle School (Years 6-8)
 - Head of Secondary (Years 9-12)
- 8.4 **Stage 4** – If concern, grievance or conflict remains unresolved, the student or parent/guardian may contact the relevant Head of Sub-School (Head of Primary or Head of Secondary) to discuss the concern and seek resolution.
- 8.4.1 At this stage, the concern may be recorded as a formal complaint.
- 8.4.2 The Head of Sub-School will conduct a review of the complaint and actions already taken.
- 8.4.3 The Head of Sub-School may meet with parties involved to clarify details and obtain additional information.
- 8.4.4 The Head of Sub-School will take appropriate action based on their review.
- 8.4.5 Actions will be documented and communicated to parties involved as appropriate.
- 8.5 **Stage 5** – If the student or parent/guardian is unsatisfied with the outcome, they may contact the Principal to discuss the complaint and seek resolution.
- 8.5.1 The Principal will conduct a review of the complaint and actions already taken.
- 8.5.2 Where necessary, the Principal may meet with parties involved to clarify details and obtain additional information.
- 8.5.3 The Principal will take appropriate action based on their review.
- 8.5.4 The Principal's decision will be documented and communicated to parties involved where appropriate.
- 8.5.5 This stage may require an extended period to complete and for the final decision to be communicated.

- 8.6 **Stage 6** - If the student or parent/guardian remains unsatisfied with the outcome, they may request a review of the processes and decisions by the College Executive Committee.
- 8.6.1 The request must be made in writing to the Executive Director.
 - 8.6.2 The Executive Committee will ensure that all involved parties are informed of the escalation.
 - 8.6.3 The Executive Committee will impartially hear all parties and seek to resolve the complaint in the most appropriate manner.
 - 8.6.4 The Executive Committee will provide regular updates to the involved parties and will seek to conclude the matter in a timely manner.
 - 8.6.5 The Executive Committee may either uphold the Principal's decision, or may overrule it, requiring the Principal to modify some or all the decisions.
 - 8.6.6 The Executive Committee's decision will be documented and communicated to parties involved as appropriate.
 - 8.6.7 This stage may require an extended period to complete and for the final decision to be communicated.
 - 8.6.8 The Executive Committee will not investigate any matters that have not followed the complaints process.
- 8.7 **Stage 7** – If the student or parent/guardian is still unsatisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they may seek a further review by the Carmichael College Board.
- 8.7.1 The Board's position is not to re-open or initiate a further investigation but to make enquiry into the process undertaken and whether due process and natural justice were provided, and in compliance with relevant regulations.
 - 8.7.2 The Board will not investigate any matters that have not followed the complaints process.
- 8.8 A register of all reported concerns, grievances, conflicts or complaints will be kept and will outline investigations undertaken, discussions and resolutions.

9. Outcomes/Consequences

- 9.1 Outcomes may include any combination of the following:
- counselling.
 - training.
 - disciplinary actions against the person complained about.
 - official warnings that are noted on the personnel or student file.
 - a finding that the complaint was vexatious or malicious.
 - formal apologies, and/or
 - reimbursing any costs associated with the issue of concern.
- 9.2 Outcomes decided upon will depend on factors such as:
- the severity and frequency of the issue causing concern.
 - the weight of the evidence.
 - the wishes of the person who is making the complaint.
 - whether the person causing the problem could have been expected to know that such behaviour was a breach of policy/professional conduct.

- the level of contrition.
 - whether there has been any prior incidents or warnings, and
 - whether or not there are legislative obligations.
- 9.3 Disciplinary outcomes will apply to anyone who brings a complaint which is considered vexatious or without any basis.
- 9.4 The decision of the Carmichael College Board marks the end of the formal complaint process offered by the College.

Appendix 1 - Summary of Key Changes

Version	Key Changes
January 2023	Carmichael College Bullying Prevention Policy and Carmichael College Behaviour Management Plan added to Related Documents section on the policy.

Appendix 2

 <p>CARMICHAEL COLLEGE</p>	<h1>COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCES FORM</h1>	<p>Report Date</p> <p>____/____/____</p>
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This form is designed to accommodate formal reports of complaints or grievances, and is considered appropriate where escalation (i.e., reporting to the Principal, Heads of Department and/or Year Level Co-ordinators) has become necessary.

What can you expect on submission of this form?

Submitting this form will escalate your complaint to the relevant manager and/ or Principal, depending on the circumstances detailed. This form initiates a formal process, and an investigation will be undertaken by the recipient of your completed form. You will receive acknowledgement of the receipt of this form at which time you will be advised of, and provided contact details, for the person who will undertake this investigation. You are free to request a different investigative officer if you are concerned about a conflict of interest.

Mechanisms exist behind this form for additional accountability and record keeping. We are committed to following up on your report and you will receive regular and good faith updates throughout the investigative period. For further information on how this process is managed, or to view the entire process and its workflow, please refer to the Carmichael College Complaints Handling Policy - Parents & Students or, if a staff member, Carmichael College Complaints Handling Policy – Staff.

Anonymous Reports: We do encourage you to provide contact details so that updates and findings can be advised directly to you. Anonymous reports are welcomed and will receive the same investigative rigour as a report with full contact details but may be hindered due to lack of some details. Do not complete contact details if you wish to remain anonymous.

Complainant Contact Details

Name:			
Email Address:		Contact Number:	
On whose behalf are you completing this form ?	Self <input type="checkbox"/>	Child/ Dependant <input type="checkbox"/>	Third Party <input type="checkbox"/> (Please Specify)
Third Party Details (If known):			
Your relationship to Carmichael College	Staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Student <input type="checkbox"/>	College Community (see below) <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>"College Community" includes Parent, Carer, Board Member, Volunteer, Contractor/ sub-contractor. (Please Specify)</i>			

Complaint/ Grievance Details

This complaint/ grievance is against:	General Staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Principal, Head of Dept <input type="checkbox"/>	Student/ group of students <input type="checkbox"/>
	College Community (see definition above) <input type="checkbox"/> (Please Specify)		

Please describe the nature of your complaint ? (Provide as much detail as possible including the circumstances that have led to you making this report.)

Complaint/ Grievance Details (cont.)

Please provide information regarding those who have been affected by the concerns in this report, describing how you feel they have been affected. If this incident has affected you personally, please provide that information also.

Please Note – We believe that the best way to resolve an issue, complaint or grievance is through informal discussion. This form is designed for matters that have already progressed beyond this point without resolution or if you feel that informal resolution discussions are not appropriate.

What previous steps have you taken to try to resolve this matter ? In your opinion, why has this action not been effective ?

Please tell us what kind of resolution you would like to see, or what outcome you would be satisfied with ?

Attachments

Please provide any attachments, photos or other supporting information that you would like to include with this report.

Complainant Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

OFFICE USE ONLY:

Date Complaint Received	___/___/___	Date Registered	___/___/___
Updates to Complainant	___/___/___	___/___/___	___/___/___
	___/___/___	___/___/___	___/___/___
Date Resolved	___/___/___		

Outcome: