



# Camberwell High School

## Complaints Policy

### 1. BACKGROUND

The school has developed its Complaints policy and procedures to address concerns and complaints in collaboration with students, parents and the school community. We recognise that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

Concerns and complaints covered by this policy:

- General issues of student behaviour that are contrary to the school's expectations including incidents of bullying or harassment
- Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- Communication with parents
- School fees and payments
- General administrative issues
- Any other school related matters except the following matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide
  - Student discipline matters involving expulsions
  - Complaints about employee conduct or performance and complaints that should be dealt with by performance management, grievance resolution or disciplinary action
  - Complaints by the Department's employees related to their employment
  - Student critical incident matters
  - Complaints from International students or parents about any matter pertaining to international students
  - In some limited instances, we may need to refer the complainant to another Department of Education and Training process where there are different mechanisms in place to review certain decisions, such as, expulsion appeals

### 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to guide procedures over concerns and complaints. The school's approach for handling concerns and complaints is based on our commitment to:

- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students and staff
- Building positive relationships between students, parents and staff
- School values of respect and responsibility

### 3. PRINCIPLES

- 3.1. That the school addresses any concerns and complaints received courteously, efficiently and fairly
- 3.2. That all complaints are handled in a timely manner and in accordance with due process, principles of natural justice and the department's regulatory framework
- 3.3. That all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be considered
- 3.4. That the school respects the confidentiality of all parties

### 4. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

- 4.1. The school expects a person raising a concern or complaint to:
  - 4.1.1. Do so promptly, as soon as possible after the issue occurs
  - 4.1.2. Provide complete and factual information about the concern or complaint
  - 4.1.3. Maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
  - 4.1.4. Acknowledge that the goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all
  - 4.1.5. Act in good faith, and in a calm and courteous manner



4.1.6. Show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge or blame

#### 4.2. Raising concerns or complaints

4.2.1. Complaints should be made to the school first

4.2.2. The complainant should telephone or write to:

- a) the subject teacher regarding classroom issues
- b) Teaching and Learning Leader regarding subjects and curriculum
- c) Student Learning Leader or House Leader for learning or behavioural issues that are broader than one subject or class
- d) The Sub-school Leader for more complex student issues
- e) The Assistant Principals for complaints regarding staff
- f) The Principal about issues relating to school policy, school management or staff members

#### 4.3. Managing parent concerns and complaints information

4.3.1. The school records the following details of all complaints received:

4.3.1.1. If the complaint is easily resolved, a brief note in the staff member's diary recording the issue and the resolution is all that is necessary

4.3.1.2. If the complaint is not easily resolved (i.e. requires investigations, involves conflicting views the following will be recorded:

- Name and contact details (with permission) of the complainant
- The date the concern was expressed or the complaint made
- The form in which the concern or complaint was received e.g. email
- A brief description of the concern or complaint
- Details of the staff member responding to the concern or complaint
- Action taken on the concern or complaint
- The outcome of action taken on the concern or complaint
- Any recommendations for future improvement in the school's policy or procedures

#### 4.4. Addressing concerns or complaints

The school makes every effort to:

- Resolve concerns and complaints before involving other levels of the Department
- Note and act promptly on complaints. The school will acknowledge all complaints in writing. Investigate all complaints and provide a response to the complainant. Resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible.

#### 4.5. Resolution of complaints or concerns:

4.5.1. If a concern or complaint is substantiated in whole or part, the school will offer an appropriate resolution which may include:

- An explanation or further information about the issue
- Mediation, counselling or other support
- An apology, expression of regret or admission of fault
- To change its decision, policies, procedures or practices
- To cancel a debt (such as school payments) or refund
- Referral of concerns or complaints to Regional Office or external agency

4.5.2. If a person with a concern or complaint is not satisfied with the outcome determined by the school, they should contact the Department's appropriate regional office.

#### 4.6. Complaints regarding International students

4.6.1. Complaints involving International students about school related issues should be brought to the attention of the International Student Coordinator. If the complaint



cannot be resolved at this level, the complaint should be forwarded (in writing) to the school Principal. The Principal should endeavour to resolve the complaint but if the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, parents or nominee, a copy of the written complaint together with the reason for the grievance may be forwarded to the Executive Director of International Education Division (IED) within the Department of Education (DET). The Executive Director will review the decision made by the Principal, provide the parent / student or nominee with an opportunity to present their case and either uphold the original decision or decide in favour of the parent / student. If the parent / student is not satisfied with the Executive Director's decision, they may take the complaint to DET's independent dispute resolution service.

4.6.2. Complaints regarding International student non-school related issues, including complaints about tuition fees and refunds, should be made in writing to the Executive Director of IED. The Executive Director of IED will forward the complaint to the relevant Unit Manager for assessment and advice. The Executive Director will inform the complainant of any pending action which may include referral to an external agency or referral to the Region/DET. The officer from the region will ask the complainant for a complete and factual account in writing of the concern or complaint and complainant's opinion about why the school did not satisfactorily resolve the complaint. If the complaint cannot be resolved by the complainant, school and regional office working together, the regional office may refer it to the Deputy Secretary, Office for Government School Education.

#### 4.7. Communication and Training

The school makes this policy readily available to parents and the school community. It will be available in hard copy from the office. The school:

- Briefs all relevant members of staff about its procedures to address concerns and complaints
- Provides all staff with (or provide access to) training and support appropriate to their responsibilities under the procedures
- Ensures staff who manage complaints demonstrate the personal attributes outlined in the *GOOD Practice Guide: Ombudsman Victoria's guide to complaint handling for Victoria public sector agencies*

#### 5. EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

#### 6. REFERENCES

- 6.1. [DET Complaint Process](#)
- 6.2. Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- 6.3. Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- 6.4. Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- 6.5. The Department's *Parent Complaints* policy, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Parent complaints policy](#)
- 6.6. [Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution](#)
- 6.7. Camberwell High School Policies
  - 6.7.1. Student Engagement and Wellbeing
  - 6.7.2. Bullying Policy
  - 6.7.3. International Students Program (ISP) Complaints and Appeal Policy
  - 6.7.4. Privacy