



Complaints Policy and Procedures

<p>Authority</p>	<p>College Principal</p> <p>Last reviewed: 2025</p> <p>Date of next review: 2027</p>
<p>Policy Statement / Purpose</p>	<p>The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or students, are concerns rather than complaints. Bialik College is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest possible stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and avoiding formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the concern or complaint, community members may wish or be asked to follow the school’s formal complaints procedure.</p> <p>Complaints should be made as soon as possible after the relevant incident. Complaints that are not made in a timely manner may impact the ability to investigate the complaint and/or to take necessary remedial action.. The primary aim of this policy is to resolve all complaints as fairly and promptly as possible, with a focus on the safety and wellbeing of students and young people. Procedural fairness is also central to the process. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious complaints may result in appropriate action taken by the College.</p> <p>The policy aims to create a culturally safe and inclusive environment that is sensitive to the diversity and characteristics of the school community whilst having a zero tolerance for abuse, racism and other inappropriate/unsafe behaviours.</p> <p>We recognise that the younger members of our community and those with additional needs and/or from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds may have difficulty understanding the details of this policy. Consequently, help-seeking posters, homeroom education regarding raising concerns and with whom to speak, are part of the SEL and homeroom curriculum from Prep to Year 12 ensuring that students of any age are empowered, informed of their rights and know how to raise a concern or complaint. Additionally, families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds are offered access to multilingual staff who can assist with understanding policies and submitting complaints or concerns. This service is available by contacting Bialik Main Reception, any sub-school office or Head of School.</p>
<p>Scope</p>	<p>Complaints or concerns may be raised by and about the College or any person connected to the school environment, i.e. staff, volunteers, visitors, contractors, service providers, parents, families, children or students.</p> <p>Complaints regarding child safety and wellbeing are prioritised and managed as outlined below.</p> <p>This policy is made available to the entire College community via the school website, internal parent/student/staff learning management system and to new staff and families.</p>

<p>Child Safety & Wellbeing Related Complaints</p>	<p>Concerns or complaints related to student safety and/or wellbeing are given the utmost priority and are managed in accordance with the College's Mandatory Reporting and Child Safety & Wellbeing Policies. These complaints may relate to all forms of child abuse and neglect, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical child abuse • sexual child abuse • grooming • emotional child abuse • family violence • neglect. <p>When College staff or volunteers receive a child safety or wellbeing related complaint or become aware of concerns relating to child abuse, they are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take the complaint or concern seriously and act on it immediately, • follow the guidance of the Mandatory Reporting Policy and the Four Critical Actions for Schools (Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse), • ensure the safety of the child who is immediately at risk of harm by separating the alleged victim from others involved, administering necessary first aid, calling for urgent medical and police assistance as required, • act to protect a student who raises or is affected by a complaint or concern, • not make a judgement about the truth of a complaint or concern relating to child abuse, • not investigate the matter themselves, • inform a member of the Child Protection Team, relevant Head of School or Principal who will be able to assist with subsequent steps, • notify the Police/ Department of Family, Fairness and Housing DFFH (Child Protection), the College Principal and the Commission for Young People (CCYP) if the complaint or concern relates to the suspected abuse being perpetrated by a staff member, volunteer or other person connected with the school, • notify the College Principal, DFFH and/or the Police if the complaint or concern relates to the suspected abuse being perpetrated by somebody outside of the school, such as a family member or somebody in the wider community. • if the complaint or concern does not involve the abuse of a child but

	<p>significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child exists, these concerns must be relayed to the Child Protection Team and in turn advice sought from Child First / Orange Door, DFFH (Child Protection) or the Police,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • document the complaint or concern as well as the actions they have taken or been involved with. This documentation is to be retained on the College MLS system using the 'confidential notes' feature to ensure confidentiality of their notes and the protection of the privacy of all children involved, • continue to provide ongoing support for impacted children in line with a support plan developed by the school, • continue to protect the privacy of any involved children and not disclose details unless it is to further the protection of children, • ensure that any additional complaints, concerns, disclosures or suspicions of further instances of abuse or risk to children is reported immediately. <p>The Principal or member of the Child Protection Team will consult with DFFH (Child Protection) or the Police to determine what information should be shared with parents/carers and how this information should be shared,</p>
<p>Procedure</p>	<p>Bialik Complaints Procedure has three sequential stages. In summary they are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 – A concern is raised informally with a staff member. • Stage 2 – Complaint is raised with, or heard by, a member of the Sub-School Leadership Team, Head of Department or the whole school Senior Leadership Team. • Stage 3 – Complaint is formally heard by the Principal (who may delegate investigation and resolution to a member of the Senior Leadership Team). <p>Documentation of all concerns and complaints are recorded in the school's Learning Management System linked to the family, student or staff member involved.</p> <p>Stage 1 – Raising a concern</p> <p>Concerns can be raised with the College at any time and will often generate a quick response, which will resolve the concern. The College requests that students or community members make the first contact with the relevant member of staff, e.g. a pastoral matter with the classroom teacher or Deputy Head of Primary, Year Level Co-ordinator (Middle & Senior) or an academic matter with the appropriate teacher, Head of Department, Director of Wellbeing or Head of School. If community members are unsure as to whom to direct a complaint, please contact the home room teacher, Year Level Coordinator, Director of Wellbeing or Head of School.</p> <p>On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case further time may be required to resolve the matter. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this manner.</p> <p>In most cases, parents will be made aware when their child has raised a concern and will be kept informed of the progress of the resolution process.</p> <p>When raising a complaint, the complainant must comply with other school policies and the Parent Code of Conduct (if a parent), Staff Workplace</p>

Behaviours Policy (if a staff member) and Positive Behaviour Policy (if a student). Conduct must be respectful and appropriate at all times.

Stage 2 – Raising a complaint

If community members are not satisfied with the result at Stage 1, they should ask to speak with the member of staff's line manager, who will attempt to address the concerns. The name of the line manager is also obtainable from the Head of School.

In the case of a student concern which has not been resolved at Stage 1, and depending on the nature of the concern, the following may take place:

- mediation between parties involved (with or without parents/carers, but only after parents/carers have been advised of the proposed cause of action)
- escalation of the concern to a school leader such as a Head of Department or Year Level Coordinator
- targeted education regarding the issue with relevant cohort
- provision of individualised or group counselling
- parents called in to meet with the Head of Department, Year Level Coordinator or Head of School.

If community members are not satisfied at the end of Stage 2, then they should contact the College within 5 school working days stating their expectations. The complaint will then be escalated to Stage 3.

Stage 3 – Complaint heard by Principal or a delegated member of the Senior Leadership Team

Formal complaints must be submitted in writing and addressed to the Principal, Director of Wellbeing or Head of School. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The College will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint and in many cases this response will also detail the action the school has taken to date to resolve the issue. A meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. This meeting will normally take place within 10 school days.

The aim is always to resolve the matter as speedily as possible.

Note that for all stages above, a concern/complaint regarding child safety and wellbeing will be referred immediately to the Child Protection Team (inc. Director of Wellbeing), Head of School or Principal. The person to whom the concern is directed will follow all mandatory reporting obligations.

Alternative Procedures for Managing a Complaint

In some cases, the key staff allocated for managing a complaint (listed above) may not be able or available. In most circumstances, such as the absence of key staff, other staff will have been identified to deputise for the unavailable allocated staff member. This may include the Vice Principal or an Assistant Principal replacing the roles outlined above allocated to the Principal. Heads of School each have either a nominated deputy or Year Level Coordinator. For complaints relating to child safety or wellbeing, the College Child Protection Team includes three senior members of staff to allow for this eventuality.

Complaint about the Principal

Formal complaints about the Principal should be put in writing and addressed

	<p>to the President of the College Council. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The President, (or if they are unavailable or also implicated in the complaint, a member of the Council Executive), will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint and in many cases this response will also detail the action the school has taken to date to resolve the issue. A meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. This meeting will normally take place within 10 school days. The aim is always to resolve the matter as speedily as possible.</p> <p>Unresolved Complaints</p> <p>In the event a complainant remains unsatisfied, the College can advise on external / statutory bodies to which a complainant can refer.</p> <p>Complaints and the Law</p> <p>Complaints made under this policy do not exempt the complainant, the investigator or the College staff and leadership from reporting obligations under Mandatory Reporting obligations and / or Failure to Disclose and Failure to Protect legislation. Complainants recognise that raising a child-safety-related complaint/concern, even confidentially, will be referred to the Child Protection Team and will be reported to police / DFFH (Child Protection) / CCYP / VIT depending on the nature of the complaint, as per the Mandatory Reporting Policy.</p> <p>Teachers also have additional responsibilities / expectations under the VIT Code of Conduct, and there are reporting obligations by the College leadership that must be followed in the instance of a complaint that involves a breach.</p> <p>Record Keeping and Privacy</p> <p>Records are kept on staff files of all complaints, and in accordance with privacy, employment and record keeping statutory obligations.</p>
<p>Other Relevant Policies</p>	<p>Whistle Blower Policy</p> <p>Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy (including the Child Safety Code of Conduct)</p> <p>Mandatory Reporting Policy</p> <p>Staff Code of Conduct</p>