



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Approved: 12/2025
Approved By: Board
Effective: 1/2026
Next Review: 2028

www.dominic.tas.edu.au

PURPOSE

Dominic College (the College) is a K-10 Catholic School in the Salesian Tradition. The policies of the College, underpinned by Gospel values, serve to promote the wellbeing, dignity, and uniqueness of each person, and ensure the College meets its duty of care and legal and regulatory obligations.

The Charter for Salesian Schools sets out four central pillars that embody our founder St John Bosco's vision and guides the College in all aspects of school life. Dominic College draws its inspiration from these four pillars and strives to be:

- A **HOME** that welcomes
- A **PARISH** that evangelises
- A **SCHOOL** that prepares for life
- A **PLAYGROUND** where friends meet and enjoy themselves

The purpose of this Complaints Policy is to set out the principles that will guide how complaints are managed and provide a supportive environment for all persons who wish to raise concerns with the College. By providing clear guidance on how complaints are raised, managed, and resolved, the policy helps foster a safe and respectful environment, supports continuous improvement, and ensures that all individuals are treated fairly and equitably throughout the complaint process.

SCOPE

This policy applies to any person who wishes to raise a formal complaint in relation to the College including but not limited to staff, students, parents, contractors, volunteers, visitors, and members of the public.

This policy applies to the School Environment and any School Activity or School Event held onsite or offsite, during school hours and outside school hours.

This policy does not apply to:

- Child safety matters (these will be managed in accordance with the College Child Safe Policy).
- Complaints subject to separate legal or regulatory processes (e.g. police investigations).
- Complaints related to conditions of employment (these will be managed in accordance with the Tasmanian Catholic Education Single Enterprise Agreement).
- Incidents occurring outside school hours or offsite unless it is a School Activity or School Event, or occurred while students are travelling by bus to or from school.
- Complaints by one parent against another parent unless it is in relation to a breach of the Parent Code of Conduct.
- Complaints regarding our legal or regulatory requirements.
- Family law matters.
- Criminal offences.

If there is an immediate threat to the health and safety of a person or if a crime has been, or is believed to have been committed, the Principal will be informed and it will be reported to Tasmania Police and/or other relevant authority.

Note:

- Dominic College is owned and governed by the Salesians of Don Bosco.
- Catholic Education Tasmania/Tasmanian Catholic Education Office does not deal with complaints concerning Dominic College.
- The Department of Education does not deal with complaints concerning Catholic schools.

DEFINITIONS

TERM	MEANING
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction or concern made by a complainant about the College's staff, students, performance, actions, decisions, services or operations.
Complainant	The person, group or organisation making the complaint.
Complaint Form	Means the Dominic College online complaint mechanism available on the College website.
Conflict of Interest	A conflict of interest occurs when a person's personal interests conflict with their responsibility to act in the best interest of Dominic College. A conflict of interest may be actual, potential or perceived and may be financial or non-financial in nature.
Frivolous or Vexatious Complaint	Is a complaint that is without merit, is trivial, lacks substance, made without reasonable foundation in fact and is designed to bother, annoy, harass, frustrate, distress, or deliberately cause an additional resource burden on the school.
Investigation	The process of gathering information and evidence to determine the facts relating to a complaint.
Respondent	The person, group or organisation against whom the complaint is made.
School Activity	Is any student-based program or endeavour that does not fall within the scope of a regular classroom activity. This includes but is not limited to camps, retreats, sporting events, incursions, excursions, extra-curricular activities.
School Environment	Is any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the College for use by children during or outside school hours. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College grounds and facilities. • Online College environments including email, intranet systems and social media platforms. • Other locations provided by the College for a child's use, including locations used for School Activities and School Events.
School Event	Is any occasion that involves the wider school community. This includes but is not limited to the College fair, fundraisers, parent education evenings, showcases, College productions, graduation masses, morning tea tours, and award ceremonies.
Unacceptable Behaviour	Includes but is not limited to excessive and repetitive phone calls or emails, verbally abusive language towards staff and/or students, aggressive behaviour or threats of violence towards staff and/or students. In the event of Unacceptable Behaviour, action will be taken to protect student and staff safety or to de-escalate the situation and allow a period of time to reflect and calm down for all people involved.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy establishes the expectations, responsibilities, and requirements for complaints at Dominic College.

Dominic College is committed to ensuring that complaints are managed fairly, equitably, and confidentially. All individuals have the right to raise a complaint and to have it addressed in a respectful, sensitive and constructive manner. The College will ensure that complaints are

investigated impartially, outcomes are communicated, and appropriate actions are taken to resolve the issues and improve practices.

All persons covered by this policy are required to comply with its provisions, support its aims and contribute to its effective implementation.

BEFORE RAISING A FORMAL COMPLAINT – INFORMAL RESOLUTION

Before raising a formal complaint, you should, where possible, discuss the matter with the person concerned or an appropriate member of staff depending on the nature of your concern. If you do not feel comfortable having a conversation face-to-face, you may prefer to email instead. When raising your concerns, it is important to:

- Clearly define your concern.
- Provide relevant details such as dates, times, locations, names, and any witnesses.
- Suggest what changes or solutions may be appropriate.
- Maintain a calm and respectful tone.

If the issue is not resolved, the next step is to contact the relevant individual identified from the list below noting there is an expectation that you will follow the correct reporting hierarchy:

- The person's direct supervisor
- The Classroom Teacher, Oratory Group Teacher, Lead Teacher or Director
- The Chief Financial and Operations Officer (concerns relating to Business Services)
- The relevant Deputy Principal
- The Principal (concerns about the Deputy Principals or Chief Financial and Operations Officer)
- The Chair of the College Board (concerns about the Principal)

By raising a concern directly with the person involved or an appropriate staff member, the informal grievance can be handled with discretion by the parties involved.

Resolving a complaint through the informal process is the preferred course of action.

If informal resolution is unsuccessful, complainants can choose to make a formal complaint. The College's preferred method for making a formal complaint is for the Complainant to complete the online Complaint Form on the College website. Formal complaints may also be lodged by email to complaints@dominic.tas.edu.au The formal complaint process is set out in the College Complaints Procedure.

COMPLAINT PRINCIPLES

- In order to help ensure complaints cause as minimal stress as possible, complaints will be handled as follows:
 - formal complaints will be acknowledged by the Governance Manager;
 - there will be an attempt to resolve complaints as promptly as possible where appropriate and reasonable to do so;
 - there is an expectation (in line with the Parent Code of Conduct) that all parties will participate in the complaint process in a positive and constructive manner;
 - confidentiality and privacy will be maintained by all parties during the complaint process; and
 - any outcome of a complaint will be provided to all parties involved.

- The College is committed to addressing complaints fairly, equitably, respectfully and with regard to due process. The manner in which the College responds to a complaint is at its discretion and will be guided by the nature and severity of the issue raised. In determining the most appropriate approach, and acting reasonably and in the spirit of this policy, the College may take into account (including but not limited to) the following factors:
 - the seriousness and potential impact of the complaint;
 - the age, wellbeing, and needs of students involved;
 - legal or regulatory obligations;
 - the rights and responsibilities of all parties;
 - whether the matter is isolated or part of a recurring issue;
 - the need for confidentiality and procedural fairness;
 - the resources required to investigate and resolve the complaint; and
 - opportunities for early resolution and restorative practices.
- Complaints are confidential and will only be shared with those directly involved in the investigation and resolution process.
- Procedural fairness requires that the Respondent be informed of who made the complaint, the nature and content of the complaint, and have the right to respond. The Respondent will be informed of the allegations in order to be able to respond to the complaint.
- The Complainant and the Respondent will be given an opportunity to provide a response either in person or in writing to the allegations and/or evidence offered by the other party.
- Complainants can choose to remain anonymous, however, this may limit the extent to which the College can investigate and address the concerns raised. In the event the College requires more information in order to act on a complaint, then the complaint may not progress. The College cannot provide updates or outcomes for anonymous complaints.
- There may be instances where the College may choose not to disclose the identity of a Complainant but this will depend on the circumstances including any legal obligations, safety concerns, ensuring a fair investigation, and any restorative steps that may be required.
- Complainants may make their identity known to the College but request that it not be disclosed further. Any such request will be considered but must be balanced against the requirement for procedural fairness and the College's ability to properly investigate and determine a complaint. While the College may undertake to maintain confidentiality to the extent possible, in some cases, identities may become apparent by virtue of the nature and content of the complaint.
- There may be instances where it is not reasonably practical for the College to accept anonymous complaints because doing so would not be lawful.
- Investigations will be impartial and avoid Conflicts of Interest.
- Consequences will be consistent with College policies and be supported by evidence including a finding on the balance of probabilities in the event of a disputed fact.
- Complainants and Respondents will be kept informed and updated on the progress of the complaint.
- Complainants and Respondents have the right to have an adult support person to assist them at any time during the complaint process. Support persons must not have a Conflict of Interest.

- Employees are entitled to have an Independent Education Union representative present during discussions if they wish.
- Internal mediation is available at any time. External mediation may occur by agreement with the Complainant, the Respondent and the Principal. For complaints about the Principal, the agreement of the Board Chair will be required for any mediation process.
- Additional support may be provided to relevant persons during the complaint process where appropriate.
- It is unlawful to victimise anyone for making a complaint or to retaliate against someone who has made a complaint in good faith.
- Complaints can be withdrawn in writing by the Complainant at any time.
- The College reserves the right to continue to investigate a complaint if a complaint is withdrawn.
- The College will maintain a record of all complaints and all associated documentation. All complaints will be securely documented and managed in accordance with the College Privacy Policy and Records Management Policy.
- The College reserves the right to postpone an investigation at any time (including a related meeting or phone call) if the Complainant and/or Respondent exhibits Unacceptable Behaviour and/or breaches confidentiality, privacy, the Parent Code of Conduct, the Staff Code of Conduct or the Student Code of Conduct during the complaint resolution process. In the event this occurs, the matter will be suspended until the Unacceptable Behaviour ceases and the Complainant and/or Respondent agrees to abide by the College's expectations.

COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

The College will attempt to resolve complaints as promptly as possible and preferably within 30 business days of receiving the complaint.

All parties will receive notification of the outcome, the findings, and any further internal avenues of redress that may be available (if applicable).

A complaint is considered closed when it is withdrawn by the complainant (and the College does not continue to investigate the complaint), the College is satisfied the complaint is resolved, or the College is satisfied that the complaint is a Frivolous or Vexatious complaint.

APPEALS

Complainants may appeal a decision made in relation to a formal complaint to the following persons, in order:

- the Principal;
- the Chair of the College Board.

Details of the appeal process are set out in the College Complaints Procedure.

BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

Any breach of this policy will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the severity, intent, frequency and impact of the breach. The College response will be guided by its Catholic and Salesian ethos, its policies and procedures, and any legal or regulatory obligations.

A breach of this policy may result in (but is not limited to) one or more of the following and will depend on the person's role (e.g. employee, student, parent, volunteer, contractor, member of the public).

- Reminder of our expectations either verbally or in writing.
- Referral to parents, Line Manager, College leadership.
- Restorative practices including mediation and conciliation.
- Corrective actions including: retraining, professional development, supervision or performance management; Points Contract or Principal's Agreement.
- Formal warning.
- Removal from specific duties.
- Restricted or banned from site, School Activities or School Events.
- Suspension or discontinuation of enrolment.
- Suspension or termination of employment.
- Referral to external authorities where required by law or regulator including Strong Families Safe Kids, Tasmania Police, Teachers Registration Board, Registration to Work with Vulnerable People or other relevant bodies.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide governance oversight and ensure alignment with strategic goals and legal and regulatory obligations. • Ensure the policy supports the College mission, values and Salesian Tradition.
Principal/College Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead policy implementation and enforcement, monitor compliance, and support continuous improvement. • Ensure the processes for investigating, managing and documenting a complaint align with this policy and associated procedures. • Ensure the College has the appropriate resources required to meet its obligations.
Lead Teachers/Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure policy and procedure awareness, compliance within their areas of responsibility, and appropriate training and support. • Ensure any breaches of this policy and associated procedures are acted upon as soon as reasonably possible. • Report any breaches of this policy and associated procedures to the relevant member of the College Leadership Team.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarise themselves with and comply with this policy and associated procedures. • Maintain privacy and confidentiality. • Declare any conflict of interest that may arise as a result of a complaint. • Take all complaints seriously, have an open mind, act professionally, and do their best to investigate and resolve the matter in a timely, fair, equitable, sensitive, constructive, positive and objective manner.

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards achieving restorative justice for all parties where applicable and where possible. • Take appropriate steps to de-escalate or protect the safety of staff and students if required.
Governance Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the College Complaints Register and complaint process including acknowledging all complaints, determining if a complaint is Frivolous or Vexatious in nature, assigning complaints to the appropriate staff member (or other person or authority) to investigate, ensuring complaints are appropriately addressed and outcomes communicated, and maintain secure records of all complaints. • Monitor compliance with this policy and associated procedures. • Oversee the ongoing review of this policy and associated procedures to ensure continuous improvement, and keep abreast of business requirements and regulatory and legislative changes. • Ensure this policy and associated procedures are accessible in the College Policy Library, the College website and upon request.
Complainants/ Respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarise themselves with and comply with this policy and associated procedures. • Maintain privacy and confidentiality. • Ensure they engage in behaviours and conduct consistent with this policy and associated procedures, our Catholic and Salesian values, the Parent Code of Code, Student Code of Conduct and Staff Code of Conduct. • Ensure complaints are made in good faith and on reasonable grounds. • Ensure complaints are not spurious, vindictive, vexatious, frivolous or unfounded, but reflect genuine concerns or issues requiring attention.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Related documents include but are not limited to those listed below.

College Policies and Procedures

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Child Safe Policy
- Communication Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Exclusion From School Policy and Procedure
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Privacy Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Welfare Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Whistleblower Policy

Legislation

- Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (Tas)
- Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023 (Tas)

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education Act 2016 (Tas)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and Australian Privacy Principles

Other

- Non-Government Schools Registration Board Guidelines
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Terms, Definitions, Acronyms and Legislation Guide

LOCATION AND ACCESS

College policies are stored and accessed through designated platforms to ensure the correct information is available to the appropriate audience.

This policy is available in the Dominic College SharePoint Policy Library accessible by all staff. It is also available on the College website or upon request.

Printed copies of this policy are not considered current and should not be relied upon. Always refer to the SharePoint version or the Website version for the current, approved policy.