



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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Approved By: College Leadership Team
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Next Review: 2028

www.dominic.tas.edu.au

PURPOSE

This procedure supports the Complaints Policy and outlines how a complaint will be handled by Dominic College (the College). This procedure also contains information about what to do if a complaint is unresolved. By providing clear guidance on how complaints are raised, managed and resolved, the procedure helps foster a safe and respectful environment, supports continuous improvement, and ensures that all individuals are treated fairly and equitably through the complaint process.

SCOPE

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

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

Complaints excluded from this procedure are detailed in the Complaints Policy.

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.

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:

TERM	MEANING
	<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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

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 complaint process is detailed below and is set out in the attached flowchart.

HOW TO MAKE A FORMAL COMPLAINT

The College's preferred method for making a Complaint is for the Complainant to complete the online Complaint Form on the College website.

Complaints may also be lodged by email to complaints@dominic.tas.edu.au

Any written complaint received by the College must be forwarded to the Governance Manager, who is responsible for overseeing the complaint resolution process. Each complaint will be recorded on the College Complaints Register maintained by the Governance Manager.

Staff who receive a complaint by email must forward the complaint to the Governance Manager. Such complaints must **not** be discussed with other staff, forwarded or copied to other staff, or placed on SEQTA. Staff should **not** respond to the complaint as this will be managed by the Governance Manager.

If you need assistance to make a complaint, or have any questions in relation to the complaints process, email complaints@dominic.tas.edu.au

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A COMPLAINT

When making a complaint, in addition to providing details about the nature of your complaint and your specific concerns, you must include the information set out below in order to facilitate the investigation and a prompt resolution:

- Names of the persons involved, including any witnesses and their contact details
- Dates, times and locations
- Any supporting documents or other information you deem relevant
- Your desired outcome
- Your contact details
- The name of any support person including their contact details, occupation, relationship to you and a conflict of interest statement.

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE A COMPLAINT IS MADE

After receiving a complaint, the following will occur:

- The complaint will be acknowledged by the Governance Manager who will assign it to the appropriate staff member to investigate (or other person or authority) within 7 days of receipt.
- An assessment of the complaint will be conducted to determine if it falls within the scope of the policy and if additional actions are required to meet the College's legal, regulatory, or duty of care responsibilities.
- The Complainant may be invited to attend a meeting at the College to discuss the matter further. Alternatively, a complainant may be contacted by telephone or email.
- If a complaint is about another person, that person will be notified of the complaint, the complainant's name, the details of the complaint, and provided with any allegations to allow them to respond.

The College will aim to resolve a complaint within 30 business days of receiving the complaint.

If a complaint cannot be resolved within 30 business days, the Complainant will be notified and provided with an estimated timeframe.

The Complainant and Respondent will be notified of any outcome and the reasons for the outcome.

INVESTIGATING A COMPLAINT

- Before investigating a complaint, the relevant staff member must ensure they do not have a Conflict of Interest.
- The investigating staff member will undertake the following steps:
 - Consider the nature of the complaint;
 - Identify if any support may be required (e.g. an interpreter, Employee Assistance Program, College Counsellor, other support services);
 - If the Complainant is a student, consider what support may need to be offered to the student's family; and
 - Inform the Complainant they can have an adult support person to assist them throughout the complaint process. Obtain support persons details before any meetings.
- If the Complainant is a student, the investigating staff member must consider the wishes of the student in determining how to resolve the complaint and ensure that the student is able to express their own views (either directly or through a representative, as appropriate).
- If a person is the subject of the complaint, the investigating staff member must:
 - Inform the person that a complaint has been made, the complainant's name, details of the complaint, provide them with any allegations and give them a reasonable opportunity to respond either in person or in writing.
 - Inform the Respondent they can have an adult support person present during any meetings to discuss the complaint. Obtain support persons details before any meetings.
 - Following the investigation, inform the Complainant and the Respondent of the outcome and the reasons in support of the outcome. The Complainant will also be advised of the internal escalation options should they wish to appeal the decision. The investigating staff member may at their discretion, and guided by the nature and severity of the issue raised and the parties involved, convey the outcome in writing, in person or by telephone.
 - Following the investigation, the investigating staff member will advise the Governance Manager of the outcome and the reasons in support of the decision in writing, including:
 - details of the investigation process including actions taken, who was interviewed and when;
 - notes of any meetings;
 - copies of all communications;
 - any supporting documents and evidence acquired during the course of the investigation;
 - any punitive or restorative actions taken; and
 - any recommendations.

- Following the investigation, if a complaint involves a student, any consequences and communication with parents, will be noted on the student's record (SEQTA) and will be locked and restricted to relevant staff only.
- The investigating staff member must investigate the complaint by taking the following steps:
 - Speak to the people involved, including any witnesses. Only provide what complaint details are necessary to ensure an informed response, do not share details provided by one person to another person.
 - If applicable, review College CCTV footage noting that accessing or viewing security footage must be in accordance with the College Surveillance Policy.
 - Follow up any avenues of enquiry in order to gather evidence (e.g. check College ICT devices and access logs).
 - Securely document all steps, decisions, evidence, information gathered, and communications.
 - Make a finding in relation to any disputed facts.
- 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, the relevant party has had time to reflect and calm down, and agrees to abide by the College's expectations.

INVESTIGATORS

- Ordinarily, the investigation will be conducted by an appropriate member of staff. This will depend on the nature and complexity of the complaint received.
- In some circumstances, the investigation and resolution of a complaint may require the appointment of an external investigator. An external investigator may be appointed in respect of any complaint at the discretion and approval of the Principal or Chair of the College Board.
- The appointment of an external investigator may extend the investigation of a complaint beyond 30 business days. An estimate of the time it will take to conduct the investigation will be provided by the external investigator.

SUPPORT PERSONS

- All Complainants and Respondents are entitled to have an adult support person at any stage in the complaint process.
- A support person may be a work colleague, family member or friend.
- Under the *Tasmanian Catholic Education Single Enterprise Agreement* employees are entitled to have an Independent Education Union representative present during discussions if they wish.
- For a student, an adult support person can be a staff member, the College Counsellor, a family member or carer. A student may also choose to have a friend to offer them peer support in addition to an adult support person.
- A support person may provide emotional support, take notes and ask for meeting breaks but cannot advocate and cannot speak on behalf of the Complainant or the Respondent.

- Support persons must not have a Conflict of Interest.
- Support persons' details must be submitted in writing to the investigating staff member, or external investigator, prior to the commencement of any investigation or meeting. The information required includes the support person's name, contact details, occupation, relationship to the Complainant or Respondent, and a conflict of interest statement (declaration of any conflicts or confirmation there are no conflicts).

COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

- All complaints are considered to be active unless 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 the complaint is a Frivolous or Vexatious complaint.
- A complaint is considered resolved when all investigative and appeals processes have been exhausted or a resolution to the complaint has been achieved between all parties to the complaint.
- The College can close a complaint at any time where the matter has been referred to Tasmania Police or is under investigation by another authority.
- When a complaint is concluded, the Complainant and the Respondent will be informed of the outcome of the complaint. The response will include:
 - a summary of the facts and findings;
 - reasons for the decision made; and
 - a statement of the rights of all parties involved moving forward including information about any further internal avenues of redress which may be available.
- The investigating staff member may at their discretion, and guided by the nature and severity of the issue raised and the parties involved, convey the outcome to the Complainant and Respondent in writing, in person or by telephone.
- The College may choose not to begin an investigation, or cease investigating a complaint, at any time if the complaint is Frivolous or Vexatious in nature. If this occurs, the College may at its discretion, and after taking into account the nature, severity and intentions of the Complainant, decide not to communicate further with the Complainant.

WITHDRAWING A COMPLAINT

Complaints can be withdrawn in writing by a Complainant at any time.

The College reserves the right to continue to investigate a complaint after it has been withdrawn by a Complainant. If a decision was made to continue investigating a withdrawn complaint, this will be communicated to the Complainant.

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.

In determining any complaint referred to the Principal or the Chair of the College Board, the Principal or the Chair shall conduct a procedural review of the Complaint. The review will determine whether the Complaint was managed in accordance with both the Complaints Policy and the Complaints Procedure.

If for some reason the complaint process did not follow the Complaints Policy and/or Complaints Procedure, the complaint will be reconsidered by the Principal or the Chair of the College Board to correct any procedural deficiency.

Complainants should email complaints@dominic.tas.edu.au to obtain the contact details of the Chair of the College Board in the event they wish to appeal.

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. • 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.

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

LOCATION AND ACCESS

College policies, procedures and other key documents are stored and accessed through designated platforms to ensure the correct information is available to the appropriate audience.

This procedure 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 procedure are not considered current and should not be relied upon. Always refer to the SharePoint version or the Website version for the current, approved procedure.

COMPLAINT PROCESS – FLOWCHART

