



## Complaints Policy

Policy Number: PPEC0210(3)

Document Management						
Version Number	Section/s Modified	Brief Description of Amendment	Policy Sponsor	Approved by	Date Approved	Next Review Date
Complaints Policy PPEC0210(3)	Full document	Updated to reflect AIS template content	Principal	College Leadership Team	29/05/2024	29/05/2027
Complaints Policy PPEC0210(2)	Title	Change of policy name	Deputy Principal	College Leadership Team	27/05/2020	27/05/2023
Resolution of Complaints Policy PPEC0210	n/a	New policy	Director of Staff Services	College Leadership Team	31/12/2015	31/12/2018

*Mercy Values - OLMC Parramatta is a Christ-centred learning community founded in the Mercy tradition. The policies of the College, underpinned by the Gospel values of mercy and justice, serve to promote the dignity and uniqueness of each human person. Their aim is to foster the intellectual, spiritual, emotional, physical and social wellbeing of all members of the College community within a safe, healthy, caring and sustainable environment.*

### 1. Purpose

This policy provides a framework to resolve complaints by students, parents/carers or the external community made in respect of services provided by the College or against staff members, which includes employees, contractors and volunteers. Complaints are to be managed in a professional, values-based, competent and timely manner, ensuring procedural fairness for all parties.

### 2. Scope

This policy and procedure provides a guide to the management of general complaints from students, parents/carers or the external community. Please note that specific complaint procedures are in place for matters concerning child protection, workplace bullying, harassment, enrolment and employment relations. Complaints regarding these matters will be dealt with as per the relevant College policies and procedures and related legislation.

This policy does not extend to personal grievances (between parents, guardians or other members of the school community) or complaints which are whistleblowing disclosures (the procedure for processing whistleblowing complaints are dealt with in the school's



Whistleblowing policy). Complaints about reportable conduct will be addressed in accordance with the College's Child Protection Policy.

### 3. Key Definitions

Complaint - A complaint or grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the College about an educational and/or operational matter

Working day – any day other than Saturday, Sunday or public holiday during term time

Support person – a friend/teacher/relative not involved in the grievance.

### 4. Policy

A complaint or grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the College about an educational and/or operational matter relating to services provided by the school or the behaviour or decisions of a staff member, contractor or volunteer, including misconduct.

Parents/carers and students may raise a complaint about something that appears to be unsatisfactory or unreasonable. This may include a decision, behaviour, practice, procedure or omission. Complaints received by the College may be oral or written and written complaints include those delivered in person or sent by letter or email.

If a parent/carer or student has a concern about the conduct of a staff member, they should raise their concern with the College in accordance with section 5. If a complaint that concerns the behaviour of a staff member may constitute reportable conduct, the matter will be addressed in accordance with the College's Child Protection Policy. Please refer to the College's Child Protection Policy for information about reportable conduct. Complainants are not required to assess whether their concern meets the threshold of reportable conduct before making a complaint. Any concern about a child's wellbeing may be reported under this policy.

The school will seek to resolve complaints informally where possible but acknowledges that in some cases a person may wish to make a formal complaint.



Parents/carers and students are encouraged to identify whether they are raising a concern or a complaint, as most issues of concern can be readily resolved through direct contact with relevant members of the community. A guide to the most relevant staff member for the initial contact for a range of concerns/complaints is included in this document in Appendix A as well as the student diary. An official complaint will be managed in accordance with this policy.

Complaints will be responded to in a courteous, respectful and timely manner and staff will work together with parents/carers and students to resolve the complaint. It is expected that parents/carers and students will be both realistic and reasonable about the action required to resolve their complaint. Complaints will be resolved at the lowest level of management necessary for their appropriate resolution with an assumption that complaints are made in good faith with an intention for resolution.

#### **4.1. Guiding Principles**

There are four guiding principles that underpin the Complaints Policy:

##### 4.1.1. Time

- complaints should be dealt with in a timely manner
- all parties should be advised if a delay occurs

##### 4.1.2. Process

- all parties have a right to be heard
- impartiality
- confidentiality
- procedural fairness
- the well-being of all parties involved or affected by the complaint

##### 4.1.3. Transparency

- Staff members have a right to be informed of formal complaints that are made relating to them and have the right of reply. The exception to this would be if the complaint related to child protection issues or other legislative areas where the Principal would follow the processes outlined in the relevant policies such as the Child Protection Policy



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- if a meeting is required, the staff member concerned must be told in advance the purpose of the meeting and who will be attending the meeting
- both the complainant (person making the complaint) and the complainee (the person complained about) may access support

### 4.1.4. Resolution

- the results of the investigation and any relevant outcomes are communicated to all parties concerned as soon as possible
- all reasonable evidence is considered prior to decision-making
- an expectation that differences are resolved amicably
- a resolution can require compromise from all parties

## 5. Confidentiality

All parties involved in complaints handling are required to maintain appropriate confidentiality, including in relation to handling and storing records.

## 6. Procedures

### 6.1. Raising a complaint

Informal complaints may be raised by a complainant directly with the appropriate staff member as per Appendix A. However, if the complainant does not feel comfortable doing so or the matter is one where it may not be appropriate to do so a complaint can be made to the Deputy Principal (Complaints Officer).

Any complaint about the conduct of a staff member should be raised directly with the Principal in the first instance.

Should the matter not be resolved through informal processes, the complainant may raise the matter formally with the College. A formal complaint can be made in writing to the Principal, via email ([complaints@olmc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:complaints@olmc.nsw.edu.au)) or via the Make a Complaint link in the Contact section of the OLMC website. The complainant should explain the behaviour, decision, practice or action that was unsatisfactory or unreasonable and identify the outcome that the complainant is seeking.



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Where a person wishes to make a formal complaint concerning the Principal the complaint should be made in writing to the Chair of the Board, via email [chairboard@olmc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:chairboard@olmc.nsw.edu.au). In this situation, the references in this policy relating to the role of *the* Principal should be read as references to the Chair of Board.

The Principal will generally acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing as soon as practicable.

### 6.2. Handling complaints

#### 6.2.1. Assessing a complaint

The Principal (or their delegate) will assess the complaint and determine:

- whether the complaint is one to be addressed under this policy or is a staff grievance or reportable conduct matter which are dealt with by the relevant policies; and
- the priority of the complaint in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the matter raised; and
- whether the school may be required to report the matter to the Office of the Children’s Guardian, Police, Department of Communities and Justice or other relevant authorities should the complaint relate to possible unlawful conduct or other reportable matters.

#### 6.2.2. Managing a formal complaint

The Principal/Delegate generally will manage a formal complaint by:

- a) advising the complainant of the likely steps that will be undertaken by the College in relation to the complaint;
- b) if appropriate, advising the relevant parties of the complaint at the relevant time and providing them with an opportunity to respond;
- c) collecting any additional information the College considers necessary to assess the complaint;
- d) making a decision about how the complaint will be resolved (“resolution decision”); and
- e) advising the complainant in writing, and any other relevant parties as appropriate, of the resolution decision of the Principal/Delegate and if appropriate, any proposed action to be taken.



There may be circumstances where some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the school will determine, on a case by case basis the most appropriate method of handling the complaint.

A complainant and the relevant parties that the complaint is about may choose to have an appropriate support person present at any meeting with representatives of the College about the complaint. However, the College maintains the right to determine whether the person's preferred support person is appropriate and may not approve the attendance of a support person where they are determined by the College to be inappropriate.

Anonymous complaints are investigated at the Deputy Principal's discretion.

### 6.3. Contact

Any queries about this policy or procedure, should be directed to the Deputy Principal for advice.

## 7. Responsibilities

### 7.1. Principal

- to ensure the policy is in place
- participate as necessary in investigations

### 7.2. Deputy Principal

- to respond to complaints
- and/or report as required

### 7.3. Staff, Contractors and Volunteers

- to respond to complaints and/or report as required in the first instance

### 7.4. Parents/Carers and Members of the College Community

- to lodge concerns or complaints as provided for in the guidelines

## 8. Review

The Complaints Policy will be reviewed every 3 three years unless there is a legislative or regulatory requirement to do so earlier.

## 9. References

### 9.1. Related Policies, Procedures, Registers and Sites



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- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Conduct

### 9.2. Related Legislation

- NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- Education Act



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## 10. Communication

<b>Audience</b>	<b>Communicated by</b>	<b>Communication pathway</b>
All staff	College Principal	General Staff Meeting/email
Parents	College Principal	College Website

## Publishing this policy

Staff Portal
College website

## Appendix A: Point of Initial Contact when Raising a Complaint

Complaint is initiated

Examples of Types of Complaints					
A teacher's performance	A particular assessment task	A student having problems with a particular subject or cocurricular activity	A student's work progress over a number of subjects, her lack of focus or motivation, peer relationships etc.	Train or bus travel incidents	Fee charges

