



PARENT AND STUDENTS COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES POLICY

PURPOSE

St Kevin's College strives to be a community of faith, hope and love where communication takes place in an environment of transparency, respect, compassion, fairness, inclusion and a Christian concern for all. Within the reality of the schooling experience, it is recognised that, from time to time, misunderstandings and issues will arise, and that these need to be resolved satisfactorily in partnership with members of the College community. These situations can be opportunities to model the love of Christ, and our response should be founded on a belief in the dignity of each person, on respect, compassion, integrity and truth.

St Kevin's College welcomes feedback from all members of the community and takes all complaints or concerns that may be raised seriously. This policy is designed to assist you to understand our complaints handling process.

SCOPE

This policy is provided for our community including parents and students to assist you to understand our complaints handling process.

Implementing the procedural aspects of this policy applies to all St Kevin's College staff, volunteers, contractors and school council advisory members.

This policy applies to all College activities during and outside of school hours. This includes College activities that are occurring on school campus, offsite, online, extracurricular, sport activities and programs, excursions, camps, interstate and overseas travel.

WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to St Kevin's College, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

ST KEVIN'S COLLEGE'S COMMITMENT

St Kevin's College is committed to handling and resolving complaints fairly, effectively and efficiently. To manage complaints effectively, we have established a Complaints Handling Program in line with both the international complaints handling standard (ISO 10002:2014 Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations), and the Australian/New

Zealand complaints handling standard (AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organisations).

PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS PRINCIPALS

The College is committed to ensuring procedural fairness when determining an appropriate resolution to a complaint and will, where possible:

- respect the right of all parties to be heard and treated fairly
- respond to complaints promptly and thoroughly
- make sure all parties understand the complaints policy and the process
- if the complaint is about a person, give that person the opportunity to respond to any allegations
- conduct investigations impartially, substantiate the facts of the matter and maintain appropriate records
- appropriately communicate the reason for any decision and any action it intends to take
- meet privacy and other legal obligations
- record complaints on a secure database with relevant levels of authorised access.

Our program includes the establishment of an online complaints management register which allows us to effectively capture, manage and report on complaints. The regular analysis of complaints received and the implementation of rectification action, where deficiencies are identified, are key to our commitment. Our internal complaints handling process is available at no cost.

INFORMAL COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION

The vast majority of issues causing concern in schools can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. In most cases these issues can be resolved through informal discussions with appropriate staff members. Even if an issue is able to be resolved informally, all staff are required to log issues through our complaints management register so we are able to identify any systemic issues arising, and take appropriate rectification action.

HOW DO I MAKE A FORMAL COMPLAINT?

If you have been unable to resolve a matter informally, or simply wish to make a formal complaint you can do so by any of the following means:

1. Sending an email to feedback@stkevins.vic.edu.au
2. Writing a letter to St Kevin's College addressed to "The Complaints Manager"
3. Calling St Kevin's College on (03) 9832 4925 and asking for your details to be sent to the Complaints Manager.

All formal complaints will be logged into our online complaints management register and managed in accordance with the following procedure.

OUR INTERNAL COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCESS

Step 1

All formal complaints are logged through our online complaints management register where they are screened by one of our Complaints Officers, the Complaints Manager, or, in the case of a complaint directly related to conduct by the Principal, Deputy Principal or Member of the School Board, the EREA Regional Director.

Step 2

All valid complaints will be acknowledged in writing as soon as practicable, and always within 10 business days. They will be allocated a status, priority and target resolution date. It is our policy, where possible, to commence an initial investigation and make a preliminary determination within 10 business days of acknowledging the complaint.

Step 3

The Complaints Officer shall conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination.

The investigation will establish the circumstances of alleged events and explore options for resolution. Investigations may consist of interviews with involved parties or subject matter experts and/or documentation to determine the full circumstances leading to the complaint. Following completion of the investigation the Complaints Officer will make a determination

Step 4

Following the determination, if appropriate, the Complaints Officer shall formulate a resolution and provide a written response to the complainant. The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

Step 5

If the initial response is not acceptable the matter will be reviewed internally by the Principal or the Principal's delegate, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Principal or their delegate seek to resolve all disputes within 20 business days of the acknowledgement of the complaint. The matter will be closed if the response of the Principal, or their delegate, is accepted. Where appropriate, the matter may be escalated to the EREA Regional Director.

Step 6

All complaints received will be entered into our Complaints Register and, where appropriate, a corrective action request will be made to address any underlying processes which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.

Step 7

If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives.

ESCALATION

A complaint may be escalated during any stage of the complaints process. If a complaint remains unresolved within timeframes we consider reasonable, it will be escalated, unless agreed otherwise by the parties involved.

Escalation of a complaint may include requesting an alternate staff member to review the complaint or the commencement of a formal investigation.

REVIEW OF DECISIONS

If a formal decision has been made and the complainant is not satisfied with the process and/or outcome the complainant can request a formal internal or external review. The internal review will independently re-consider all the information available and may conduct its own enquiries and provide a decision on the matter.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied the matter may be escalated to Edmund Rice Education Australia Email complaints@erea.edu.au.

A complainant may also choose to contact the relevant Catholic Education Office for support and advice, and the complaint will be handled in accordance with the respective Catholic Education Office complaints policy.

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools
Southern Regional Office
602 South Road
MOORABBIN EAST VIC 3189

Ph: (03) 8301 7400

CHILD PROTECTION COMMITMENT

We are committed to protecting students in our care. We have zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interest, keeping them safe from harm. All child abuse complaints must be addressed in accordance with the College Child Safety Policy and Child Protection: Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures, child protection laws and reporting obligations. Please report concerns to the Director of Child Safeguarding, Liz Weir, via weire@stkevins.vic.edu.au

OVERSEAS STUDENTS

If an overseas student isn't satisfied with the outcome of St Kevin's College's internal complaints handling process, they may lodge an external appeal through the Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO) which investigates complaints about problems that overseas students or intending overseas students may have with private education and training in Australia. The services of the OSO are free. The contact details for OSO are as follows:

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Call: 1300 362 072 within Australia.
Outside Australia call +61 2 6276 0111.

Enquiries: 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday, Australian Eastern Standard Time (Australian Eastern Daylight Time when daylight savings is in effect)

Postal: Commonwealth Ombudsman, GPO Box 442 Canberra ACT 2601.

Website: <http://www.oso.gov.au/>

St Kevin's College agrees to be bound to the OSO's recommendations, and will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within 30 days of receipts of the report.

FEEDBACK

St Kevin's College also values positive feedback. We welcome you to provide any feedback to feedback@stkevins.vic.edu.au.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality applies with respect to both information relating to the person making the complaint, and, if relevant, to a person against whom a complaint is made. St Kevin's College is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process.

Personally identifiable information about a complainant will only be made available for the purpose of addressing the complaint and (unless the complainant consents) will be actively protected from disclosure.

Anonymous complaints are accepted. However, should additional information be required to investigate the complaint, the absence of identifying and contact information may mean investigation cannot be undertaken.

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

This Parents and Students Complaints and Grievances Policy is available to parents and carers, students and our community who are able to access this policy on the College website, College staff and parent portals or provided on request to any person.

All staff will be made aware of their responsibilities with regard to this policy. Training will be provided to staff on the commencement of their employment and annually on identifying risks and their responsibilities.

POLICY BREACH

A breach of this policy or procedure may lead to disciplinary action.

All breaches, near misses and risks related to this policy should be reported to incidents@stkevins.vic.edu.au

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Principal and Director of Governance and this may include independent audits and reviews.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Edmund Rice Education Australia Board (EREA)

The EREA Board is St Kevin's College governing authority. The EREA Board is responsible for endorsing this policy, ensuring this policy is reviewed and updated as needed and reviewing the College's compliance with this policy and child safety obligations.

School Advisory Council

The School Advisory Council is responsible for confirming this policy is consistent with EREA guidelines.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for the College's compliance with this policy.

RELEVANT POLICY AND REFERENCES

This policy provides the overarching foundation for our Child Protection Program.

Key relevant policies to support our program include:

- St Kevin's College Child Safety Code of Conduct
- St Kevin's College Mandatory Reporting Policy & Procedures

EREA policy linkage

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related documents:

- EREA Commitment Statement to Child Safety
- EREA Code of Conduct
- EREA Child Safety Code of Conduct

Related legislative instruments

The following legislation, standards and regulations apply and this policy aligns with these mandated requirements:

- Ministerial Order 870;
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic);
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic);