



Parent Guide to Raising A Concern or Complaint Policy

VISION: Clare High School is a learning community that inspires, supports and challenges every young person to engage in achieving success, fostering education, social development and wellbeing.

Reviewed: February 2017

RATIONALE:

A grievance is understood to be a formal objection or complaint made on the basis of something believed to be wrong, unfair, offensive, misleading, unlawful or of poor quality. A grievance may be about the conduct of a person, about specific practices and policies of the school, or about the school generally. A member of staff, a student, parent, carer or member of the public may lodge a grievance.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE AIM:

The aim of a grievance procedure is to produce a solution, which is acceptable to the individuals or parties involved. However, not all problems will be capable of a resolution which satisfies those concerned, but the grievance procedure will ensure that the problem is addressed and that a clear response is provided at each stage of the process. The procedure involves both informal and formal components.

OBJECTIVES:

- Grievances arising shall be dealt with efficiently and in a manner which affords natural justice to all parties.
- To provide for fair, effective and open organisational response to grievances
- To minimise personal and organisational dysfunction arising from unresolved grievances

GRIEVANCE PRINCIPLES:

- The grievance procedures provide guidelines for raising an unresolved issue or complaint and having it considered seriously. It is essential, therefore, that before the process begins all parties participating are familiar with the CHS Grievance Policy and Procedures.
- The grievance procedures may not result in a change to, or reversal of, a decision or action. Sometimes the only achievable outcome may be the enactment of forgiveness or an understanding/agreement to follow or improve conduct, guidelines or procedures in the future.
- Grievance procedures involve Informal and Formal resolution pathways. The informal resolution of a grievance involves only those people concerned who agree to meet privately regarding the grievance. This procedure is always encouraged as the preferred option and resolution is reached when the outcome is satisfactory to all. The formal process is set in motion where the informal process reaches an unsatisfactory outcome.

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- Raising the issue directly, and as soon as possible, with the person concerned is encouraged.
- Communication should be open and honest, focusing on the issue and not the person. This includes listening carefully and respectfully while the other person is talking, and exercising responsibility and mutual respect: respect by staff for parents' special relationships with their children; respect by parents for staff as professionals; general respect for other peoples views, values and opinions.
- When an issue is discussed in the student's presence, it is important that the student understands that you have confidence that the issue will be resolved confidentially at the school level. Criticism of the school or teachers does not support the child's education as it undermines trust and confidence.
- Confidentiality must be maintained through all stages of the process.
- Constructive conflict helps everyone learn, grow and change for the better. Where both parties agree to seek a positive resolution, positive outcomes are likely to result.
- It is important that everyone in the school community feels that they have a right to contact the school to raise matters of concern with appropriate people within the school. Schools can't do anything to address concerns if they don't know about them.
- There are usually 'two sides' to a story and it is important that all parties have the opportunity to understand the issue from different viewpoints.

INFORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES:

This stage allows for grievances to be resolved directly and quickly by those involved, with or without the assistance of others. At this stage, you are not required to submit your complaint in writing to anyone involved with the grievance.

Step 1: Where practical, you should try and resolve the grievance by talking directly with the person you have the grievance with. e.g.- If it has to do with the behavior of another person towards you, talk directly to that person where possible.

Make an appointment to meet with the person at a mutually convenient time and in doing so, make sure you prepare what you are going to say in advance. Focus on your own feelings, describe the behavior in detail, give concrete examples including what was said or done, dates and location, explain how the behavior has affected you and the impact it has had on you.

If the grievance has to do with a decision, process or activity of the school, you should talk to the person responsible for that decision, process or activity.

Step 2: If you don't feel comfortable making that initial direct contact or feel intimidated or unsafe in doing so, or if you would like someone to accompany you to a meeting, you do have the right to seek advice and support, and should not hesitate to do so.

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FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES:

Step 1: If your grievance is not resolved and you wish to pursue the matter, this must be done in writing and submitted to the school leader who is directly responsible for managing in the area of your concern. These people may include:

Year Level Coordinators - Year 7-12
Curriculum Coordinators - All Learning Areas
Personnel Managers
Ancillary Manager

Each school leader will communicate with the staff involved to initiate any necessary action including mediation. At any time throughout the formal stage, you can withdraw your complaint.

Step 2: If your grievance is not resolved through actions initiated by the appropriate school leader and you wish to proceed with your complaint, your grievance should be forwarded in writing to either, the Assistant Principal of Middle School or Senior School. The appropriate Assistant Principal will consult with the parties involved in an attempt to facilitate a satisfactory resolution to the matter.

Step 3: If your grievance is not resolved through actions initiated by the appropriate Assistant Principal and you wish to proceed with your complaint, your grievance should be forwarded in writing to the Principal. The Principal will consult with the parties involved in an attempt to facilitate a satisfactory resolution to the matter.

Step 4: If your grievance is not resolved through the actions initiated by the School Principal and you wish to proceed with your complaint, your grievance will need to be made in writing to the District Director - Wakefield. The District Director will advise you of the formal DECS Grievance procedures to be followed.

ADDRESSING ANONYMOUS GRIEVANCES:

Staff, students, parents and members of the public lodging complaints should be encouraged to identify themselves, with the reassurance that their complaints will be handled confidentially, appropriately and without fear of retribution.

If a complainant wishes to remain anonymous, it is at the school's discretion as to what action, if any, should be taken, depending on the nature of the complaint. Anonymous complaints should be recorded in the log.

RECORDING GRIEVANCES:

Each school leader is responsible for maintaining a log of grievances by staff, students, parents and members of the public. The log should contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of complainant
- Brief statement of issue
- Location of detailed file
- Member of staff handling the issue
- Brief statement of outcome.

All staff should take confidential file notes when encountering or responding to grievances. These may be cross-referenced with other files as necessary. The files should contain simple but clear notes of all conversations about any source of complaint or dissatisfaction. There should be a clear statement about the cause and nature of the grievance.

All formal grievances should be followed up with written correspondence summarizing the outcomes of any resolution/agreement reached between the parties involved.

EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle.

The school's Leadership Team and Governing Council last ratified this policy in...

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