

Procedures for dealing with parents concerns or complaints.

Gladstone Park prides itself on establishing a tone of mutual respect. While this primarily refers to the culture of the student body, it is equally applicable to respecting the rights of parents to have their concerns treated seriously and handled promptly and professionally.

1. Concerns and Complaints. Definitions –

* a **'concern'** is an issue of interest (because of its importance and effect) which is raised informally in order to improve or change a situation.

* a **'complaint'** is an expression of grievance or resentment where the complainant is seeking redress or justice.

2. If possible, the college aims to deal with the concern or complaint immediately so the issue doesn't fester. Whenever possible, complaints should be handled at the level they were raised rather than escalating into major issues.

3. Parents have the right to complain verbally, preferably in a calm tone, or in writing. As a general principle, complaints should first be directed to the co-ordinator directly responsible. For instance, curriculum issues should be directed to subject co-ordinators and discipline issues to the year level co-ordinators. However, a parent always has the right to refer matters directly to a principal. Responses should be prompt and verbal. Where necessary, a further response in writing may be advisable.

4. Expectations of the parties. It is expected that:

The person with concerns/complaints –

- Raise the concern/complaint as soon as possible
- Provide complete and factual information
- Maintain and respect the privacy and confidentiality of others
- Act in good faith
- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities.

The School –

- Address all complaints:

Courteously

Efficiently

Fairly

Promptly, or if the matter requires detailed investigation, within a specified timeframe agreed and in accordance with the college's Parents Complaints Policy and the Education Department's regulatory framework.

5. Complainants have the right to have someone represent them or advocate on their behalf, but not where a fee for service is involved. They also have the right to have an interpreter present, if necessary. Where possible an independent interpreter is preferred.

6. These procedures and the Parents Complaints Policy should be clearly flagged and available on the school website.

Parents should also be referred to the policy and procedures on our website:

- On enrolment
- Annually in the newsletter
- Via the Student planner (diary)

7. Subject to the complexity of the concern or complaint, a detailed record of the matter should be kept, including:

Name and contact details

Date

Description of the concern/complaint

Name of person responsible for handling the concern/complaint

Action taken

Outcome(s)

Feedback on the usefulness or otherwise of the procedures – recommended changes.
It is important to ensure all parties understand the key issues of the complaint.

8. In complex matters or where the concerns/complaints cannot be resolved at school level, the matter will be referred to the Regional Office. Any unresolved complaint against the Principal or matters raised with legal representation must be referred to the Region. See the Department's Human Resources website re complaints (including procedures) unsatisfactory performance and misconduct at: <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/perform/conduct.htm>

9. Each complaint is unique and there is a wide range of possible outcomes such as:

- . An explanation or further information
- . Mediation, counselling or other support
- . An apology, expression of regret or admission of fault
- . Change a decision
- . Change a policy, practice or procedure
- . A fee refund

10. Complainants should be provided with a copy of these procedures, if requested.

11. Ultimately, unless the complaint is against the Principal, it is the Principal who must have the final say in the correct way of handling each complaint. As most complaints relate to student management and classroom issues, Sub-school principals should regularly train their staff in the correct approach to handling complaints.

12. Annually review effectiveness of the Policy and Procedures and make appropriate changes accordingly.