



COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY – OVERSEAS STUDENTS

A copy of this policy will be provided to the student (or parent(s)/legal guardian if the student is under 18) at a reasonable time prior to a written agreement being signed, and again during orientation or within 7 days of the commencement of student attendance of the enrolled course.

1. Our Commitment

Heights College recognises and acknowledges each member of the College community's entitlement to complain about perceived injustices and unfairness of people or systems, and make suggestions for improvement, and we aim to work with you in the best interests of the students in our care. The College is committed to ensuring that all complaints are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner. As a faith community, we aim to nurture each other's growth in the values lived by Jesus Christ.

"If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you" Matthew 18:15

Therefore, the College acknowledges that concerns and issues exist that may be resolved informally without the need to follow a formal complaints process. In such cases complainants are encouraged to initially raise issues or concerns informally with the relevant person at the time of the issue arising. Discussing the issue or concern immediately and face-to-face may clarify the situation and resolve any misunderstandings satisfactorily. However, in the event that this does not resolve the issue, relevant complaints procedures should be followed.

2. Purpose

- a) The purpose of Heights College's Complaints and Appeals Policy is to provide a student or parent(s)/legal guardian with the opportunity to access procedures to facilitate the resolution of a dispute or complaint involving Heights College or third party engaged by Heights College to deliver a service on behalf of Heights College.
- b) The internal complaints and appeals processes are conciliatory and non-legal.

3. Complaints against other students

- a) Grievances brought by a student against another student will be dealt with under the school's Behaviour Management Policy/Code of Conduct.

4. Informal Complaints Resolution

- a) In the first instance, Heights College requests there is an attempt to informally resolve the issue through mediation/informal resolution of the complaint.
- b) Students should contact their Pastoral Care teacher or subject teacher in the first instance. .
- c) If the matter cannot be resolved through mediation, the matter will be referred to the Headmaster and Heights College's internal formal complaints and appeals handling procedure will be followed.

5. Formal Internal Complaints Handling and Appeals Process

- a) The process of this grievance procedure is confidential and any complaints or appeals are a matter between the parties concerned and those directly involved in the complaints handling process.
- b) The student must notify the school in writing of the nature and details of the complaint or appeal.
- c) Written complaints or appeals are to be lodged with the Headmaster.
- d) Where the internal complaints and appeals process is being accessed because the student has received notice by the school that the school intends to report him/her for unsatisfactory course attendance, unsatisfactory

course progress or suspension or cancellation of enrolment, the student has 20 working days from the date of receipt of notification in which to lodge a written appeal.

- e) Complaints and appeals processes are available to students at no cost
- f) Each complainant has the opportunity to present his/her case to the Headmaster.
- g) Students and / or the School may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at all relevant meetings.
- h) The formal internal complaints and appeals process will commence within 10 working days of lodgement of the complaint or appeal with the Headmaster and will be finalised within 10 working days, or as soon as practicable.
- i) For the duration of the internal complaints and appeals process the student's enrolment will be maintained, as required under the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 and the student must continue to attend classes.

However, if the Headmaster deems that the student's health or well-being, or the well-being of others is at risk he may decide to suspend or cancel the student's enrolment before the complaints and appeals process has been accessed or fully completed. In such cases, the student may still lodge a complaint or appeal, even if the student is offshore.

- j) Once the Headmaster has come to a decision regarding the complaint or appeal, the student will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the outcome, and a copy will be retained on the student's file.
- k) If the complaints and appeals procedure finds in favour of the student, Heights College will immediately implement the decision and any corrective and preventative action required, and advise the student of the outcome and action taken.
- l) Where the outcome of a complaint or appeal is not in the student's favour, the school will advise the student within 10 working days of concluding the internal review of the student's right to access the external appeals process.

However, the school is only obliged to await the outcome of an external appeal if the matter relates to a breach of course progress or attendance requirements. For all other issues, the school may take action (including making changes to the student's enrolment status in PRISMS) in accordance with the outcome of the internal appeal.

6. External Appeals Processes

- a) If the student is dissatisfied with the conduct or result of the internal complaints and appeals procedure, he/she may contact and / or seek redress through the Overseas Students Ombudsman at no cost. Please see: <http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/about/overseas-student-ombudsman-landing-page> or phone 1300 362 072 for more information.
- b) If the student wishes to appeal a decision made by Heights College that relates to being reported for a breach of course progress or attendance requirement (under Standard 8), the student must lodge this appeal with the Overseas Student Ombudsman's office within 10 working days of being notified of the outcome of his/her internal appeal.
- c) If the student wishes to appeal a decision made by Heights College that relates to:
 - i) refusal to approve a transfer application (under Standard 7), or
 - ii) suspension or cancellation of the student's enrolment (under Standard 9)

Any choice to lodge an external appeal with the Overseas Student Ombudsman is at the student's discretion. The school need not await the outcome of any external appeal lodged, before implementing the outcome of the appeal.

- d) Heights College will immediately implement the decision and any corrective and preventative action required, and advise the student of the outcome and action taken.

7. Other legal redress

- a) Nothing in the School's Complaints and Appeals Policy negates the right of an overseas student to pursue other legal remedies.

8. Definitions

- a) Working Day – any day other than a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday during term time
- b) Student – a student enrolled at Heights College or the parent(s)/legal guardian of a student where that student is under 18 years of age
- c) Support person – for example, a friend/teacher/relative not involved in the grievance.

(Policy last updated on 2 May 2018)