



Heights College

Complaints Management Procedures

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Making a Complaint

Parent (or Guardian)

1. Parents are encouraged to make their own decision about the appropriate member of staff in the College to whom their complaint should be made. If in doubt, however, the points below offer some guidance:
 - a. If the complaint is of a minor nature, please refer this to the Pastoral Care teacher or Head of Sub School and both parties should act together to resolve the issue.
 - b. If a complaint is, in the opinion of the parent, of serious nature, the parent should make an appointment to see a senior member of staff. The senior staff member and the parent should work together to find a suitable resolution.
 - c. Failing resolution, the parent may raise the complaint with the Principal and work together to find a resolution.
 - d. Failing resolution, the parent may request that the matter be referred to the Chairman of the School Board who, together with the Board, is the final authority on matters concerning the College.
2. If the complaint is against the Principal the matter should be referred directly to the Chairman of the School Board.
3. All instances of serious complaint shall be recorded including the issues and steps, which have been taken to resolve any complaints.
4. The Principal, or senior members of staff, may choose to interview students without parents or staff members being present.
5. The College reserves the right to appoint a mutually acceptable, independent, external auditor if it feels this is required.

Student

1. Students are encouraged to raise their complaint directly with the staff member concerned. If the student feels they cannot raise the complaint directly with the staff member concerned, they may approach a senior member of staff, or a staff member that they feel comfortable talking to.
2. In the first instance, when a student speaks to a staff member directly, the student and staff member should act to resolve a minor complaint to the satisfaction of both parties.
3. If the student has made a complaint to another member of staff concerning another staff member, and the complaint is not of a serious nature, the staff member is to work to resolve the issue between the student and the staff member.
4. If the matter is of a substantial nature, the matter should be referred to the Principal or their delegate either by the student or by the staff member whom the student has spoken to.
5. If the complaint is against the Principal the matter should be referred directly to the Chairman of the Board by the student or the staff member.

Staff Member

1. The aggrieved staff member is encouraged to begin by trying to resolve any grievance directly with the person/s concerned. The staff member is encouraged to use other staff members e.g. Head of Sub School, Executive Team Member, to assist them in resolving their grievance informally.
2. If the grievance cannot be resolved directly with the person/s concerned, the aggrieved staff member is to raise the grievance with their immediate supervisor or leader with the view to resolution of the matter in question.
3. If at this point the matter is not resolved, the grievance should be raised with the appropriate member of the Executive Team with the view to resolution of the matter in question.
4. If at this point the matter is not resolved, the grievance should be referred to the Principal for further investigation and discussion with the aim of resolution. The Principal may involve some member(s) of the Executive or other appropriate resources to resolve the grievance.
5. If at this stage the grievance has not been resolved, the Principal will request the Chairman of the School Board to assist with resolution.
6. If the complaint is about the Principal, the person making the complaint should report to another senior management position. The senior management staff member is to report directly to the Chairman of the Board and the Chairman will conduct the investigation. Complaints about the Principal of a serious nature can be directed to the College Board Chairman in written form:

CONFIDENTIAL

Cathedral of Praise Church

Attention: College Board Chairman

P.O. Box 5571,

Red Hill North Rockhampton, QLD 4701

Community Member

1. A member of the community may raise a concern or issue with the College or its services by contacting the College office verbally by telephone or in person or in writing by email or mail.

Heights College

276 Carlton Street, Kawana, QLD 4701

P.O. Box 5671, Red Hill North Rockhampton, QLD 4701

Email: admin@heights.qld.edu.au

Telephone: 07 4923 1800

Contact details are also available on the College website.

2. The College Administration will record the details of the issue raised and forward to the appropriate staff member to handle it.

3. The senior staff member will determine if the issue can be handled informally or needs to be formally managed through the *Complaints Management Procedure*.
4. If the complaint is deemed serious enough to warrant formal action, the appointed staff member will follow the phases of complaint management.

Complaints Management Phases

There are four key phases in handling a complaint, with the option of a fifth phase for review of a complaint outcome:

- Phase 1. Receiving and clarifying the complaint
- Phase 2. Deciding how to handle the complaint
- Phase 3. Investigating the complaint
- Phase 4. Making a decision about the complaint
- Phase 5. Review (optional)

Phase 1 - Receiving and clarifying the complaint

Any member of staff can receive a complaint.

All complaints should be received in the following manner:

- being respectful and helpful;
- giving the person your undivided attention;
- not being defensive or apportioning blame;
- remaining positive; and
- not perceiving anger as a personal attack.

When a staff member receives a verbal complaint they should:

- listen carefully to the issues being raised;
- summarise the issues to clarify and check that they understand what the complainant is saying;
- empathise and acknowledge the complainant's feelings;
- find out what the complainant wants to happen as a result of the complaint;
- tell the complainant that they may use the support of a third party in progressing the complaint, if they feel this is needed;
- resolve the complaint if possible, or assure the complainant that an appropriate staff member will address their complaint;
- advise the complainant what will happen with their complaint; and
- thank them for their complaint.

Complaints are sometimes made with the assistance of an advocate, interpreter or by a third party (as agreed between the complainant and the principal). In this case staff will receive and clarify a complaint from more than one person.

Many complaints are resolved at the first point of contact with information and/or an explanation, together with an apology and recognition of the effect the situation has had on the person. Some complainants may also want an undertaking that action will be taken to prevent the problem recurring.

When the complaint is not resolved immediately, the complaint is referred to an Executive Team Member as soon as is practicable. A member of staff who receives a verbal complaint that is not resolved informs the complainant of the further options of:

- putting their complaint in writing; or
- assisting the member of staff to record, in writing, the particulars of their complaint.

In general, if the complainant agrees to put the complaint in writing, the member of staff takes no further action unless or until a written complaint is received.

Receiving a written complaint

When a written complaint is received it is date-stamped and forwarded to the appropriate staff member (beginning at the lowest level of responsibility, i.e. Pastoral Care Teacher > Head of Sub School > Executive Team Member).

Receiving an anonymous complaint

When an anonymous complaint is received, the complainant is told of the possible limitations associated with making an anonymous complaint.

Phase 2 - Deciding how to handle the complaint

When a staff member receives a complaint, they should:

- begin the process of making an assessment about a complaint from the moment the complaint is received;
- make an assessment in the first instance about whether the issue can be dealt with as a concern or a complaint;
- refer the complainant or the complaint to a senior staff member for addressing.

The senior staff member decides whether to:

- take no further action;
- attempt to resolve the complaint through resolution strategies such as mediation;
- refer the complaint to the relevant internal or external agency if required; or
- initiate an investigation of the complaint, within the school, if further information is required.

Phase 3 - Investigating the complaint

The senior staff member handling the complaint gathers all the necessary facts about the complaint.

They should investigate complaints by:

- collecting and analysing information relevant to the matter;
- working collaboratively with all people involved;
- finding the facts relating to the matter;
- identifying any contributing factors to the matter; and
- documenting the investigation report or outcome.

Phase 4 - Making a decision about the complaint

Based on the facts gathered in Phase 3 about the complaint, the senior staff member makes a decision on the complaint.

Notifying the complainant of the decision

Within 28 days of the receipt of the complaint, the senior staff member provides the complainant with either:

- a written response, including reasons for the decision; or
- a written notification that their complaint has been referred to an internal or external agency.

Phase 5 - Review

If the complainant is not satisfied with this response, they are encouraged to discuss it further with the Principal and/or advised to contact the Chairman of the College Board.

Further review of the decision is available from the Queensland Ombudsman:

Office of the Ombudsman

GPO Box 3314, Brisbane, Qld 4001

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.qld.gov.au

Telephone (07) 3005 7000 or

Toll Free 1800 068 908

Fax (07) 3005 7067

Response Time

An issue face to face or by telephone may be possible to resolve immediately and to the complainants satisfaction. Initial contact for written complaints or suggestions we will be made to the complainant within seven working days to respond to concerns and explain how the College proposes to proceed. A resolution should try to be reached within 7-14 days, or if this does not look likely, an agreed timeframe should be reached with the complainant.

Record of Complaint

The staff member handling the formal complaint must ensure that records of the complaint and any referrals are kept for either internal or external review. The records of the complaint management should include, but are not limited to:

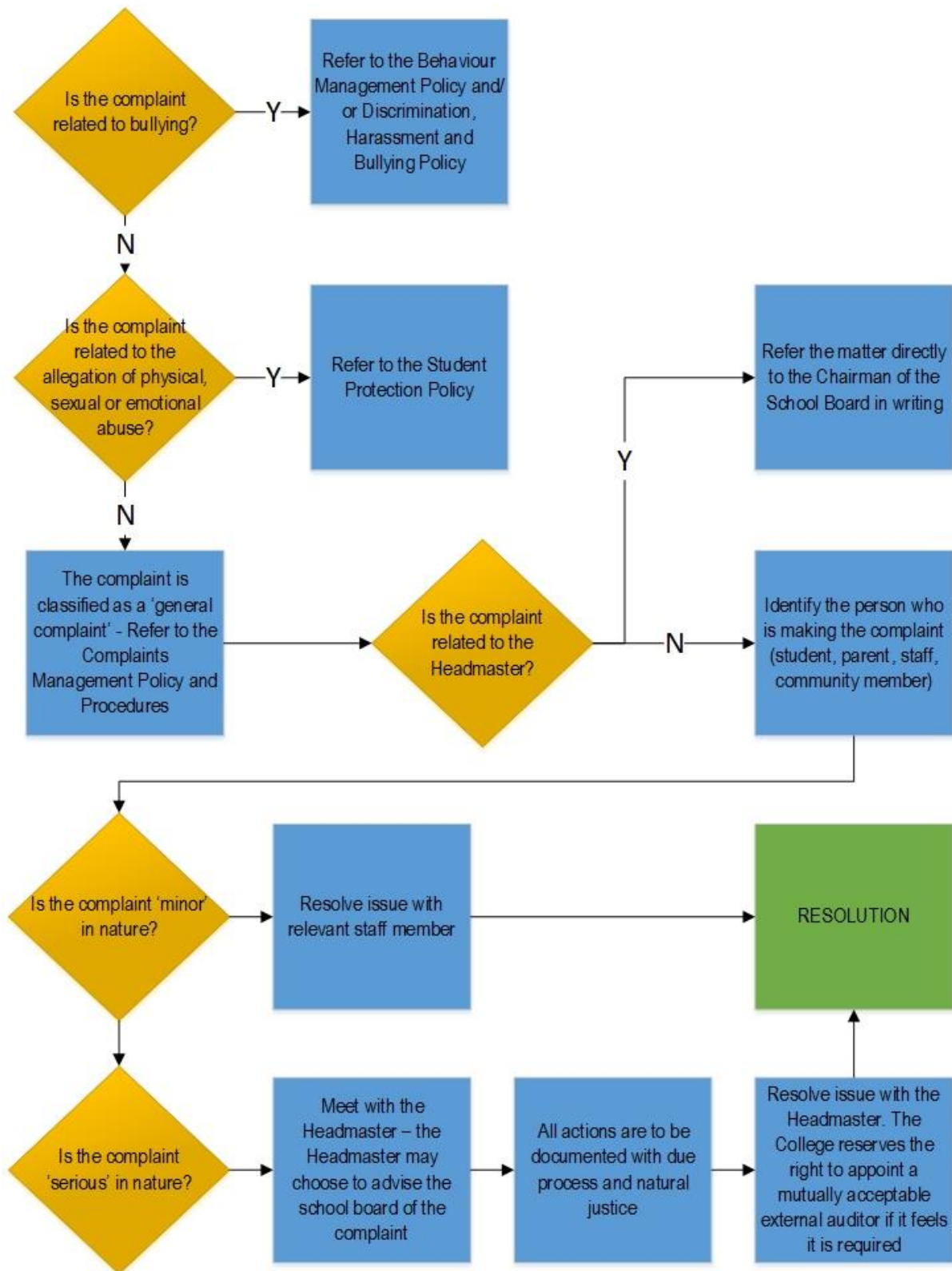
- A brief outline of the complaint
- Date and time of occurrence

- Damage that has occurred
- Restitution that is requested
- Other people that have been involved
- Steps taken to resolve the complaint
- Outcome of resolution
- Record of formal warnings given (if any)
- Review of complaint (if applicable)

Date approved	August 2020
Approval authority	
Date for next review	January 2022
Documents superseded by this Policy or Procedure	None
Distributed to	Teacher Kiosk

Revisions/Modifications			
Version	Date	Summary of changes	Reviewed by
2	August 2018	Approval and Revisions/Modifications boxes added Deleted from Phase 3 – adjustment to opening sentence wording.	Business Manager
2	August 2020	Reviewed – no changes	Executive Team

Appendix 1 – Complaints Management Flowchart



Appendix 2 – Information for Parents and Carers

Making a Complaint

During the course of your child's school years, you may have cause to make a complaint about an issue or concern you have with their education. Heights College is committed to ensuring that all complaints are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner. There are processes and support networks in place to enable you and your child to work through any issues or concerns you may have.

To achieve an effective resolution for all parties, when making your complaint, you should ensure you:

- provide complete and factual information in a timely manner;
- deliver your complaint in a calm and reasoned manner;
- avoid making frivolous or vexatious complaints or using deliberately false or misleading information.

You should be aware that if you are making a complaint about a staff member that, in most instances, the staff member will be told of the complaint and offered the right of reply. You also have the right to have a support person participate throughout the process.

The following four-step procedure is in place to assist parents/carers and school staff to reach an outcome that is in the best interest of the student.

1. Discuss your complaint with the teacher

If your complaint is with your child's teacher or relates to an issue concerning your child's experience at school, make an appointment with that teacher or the Head of Sub-School, as soon as possible through the school administration.

Discuss your complaint with the teacher and give the teacher an opportunity to suggest a solution. The teacher will make a record of your complaint and report your meeting and any outcomes to the Principal. Together, both you and your child's teacher and/or the Head of Sub-School should be able to resolve the problem at this level.

Head of Primary School - Mrs Lucy Van Heck
Middle School Coordinator - Mr Ron Neumann
Senior School Coordinator - Mrs Irene Pass

2. Discuss your complaint with a member of the College Executive Team

If after approaching your child's teacher and Head of Sub-School, your complaint remains unresolved, make an appointment to see a College Executive to discuss the issue further.

Head of Secondary - Mr Kevin O'Callaghan
Business Manager - Mr Ben Head
Principal – Mrs Karen Bredenhann

Contact details are available on the College's website: <http://www.heights.qld.edu.au/staff-information>

If your complaint relates to more general school matters, including issues of school policy and issues of compliance or non-compliance, you should raise your complaint directly with the Principal or their delegate. The Principal may refer your complaint to a delegate such as the Business Manager or a member of the College Executive team. The staff member will make a record of your complaint and work with you to come to a resolution.

Complaints to the Principal may be lodged in person, by telephone, writing or via email.

3. Raise your complaint with the College Board Chairman

If you have discussed your complaint with the Principal and still feel that you have not reached a resolution, you have the right to contact the College Board Chairman directly. Complaints may be lodged in writing. Your complaint should be specific in detail and outline the steps you have taken to resolve the issue. Ensure your complaint includes your full name and address and that you have signed and dated it. It is also a good idea to keep a copy for your own records.

Heights College Chairman

Cathedral of Praise
 P.O. Box 5571, Red Hill North Rockhampton, 4701

4. Independent Review

If you have not been able to resolve your complaint through these formal processes, you can lodge your complaint with the Queensland Ombudsman.