



# Concerns and Complaints Handling Policy

## 1. Overview

Launceston Church Grammar School fosters an environment in which relationships can thrive and a sense of belonging can grow. Launceston Grammar welcomes feedback from all members of the School community and takes all concerns or complaints that may be raised seriously.

This Concerns and Complaints Handling Policy is designed to provide guidance and instruction for students, parents/guardians, staff and members of the wider community with concerns and complaints, in the context of less serious concerns and formally documented complaints, regarding any aspect of the School's operations such as:

- Academic: assessment policy, reporting procedures, curriculum issues, classroom management issues.
- Emotional: social, psychological, behavioural or spiritual: exclusion discrimination, bullying, stress or anxiety.
- Administrative: noise, parking, accounts, uniform, healthcare, information and technology, marketing and communication.
- Employment: workplace disputes, advice, training, professional development.

For the purposes of this policy, unless indicated otherwise, the terms "staff" and "staff member" include all teaching and non-teaching staff, School Board members, volunteers, contractors and external providers.

## 2. Launceston Grammar's Commitment

Launceston Grammar is committed to handling complaints effectively and efficiently through an established Concerns and Complaints Handling Programme in line with:

- Principle 6 of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, using the Office of Child Safety's "Complaints Handling Guide: Upholding the Rights of Children and Young People"
- the international complaints handling standard (ISO 10002:2018 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 organizations).

Our Concerns and Complaints Handling Programme includes the establishment of an online complaints management system which allows us to effectively capture, manage and report on complaints.

Regular analysis of complaints received and the implementation of rectification action, where deficiencies are identified, are key to the School's commitment.

### **3. Concern versus Complaint**

#### **What is a concern?**

For the purpose of this policy, a concern or informal complaint will be treated as a less serious matter. The vast majority of issues causing concerns within the Launceston Grammar community can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. The process of raising a concern is outlined in the Concerns and Complaints Handling Procedure and Guidelines document. Although formal records are not kept of all concerns raised, to enable the School to identify any systemic issues arising, and take appropriate action, concerns may be documented.

#### **What is a complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of genuine dissatisfaction made to Launceston Grammar, related to the School's services or operations, or the Concerns and Complaints Handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Matters which are considered a complaint may include (but are not limited to):

- unresolved disputes or conflict;
- allegations of discrimination, harassment or bullying;
- issues that may cause financial loss or damage to the School's reputation.

The process of raising a formal complaint is outlined in the Concerns and Complaints Handling Procedure and Guidelines document.

### **4. Acknowledgements**

- Launceston Christian School

# Concerns and Complaints Handling Procedures and Guidelines



**Launceston  
Grammar**

EST. 1846

## 1. How do I raise a concern or complaint?

### 1.1 Raising a concern

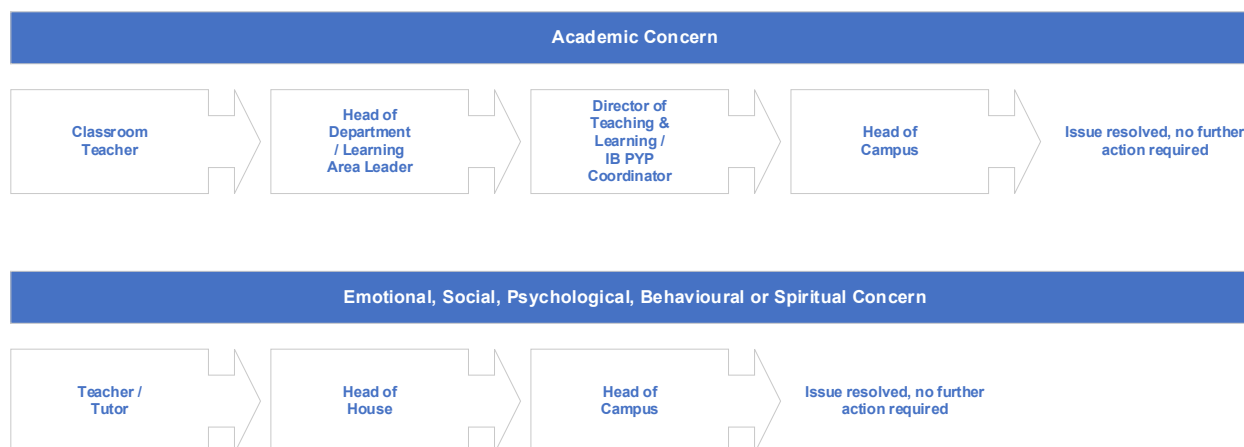
As a first step, informal and private attempts at resolution should be undertaken between the parties concerned. Most concerns will be able to be resolved using this informal process. [The School Handbook](#) provides advice around “Who and When to make contact” on such occasions.

When attempting to resolve your concern, take time to consider the following:

- Talk to the person as soon as possible. Leaving things longer will only make it harder.
- Try to remain calm even though you may not feel that way.
- Writing down the concerns will help you to describe clearly the action or behaviour that is objected to.
- Try to identify what outcome would resolve the situation for you.
- Choose a mutually convenient time to talk and do so in a private place, i.e. not in front of students or other adults.
- Remember that you have one side of an issue, others will have another side.
- Seek positive outcome resolution at all times.

#### Students with a concern:

Wherever possible, students are encouraged to raise concerns directly with their class teacher in the first instance. Students may also seek advice and guidance on how to raise concerns from their Head of House or another trusted adult.



## Parents / Guardians with a concern:

Parents are encouraged to direct their concerns to the relevant Launceston Grammar member of staff as follows:



## Alumni and Community Members:

Alumni and Community members (including volunteers, contractors, visitors, neighbours or anyone impacted by the operations of the School who are not otherwise students, parents or staff) are encouraged to share their concern via the feedback form on the School's website or telephoning Reception (03 6336 6000) in the first instance where the call can be redirected.

## Staff Members / Employees:

Staff members / employees of the School are encouraged to raise their concern directly with the individual as soon as possible.

Concerns relating to workplace issues or employment should be raised with their direct supervisor (Department Head / Learning Area Leader) in the first instance. If the concern is not resolved then it should be raised with the Director of People and Culture.

If a staff member / employee is hesitant with raising a concern regarding their employment and do not wish for it to be handled by the Director of People and Culture, they should raise their concern directly with another member of the Senior Executive Team.

Concerns regarding working conditions of an Industrial nature will be dealt with under the Dispute Resolution section of the appropriate Launceston Church Grammar School Enterprise Agreement.

In the event that a staff member / employee has an unresolved issue with a student or parent at the school, they should meet with the Head of Campus to discuss their concern.

### **Students, Parents / Guardians, Alumni and Community Members, Staff Members / Employees:**

There may be occasions where the parties' preference is to have an issue dealt with as an informal concern, however, because of the potential risk (real or perceived) to the School, its staff members, students, parents or the wider general community, the School may be obliged to deal with the concern in a more formal context by lodging a complaint.

If you believe your concern has not been resolved or addressed appropriately you may proceed to a making a formal complaint.

## **1.2 Making a Formal Complaint**

In the event that it has not been possible to resolve an informal concern, a formal complaint can be made.

All complaints will be handled using the principles of Procedural Fairness. This means that:

- each party has an opportunity to be heard, in person or in writing as appropriate to their needs, and to respond to the allegations and/or evidence offered by the other;
- issues or facts which are disputed are investigated;
- the investigator is free from bias or the perception of bias and, in particular, is not 'judge' in their own cause;
- any complaint outcome is supported by the evidence, including a finding on the balance of probabilities in the event of a dispute of fact;
- if necessary, the complaint outcome is finalised by an adjudicator, who may also be the investigator, who is free from bias or the perception of bias; and
- the outcome is consistent with established School policy.

At any stage of the complaint process, either parties can seek mediation or legal advice at their own expense.

The process to provide a formal complaint is set out below:

1. Lodging a feedback form:
  - Staff can access the '*Employee Complaint Form*' via the PolicyConnect homepage.
  - Parents can access the '*Community Compliment and Complaint Form*' via ParentLounge or the School Handbook.
  - Students can access the '*Students' Compliment and Complaint Form*' via the School Handbook or:
    - Junior Campus Students: via the Junior Campus Intranet
    - Senior Campus via Student Café
2. Sending an email ([senior@lcgs.tas.edu.au](mailto:senior@lcgs.tas.edu.au)) or writing a letter to the School, addressed to "The Complaints Manager".
3. Telephoning Launceston Grammar (03 6336 6000) whereby the nature of the complaint will be directed to the appropriate department.

## 2. Launceston Grammar's Internal Concerns and Complaints Handling Process

The following steps are followed when responding to a complaint.

Step	Action	Process	Outcome
<b>Step 1</b>	Submit a complaint	All formal complaints are logged through the School's online complaints management system where they are screened and actioned by the Complaints Officer.  In the event that a complaint is submitted anonymously, the complaint will not be acted on unless the allegation is of such a serious nature as to warrant an investigation.	
<b>Step 2</b>	Acknowledgement of complaint received and review complaint	All valid complaints will be acknowledged in writing, as soon as practicable, and allocated a status, priority and target resolution date.	
<b>Step 3</b>	Investigate	The Complaints Officer will conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness, and make a determination.	
<b>Step 4</b>	Written response	Following the determination, if appropriate, the Complaints Officer will formulate a resolution and provide a written response to the complainant.	The matter will be closed if this response is accepted.

Step	Action	Process	Outcome
<b>Step 5</b>	Internal Review	Internal reviews: If the initial response is not acceptable the matter will be reviewed internally by the Headmaster or the Headmaster's delegate, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Headmaster or their delegate seek to provide a resolution within 14 business days from the date that the review process is initiated.	The matter will be closed if the response of the Headmaster, or their delegate, is accepted.
<b>Step 6</b>	Internal reflection and corrective action	All complaints received will be entered into the School's Complaints Register and, where appropriate, a corrective action request will be made to address any underlying processes where the complaints investigation identifies improvement is required.	Improvement or corrective action undertaken to internal processes or procedures.
<b>Step 7</b>	Independent mediation	Where a complaint is not resolved either party may elect to proceed with independent mediation.	The matter will be closed if the mediation results in an outcome.
<b>Step 7</b>	Independent External investigation	If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives.	

**Note:**

- There may be circumstances in which some of the steps outlined above are not appropriate and the School (and the Board if appropriate) will determine, in its absolute discretion, on a case by case basis, the most appropriate method of handling the complaint.
- Staff Complaints specific to industrial matters covered under the School's Enterprise Agreements are to be resolved under the Dispute Resolutions clauses contained within the relevant agreements.

## Overseas Students

If an overseas student is not satisfied with the outcome of the School's internal Concerns and 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](mailto: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, AEST  
 Postal: Commonwealth Ombudsman, GPO Box 442 Canberra ACT 2601.  
 Website: <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students>

Launceston Grammar agrees to be bound to the OSO's recommendations, and will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within 30 days of receipt of the report.

### **3. Outcomes and Shared Understanding**

The School is committed to positive-restorative outcomes for those involved. This will depend on the seriousness of the matter, the wishes of the complainant and the nature of the working relationship of the persons involved.

In working through this process it is understood that:

- 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. The School 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.
- Complaints will be received in a positive manner.
- Information that will assist in the resolution of a complaint will be clear and readily available;
- Concerns will be dealt with as speedily as possible and those who have raised them will be kept informed about progress;
- Students will not receive adverse treatment because they or their parents have raised a complaint;
- Clear confidential files and a log of all complaints will be kept and maintained; *and*
- Resolution of the matter will be sought.

The School is committed to providing training, ongoing mentoring, disciplinary action, review of policy or procedure and committed to the confidentiality and privacy of all parties.

### **Complaints About Child Safety Incidents or Concerns at or Involving the School or its Staff Members**

Complaints about or allegations of the following matters are managed by the School in a different manner to other complaints:

- breaches of the Child Safe Codes of Conduct
- child abuse, grooming or other harm of a current or former student by
  - current or former staff members
  - current or former students
  - other people on School premises or at School events
- “reportable conduct” as defined in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- other \*child protection/child safety/child safeguarding\*-related staff misconduct

This is due to the additional confidentiality and privacy requirements surrounding these kinds of matters. The School refers to these as child protection or child safety-related complaints.



If your complaint is a child protection / child safety-related complaint, please make your complaint to one of Launceston Grammar's Child Protection Officers or the Headmaster:

- Mr Nick Foster - Head of Senior Campus and Child Protection Officer
- Mrs Sheona Carter - Head of Junior Campus and Child Protection Officer
- Mr Richard Ford - Headmaster

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