

GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

Policy Statement

Kurnai College recognises the need for students, parents and staff to have confidence that the College will deal with complaints and grievances in a fair and equitable manner.

Our College will

The College will deal with complaints and grievances according to the following principles:

- Complaints and grievances to be resolved informally where possible
- Complaints and grievances must be fully described by the complainant
- People will be given the details of any allegation against them and will be given the opportunity to put their side of the story before any resolution is attempted
- Proceedings will be conducted honestly, fairly, promptly and without bias, and in the case of a complaint or grievance against a staff member, in accordance with the appropriate DEECD guidelines
- Where appropriate, an independent mediator, such as a staff member or Principal from a neighbouring school, may act as mediator

Implementation

Guiding principles

The complaint-handling process must reflect the following guiding principles, which are informed by the *Australian/New Zealand Standard - Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (AS/NZS 10002:2014)*.

Visibility

Information about how and where to make a complaint, as well as how a complaint will be handled, should be regularly publicised within the school community. The actions taken to respond to a complaint should be well documented and include the reasons underpinning any decisions made.

Accessibility

Information about how to make a complaint and the school's procedures when responding to a complaint should be easily accessible. The complaint-handling process should be flexible and include the ability to make a complaint in person, by phone and in writing. Support should also be given to parents with special needs, including translations, interpreters and enabling a parent to seek the services of an advocate.

Responsiveness

Receipt of written complaints should be acknowledged by communicating with parents as soon as possible. Complaints should be addressed promptly and the parents kept informed of the progress of their complaint when the matter is complex and will take time to bring to resolution.

Objectivity

Each complaint must be treated in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.

Cost

There should be no cost to the parent for access to the complaint-handling process at the school, region or central office.

Protection of Privacy

Personally identifiable information concerning the parent should be actively protected from disclosure except where needed in relation to the complaint. This means that the complaint should only be discussed with those directly involved in the complaint-handling process.

Student-focused

The school should be open to feedback including complaints and should show a commitment to resolving complaints with the educational wellbeing of students as the first priority.

Accountability

Schools are required to have a fair, effective and efficient complaint-handling process. Schools are accountable, both internally and externally, for their decision making and complaint-handling performance. Schools need to be able to provide explanations and reasons for their decisions.

Continual Improvement

Parent complaint-handling procedures should be regularly reviewed for improvement. Complaint data and feedback should be used to identify recurrent themes and to implement improvement measures where a need is identified.

Process

1. All complaint are records on the College's grievance and complaints register.
2. If possible, the person with the grievance should discuss the matter directly with the person responsible.
3. If unresolved, or if it is not possible to approach the person responsible, the person with the grievance should contact a Person of Responsibility (Advocate, VET Coordinator for VET issues, Principal or Business Manager) to assist with informal resolution.
4. If resolution is still not reached, then a formal complaint should be made in writing to a Principal or Business Manager outlining the exact nature of the grievance in as much detail as possible.
5. The Principal or Business Manager will contact an appropriate independent person as outlined above to investigate. All people involved will be given the opportunity to give their side of the story.
6. The independent person investigating the grievance will make a written recommendation within five working days of hearing the matter.
7. If the person with the grievance is not satisfied with the outcome he/she may appeal on the following grounds:
 - a. The case was not heard on its merits.
 - b. New evidence is available which could not reasonably been provided at the time of the original investigation.
8. The appeal must be made in writing to a Principal or Business Manager in the following format:
 - a. State the grounds on which the appeal is made.
 - b. Details of new evidence, if appropriate.

9. On receiving the written appeal, a Principal or Business Manager will check that the appeal complies with 6.a & 6.b. If, in the opinion of the Principal or Business Manager, the appeal does not comply with 6.a & 6.b, the matter will be referred to the College Principal to determine whether the appeal will be rejected or a Grievance Appeals Committee (comprised of staff from different campuses with differing roles and responsibilities) be convened to hear the appeal. Where the appeal is not rejected, it will be forwarded to the Grievance Appeal Committee.
10. A meeting of the Committee will be convened within 10 working days of the lodgement of the appeal. All participants will be given at least 5 working days' notice of the time, date, and place at which the appeal is to be heard.
11. The applicant will be given the opportunity to appear in person, and may be accompanied by an advocate who is not a member of the Committee and is not a legal practitioner.
12. The applicant must be given the opportunity to hear any evidence of any witnesses called before the Committee.
13. The Committee must hear the matter on its merits, taking account of all the circumstances of the case.
14. After consideration all available evidence, the Committee shall reach its decision by consensus or by majority vote if consensus cannot be reached.
15. The Committee may:
 - a. Confirm the decision against which the appeal was lodged
 - b. Uphold the appeal.
16. The Committee will then document the decision and the reasons for the decision, and send a copy of this document to all appropriate parties.
17. There is no further appeal against the decision of the Grievance Appeals Committee to any other officer or body within the College.

International Students

International students studying at Kurnai College will follow the same process as local students. Additional support will be provided by the International Student Co-ordinator, the International Student Principal and appropriate welfare and support agencies before, during and after the complaints and appeals process. Should a matter not be resolved following the process, a written grievance or complaint can be forwarded to the General Manager of DET IED for action (which may then be referred to an external agency).

Links


<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/spag/community/policyparentsconcerns.pdf>

Appendix

Appendix A – Grievance process flowchart

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's four year review cycle.

Date Implemented	Week 3 – Term 3 – 2014 – V1
Approval Authority (Signature and date)  13 June, 2018	
Dates Reviewed	Week 7 – Term 4 – 2014 V2 Week 7 – Term 3 – 2017 V3 Week 9 – Term 2 – 2018 V4
Responsible for Review	College Principal
Next Review Date	Week 3 – Term 3 - 2018
References	DET

Appendix A

