

## School Philosophy

At Gisborne Secondary College, we believe that all members of the school community have the right to work in a safe and supportive environment. Our school is committed to ensuring a caring learning environment, which promotes respect, and values diversity. The Principal and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all students, parents and other staff. However, the school is obliged to have a policy and procedures in place in case there are complaints and concerns raised by parents, caregivers, students or other members of the broader community.

*Complaints raised by staff members are covered by DEECD Policy and Guidelines.*

This policy is developed within the guidelines found in the document “Addressing parents’ concerns and complaints effectively: policy and guides.” Office for Government School Education April 2009.

## Definitions

“Parent” in the policy has the same meaning as in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006.  
“Concern” is an issue of interest (because of its importance and effect) which is raised informally in order to improve or change the situation.

“Complaint” is an expression of grievance or resentment where the complainant is seeking redress or justice

“Legislative and Regulatory Framework”

All concerns and complaints must be addressed in line with the Department’s legislative and regulatory framework.

“Dignity and respect statement”

Concerns and complaints must be addressed in line with the Department’s 2006 Dignity and Respect Statement.

## Aims

Gisborne Secondary College aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint or concern. The College will give careful consideration to all concerns and complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. The College aims to resolve any concern or complaint through open dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, the College puts the interests of the student above all other issues. The College provides opportunities for any concern or complaint to be fully discussed and resolved.

## Implementation

### Teachers / School Support Staff

- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Resolve concerns and complaints where possible promptly.
- Record concerns and complaints on the school’s management system (SMT).
- Communicate concerns and complaints to the Learning Centre Leaders, Heads of House, the Senior School Leader, Assistant Principals or Principal where appropriate and as needed.
- Refer parent complaints and concerns to Learning Centre Leaders or Heads of House or other relevant staff as needed and where appropriate.

### Principal / Assistant Principal

- Maintain confidentiality and impartiality in dealing with each matter.
- Ensure, wherever appropriate and possible, that complaints and concerns are resolved at

the school level.

- Record concerns and complaints on the school's management system (SMT).
- Develop and implement a process for registering, responding to and managing parent enquiries, concerns and complaints.
- Ensure that the process for managing concerns and complaints includes recording and monitoring of complaints and their outcomes to enable improvements to be identified and implemented.
- Ensure that enquiries, concerns and complaint procedures are communicated clearly to parents and community members.
- Ensure that school policies and procedures are monitored and modified, where necessary, to address areas of concern.
- Ensure that processes are consistent with all relevant Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) policies
- Ensure that complainants and respondents are aware that they can have a friend or adviser present during any discussion. Complainants can seek the services of an advocate when they feel they are unable to express their concern clearly. An advocate can be a friend or someone who is available through an appropriate support organisation who does not receive a fee for service.
- All parties involved in addressing a complaint may seek the services of a mediator when there is difficulty coming to an agreement.
- Refer the complaint, where appropriate, to the Regional Director for resolution.

### **Concerns and complaints covered by the procedures**

These procedures cover concerns and complaints about:

- General issues of student, staff or parent behaviour that are contrary to the school's Well-being and Engagement Policy
- Incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the school yard
- Curriculum, learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- Communication with parents
- School fees and payments
- General administrative issues
- Any other school-related matters except as detailed below.

*These procedures do not cover matters for which there are existing rights of review or appeal, as detailed in the Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide.*

*Those matters include:*

- *Student discipline matters involving expulsions*
- *Complaints about employee conduct or performance and complaints that should be dealt with by performance management, grievance resolution or disciplinary action*
- *Complaints by the Department's employees related to their employment*
- *Student critical incident matters*
- *Other criminal matters.*

### **Making a Complaint / Raising a Concern**

In the first instance, a complaint should be made with the school.

- Concerns or complaints about learning issues should be raised with the student's subject teacher or Head of House/Learning Centre Leader.
- Concerns or complaints about incidents that happened in class should be raised with the student's teacher, mentor-group teacher or Head of House/Learning Centre Leader.
- Concerns or complaints about incidents involving several classes should be raised with the

- student's Head of House/Learning Centre Leader.
- Issues relating to staff members or complex student issues should be raised with an Assistant Principal.
- Issues relating to school policy, school management, staff members or very complex student concerns should be raised with the college Principal.
- Complaints made directly to the Principal in the first instance may be referred to an appropriate member of staff.

### **Complaints can be made:**

- Verbally
- by letter
- by email
- by fax

Gisborne Secondary College's phone number is: 03 5428 3691.

Gisborne Secondary College's fax number is: 03 5428 4018.

Written complaints should be addressed to the appropriate member of staff:

*PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL*  
Gisborne Secondary College  
PO Box 57  
Gisborne 3437

Or via email: [gisborne.sc@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:gisborne.sc@edumail.vic.gov.au)

### **Minimum information required when making a complaint**

The following information should be provided when making a complaint:

- name and contact details;
- copies of any relevant correspondence or documents relating to the complaint;
- the nature of the complaint; and
- what is needed to resolve the complaint.

### **Dealing with Concerns and Complaints**

#### **Responsiveness**

The College will endeavour to acknowledge written complaints or concerns within five school days. The College will also endeavour to resolve local complaints in a timely manner. If because of the serious nature of the complaint, it is deemed necessary to forward it on to another section of the Department; the College will do this without delay. In all cases the complainant will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint or concern.

#### **Enquiring about a complaint's progress**

Complainants may enquire as to the progress of their complaint at any time by directly contacting the appropriate person. At the time of lodging a verbal complaint or concern, or in the acknowledgment letter for a written complaint, this person will be identified for them.

#### **Outcome of a complaint**

The College will advise complainants verbally, or in writing of the outcome of their complaint. The outcome of all written complaints will be provided in writing.

## **When a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of a complaint**

If a complainant is dissatisfied with attempts to resolve their complaint, or dissatisfied with the outcome, they may wish to express their concerns to the Regional Director. (Phone number: 03 5440 3111)

### **Rejecting a Complaint:**

Complaints or concerns judged to be vexatious, trivial or without substance, or where it is judged to not warrant further action, will not be processed. Complainants will be advised of this decision in writing.

### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle, or at times when the principal believes that policy warrants a review.

Ratified June 2018