

COVENANT COLLEGE

OPERATED BY: GEELONG ASSOCIATION FOR PARENT-CONTROLLED CHRISTIAN
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COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES POLICY

Intent

Our aim as a Christian community is to restore and build up, encouraging each other to greater holiness in our service of one another and of God, thereby modeling, as much as possible, authentic Christianity.

Our approach should be outlined as in Matthew 18:15. Love must be primary. We should lovingly, gently and personally approach one another, seeking to understand before making any accusation. Where there is genuine repentance, forgiveness ought to be accorded in the same manner in which Christ forgives us.

Covenant College is committed to providing a safe and supportive work environment where everyone is treated with respect, fairness and dignity. The aim of this policy is to provide clear guidelines to support the Covenant College community in dealing with and resolving concerns that students, parents/guardians or teachers may have in relation to any Covenant College matter.

For the purposes of the policy:

- a 'concern' is an issue of interest (because of its importance and effect) which is raised informally in order to improve or change a situation; and
- a 'complaint' is an expression of grievance or resentment where the complainant is seeking redress or justice.

If the complainant is unsure about where to lodge a complaint, they should contact the Principal.

Personal support is most appropriate in situations where the complainant and others involved in the complaint process have emotional issues related to the complaint.

Complainants can seek the services of an advocate when they feel they are unable to express the concerns clearly. An advocate can be a friend or someone who is available through an appropriate support organization who does not receive a fee for service.

Parent/guardian Concerns and Complaints about Their Child/children

Parents'/guardians concerns and complaints most commonly relate to:

- the management of an incident between students at school;
- the educational or other progress of their child;
- the development and implementation of a school and general education policy; and
- general behavioural issues.

Informal resolution process

If parents/guardians have a complaint they should first contact their child's homeroom teacher or relevant subject teacher. This can be achieved through a note in the diary, a phone call or email.

If the child's teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary to involve the appropriate Head of School (HOS). In addition to this, if the issue of concern involves students from several different classes, the HOS are to be approached in the first instance.

The teacher/HOS should make a written record of all complaints and/or concerns and the date on which they were received. The written record should be passed on to the College office in order for it to be filed in the student's personal file. The HOS will inform the Principal of complaint matters and resolutions.

Should the matter not be resolved, or the teacher/HOS and parent/student fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents/guardians will be advised to proceed with their complaint formally.

Formal resolution process

For all student related matters, the parent/guardian should put their complaint in writing to the Principal and he/she will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

It may be necessary for the Principal to carry out further investigations and once all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents/guardians will be informed of this decision in writing.

Fee Related Concerns and Complaints

All issues relating to fees and levies are to be directed to the Bursar either in person or in writing.

Transport and Administrative Related Concerns and Complaints

All issues relating to transport or administration should be directed to the Business Manager either in person or in writing.

Issues Relating to School Management, Staff Members or Complex Student Issues

Issues relating to the above should be directed to the Principal either in writing or via email.

Policy and Governance Concerns and Complaints

Issues relating to policies or the governance of the college should be directed to the Principal.

Expectations of Communication Relevant to All Concerns and Complaints

We expect that all parties will, when addressing concerns and complaints:

- Maintain confidentiality.
- Acknowledge that their common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties.
- Act in good faith and in a calm and courteous manner.
- Show respect and understanding of each other's point of view.
- Recognize that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced.

Covenant will record the following details of all formal complaints received:

1. Name of complainant.
2. Date the concern was expressed.
3. Brief description of the concern or complaint.
4. Action taken on concern or complaint.
5. Any recommendations for future improvements in Covenant College's policy or procedure.