



# *Saint Ignatius College Geelong*

## Complaints Handling Policy

*Approved by College Board: September 2020*

*Revision date: August 2023*

# Complaints Handling Policy

## Rationale

Saint Ignatius College Geelong (SICG) has as its foundation the “cura personalis” (individual care and concern for each person) which is an essential aspect of Jesuit Education as provided in the Characteristics of Jesuit Education.

SICG is committed to providing a safe and professional environment for all. We acknowledge that employees, students, parents/guardians and other who have interaction can sometimes feel aggrieved about something that is happening at the College which may cause concern, be upsetting, be discriminatory, or constitute harassment, or is so unreasonable as to cause concern.

Addressing such matters within a framework of dignity, respect and truth can provide powerful opportunities to illustrate our commitment to Gospel values and model the love of Christ.

The Characteristics of Jesuit Education promote the responsibility of each individual to show respect for other members of both the College and the wider community at all times.

## Scope

This policy outlines SICG’s complaints resolution process where complaints are referred to the College from parents/guardians, carers and students (the Complainant). Procedures for making a complaint are presented in this document.

This policy **does not** cover complaints:

- that are of a child protection nature. These must be addressed in accordance with child protection laws and reporting obligations (see the SICG Child Protection Policy and [PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#))
- from Staff about aspects of their work or employment conditions. These matters are addressed either through OHS, Internal Grievance Procedures and considered in accordance with the [Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2018 \(VCEMEA\)](#).

## Definition

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to SICG with regard to an action taken, decision made, service provided or handling of an issue where a response or resolution is expected.

## Guiding Principles

In receiving and responding to complaints, the following guiding principles will inform and direct the actions of SICG:

- all parties involved are expected to act in good faith and work together with respect and openness to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties;
- complainants can expect their concern or complaint to be responded in a timely manner;
- complainants and the person(s) against whom the complaint is made have the right to be heard and to expect that procedural fairness will be observed;
- confidentiality, protection of privacy, meeting legal obligations, respect, dignity and impartiality will form the basis of the complaint resolution process;
- the complaints resolution process will seek to achieve the restoration of good and respectful relationships.

### Confidentiality

SICG will endeavour to address complaints professionally, competently and in accordance with the principals of procedural fairness and confidentiality. There is an expectation that all participants in the process only share information about the complaint to those who need to know in order to:

- refer the complaint (if appropriate, to a Principal, Deputy Principal or other appropriate person);
- address the complaint;
- provide advice and support the process; and
- review and/or decide on actions and outcomes as appropriate.

All communications will be kept confidential unless required to address the complaint.

### Anonymous Complaints

SICG will endeavour to address and respond to all complaints with respect and sensitivity. In some situations however, SICG will not be able to address complaints that are made anonymously or which lack sufficient detail to enable an investigation or resolution of the matter. To ensure procedural fairness, respondents have a right to know the particulars of the allegation being made against them, and be given an opportunity to respond to the complaint.

Please refer to following pages for ***Procedure for Making and Managing a Concern/Complaint.***

Position Responsible	Deputy Principal – Staff, Identity & Operations
Approval Authority & Date	SICG Board - 10 <sup>th</sup> September 2020 (Policy) SICG Board - 23 <sup>rd</sup> October (Procedure)
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Revision Ref. No.	Approved/ Amended/ Rescinded	Date	Board/Executive
0.1	Policy Created	24/7/13	Board
0.2	Policy updated Procedure updated	10/9/20 23/10/20	Board

# Procedure for Making and Managing a Concern/Complaint

The following information can guide the process for those wishing to make a complaint or raise a concern about issues arising at the College.

## 1. How do I raise a concern/make a complaint?

- Raise the concern or complaint as soon as possible after the issue has arisen
- Communicate and respond in ways that are constructive, fair and respectful
- Be clear about the topic to be discussed
- Be mindful of the need to obtain all of the facts relating to the issue
- Observe confidentiality and respect for sensitive issues
- Consider what would be a reasonable and realistic outcome/remedy.

## 2. First Stage (*informal resolution process*)

- Make email or phone contact with the relevant person outlining the concern/complaint. (Note, if the concern/complaint is about a staff member, they are the relevant person in the first instance).
- For all other concerns/complaints (depending on the nature), make email or phone contact with the:
  - o Homeroom Teacher
  - o Learning Area Leader
  - o Year Level Coordinator
- Where possible, make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person. Talking provides the best opportunity to discuss and resolve your concern/complaint and seek a timely and informal resolution.
- Ensure the relevant person(s) is (are) given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address the concern/complaint.

## 3. Second Stage (*formal resolution process*)

- If this communication between parties does not resolve the concern/complaint in a timely manner (*informal resolution process*), please contact the College by either phone or email ([info@ignatius.vic.edu.au](mailto:info@ignatius.vic.edu.au)) to make an appointment to speak with the relevant Executive Team member.
- You may be requested to complete a Complaint Form (Appendix 1).
- Note that the Principal may refer a request to speak with her/him to another College Executive Team member.

If the complaint cannot be resolved at the College level or the complaint is about the Principal, Complainants may contact the Catholic Education Western Regional Office Ph. 8412 2400.

## 4. Action to be taken following receipt of a Concern/Complaint

*Following receipt of a concern/complaint, the College may take some or all of the following actions:*

- Acknowledge receipt of a written concern/complaint as soon as possible, ensuring the Complainant is aware of the College's Complaint Handling Policy.
- Contact the Complainant for more information to help assess the concern/complaint.
- Provide a response within a reasonable time of being made aware of concern/complaint. If more time is required to do this, make contact with the Complainant to inform them.
- Consult with the relevant Position of Leadership (POL) and/or Executive Team member.

Upon escalation of a concern/complaint to an Executive Team member, an attempt will be made, if appropriate, to resolve the concern/complaint without proceeding to the *Formal Resolution Process*.

## 5. Formal Resolution Process

When a concern/complaint is unable to be resolved through the *Informal Resolution Process*, the Principal or Executive Team member will:

- ask the Complainant to complete a Complaint Form (Appendix 1)
- organise a meeting or phone conference
- document the complaint and any actions taken to resolve it and the outcomes of those actions
- further and fully investigate the complaint
- ensure that no one is victimised as a result of a complaint being made
- if necessary, enable a complainant to be accompanied by another person of her/his choice as a support person in a meeting
- enable the person against whom the complaint has been made to respond, and to be accompanied to any meeting by another person of her/his choice as a support person
- make a decision regarding the concern/complaint in a timely manner
- advise all parties in writing of outcome.

## 6. Avenues of Appeal

If a complaint remains unresolved or if you are dissatisfied with the outcome, the Complainant has the right to seek other avenues of appeal through Catholic Education Melbourne - Western Regional Office Ph. 8412 2400.

## 7. Availability

The Complaints Handling Policy is available on the College Website and hard copies will be provided upon request from the College Office.

## Appendix 1 SICG Concern/Complaint Form

1. YOUR DETAILS	
Family name:	Given name(s):
Address:	
Contact number:	Email:
2. YOU ARE: (PLEASE TICK ONE)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/caregiver <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	
3. SUBJECT OF THE COMPLAINT (PLEASE TICK ALL RELEVANT BOXES)	
<input type="checkbox"/> School <input type="checkbox"/> Staff member <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Policy/Procedure	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	
4. DETAILS OF THE COMPLAINT	
(Please attach additional page(s) if space is insufficient. You may also attach further documentation if you wish.)	
5. DETAILS OF THE OUTCOME YOU ARE SEEKING	
(Please attach additional page(s) if space is insufficient.)	
6. HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY RAISED THIS CONCERN WITH A STAFF MEMBER? (PLEASE TICK)	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes                                              If yes, when?	
Who dealt with the matter?	
What was the result?	
Signature:	Date:

College use: RECORDING OF OUTCOMES	
<i>For matters which have been resolved:</i>	
*Informal Resolution Process (Executive member not involved)	
*Informal Resolution Process (Executive member involved)	
*Formal Resolution Process (commenced but resolved prior completed)	
*Formal Resolution Process (full investigation & outcome delivered)	
*Appeal process	
Actions undertaken:	
Outcome:	
Date matter is finalised:	
Name of staff member:	Signature:
<i>For matters which need further action:</i>	
Referred to: Name:	Date:
Referred by: Name:	Signature:
Outcome:	
Name of staff member:	Signature: