

Mildura Christian College

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Managing Complaints & Grievances

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS

Mildura Christian College welcomes suggestions and comments from parents and takes seriously complaints and concerns that may be raised.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction that needs a response.

A complaint may be made if a parent thinks that the College has:

- Done something wrong;
- Failed to do something it should have done; or,
- Acted unfairly, unjustly or improperly.

A complaint may be made about the College as a whole, about a specific department in the College or about an individual staff member.

It is the College's policy that complaints made by parents will be treated with respect and confidentiality.

“How should I complain?”

Try to resolve any problems yourself with those directly involved. If it is impossible to resolve the conflict, then seek assistance. Take the initiative in talking to those involved. Don't wait for them to come to you.

Matthew 18:15 says “If your brother wrongs you, go and have it out with him at once.”

Members of staff will be happy to help. They may be able to sort things out quickly with a minimum of fuss. When you contact the College, ask to speak with the person most closely concerned with the issue e.g. Head of School or the classroom teacher. Be as clear as possible about what is troubling you.

However you may prefer to take the matter to a more Senior member of staff, being the Principal.

“I don't want to complain as such, but something is bothering me”

The College is here for you and your child and we want to hear your views and ideas. Contact a member of staff as described above.

“I am not sure whether to complain or not”

If as parents you have concerns, you are entitled to raise them. If in doubt you should contact the College as we are here to help.

“What will happen next?”

If you raise something face-to-face or by telephone, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction.

If you have made a complaint or suggestion in writing, we will contact within five working days, to respond to your concerns and explain how we propose to proceed.

In many circumstances, the person you contact will need to discuss the matter with a colleague and consider it further before responding. You will be given a date by which time you will receive a response. If a detailed exploration of the issue is needed, a letter or report will be sent to you as quickly as possible. This will tell you of the outcome of your complaint. It will explain the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed.

“What happens about confidentiality?”

Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Principal and those directly involved. The Chair of the College Board may also need to be informed. It is the College’s policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the College aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen where, for example, a child’s safety was at risk or it becomes necessary to refer matters to the Police.

While information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file, we would point out that anonymous complaints might not be pursued.

Action, which needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints, would be handled confidentially within the College.

“What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?”

We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered.

If you are not satisfied, the Principal will offer to refer the matter to the Chair of the College Board. Alternatively, you may wish to write directly to the Board Chair. The Board Chair will call for a full report from the Principal, and will examine matters thoroughly before responding. This may result in a positive solution, but if it does not, the Board Chair will invite you to a meeting. You may wish to be supported by a friend.

If, after meeting with the Board Chair, you are still not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint or the way it has been managed, you may pursue external resolution alternatives. External agencies to which complaints may be made include the Victorian Regulations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) (vrqa.vic.gov.au) and the Victorian Ombudsman (ombudsman.vic.gov.au). For general information on mediation, counselling, advocacy and support, refer to the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (disputes.vic.gov.au).

The College recognizes and acknowledges your entitlement to complain and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care.

