CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY

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

A concern will be treated as a less serious matter that may be resolved with a more informal approach.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction that requires following a formal process as detailed below.

We encourage parents to first treat their grievance as a concern when approaching the School, and then lodge a complaint if this is not handled to your satisfaction.

We wish to ensure that:
- parents wishing to raise a concern or lodge a complaint know how to do so;
- the complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect;
- we respond to concerns within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way;
- the School gives prompt written acknowledgment of complaints;
- required action is taken within a stated timeline;
- the procedure is fair and reasonable for all parties;
- complaints are examined and investigated by an authorised person;
- the substance of the complaint is provided to the subject of the complaint;
- a clear record of the complaint is kept with the action taken and the outcome;
- if required, the matter will be referred to an external authority such as the Department for Child Protection or the Western Australian Police Service for advice or immediate action;
- if necessary, an independent arbiter can be utilised;
- any action taken is evaluated and the procedures are reviewed.

Guiding Principles
When managing a concern or complaint, Perth College aims to apply the following principles which are designed to ensure procedure is maintained at all times:

Visibility Information about how and where to complain is well publicised.
Responsiveness Complainants are to be fully informed of the progress of their complaint and complaints should be resolved as quickly as possible.
Accessibility We aim to make the complaints management process simple and accessible to all.
Complainant Focus We aim to put ourselves in the shoes of the complainant and understand the complaint from their point of view.
Completeness We are committed to undertaking a thorough investigation of each and every complaint, talking to people from both sides to establish common ground and verify explanations.
Objectivity Each complaint should be addressed on its merits, in an equitable, impartial, objective and unbiased manner.
No Charge Access to our complaints handling process is free.
Confidentiality Personally identifiable information about complainants is only available for the purpose of addressing the complaint (unless the complainant consents otherwise), and is actively protected from disclosure.
**Transparency**

We aim to make the complaints handling process as transparent as possible and in responding to a complaint will, where practical, give reasons for our decision in writing, referring to applicable provisions in legislation, codes, standards or internal procedures.

**Treatment of Personnel**

Where a complainant specifies action of a particular individual we will apply principles of responsiveness, accessibility, completeness, objectivity, confidentiality and transparency to that individual.

**Recording Information**

 Whenever dealing with a complaint, and in particular when recording information relating to the complaint, we take the view that this information may at some time in the future be requested by the complainant or may be made public as a result of litigation (whether related or unrelated to the particular complaint). Personally identified information is not recorded if the name of the complainant is not directly relevant to the complaint or issue raised.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all members of the Perth College community.

**Associated Policies and Procedures**

- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Equal Employment Opportunity and Anti-discrimination Policy
- Harassment Policy

**Relevant Legislation and Authority**

- School Education Act 1999
- School Education Regulations 2000
- The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000
- Education Service Providers (Full Fee Overseas Students) Registration Act 1991 (WA) (ESPRA)
- The Privacy (Enhancing Privacy Protections) Act 2012

*Since there are visa implications with Full Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS) complaints are covered under the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 and the National Code 2007, and handling of these are covered by the School’s FFPOS Complaints and Appeals Procedures available from the School directly.*

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

“How should I raise a concern or lodge a complaint?”
When raising a concern we suggest contacting the School and asking to speak to a member of staff with whom you feel comfortable. Members of staff will be happy to help. It may be best to start with the person most closely concerned with the issue. For example, you can raise pastoral concerns with the Year Co-ordinator or class teacher, academic concerns with the subject teacher and sports concerns with the Head of Sport. They may be able to sort things out quickly, with the minimum of fuss. However, you may prefer to take the matter to a more senior member of staff, for example the appropriate Deputy Principal or Head of Junior School.

If you feel your concern has not been dealt with satisfactorily, you may wish to lodge a complaint. A complaint should be made in writing, clearly outlining the details of the grievance, and this can be lodged with the Complaints Manager in writing or via email (complaintsmanager@pc.wa.edu.au).

“I don’t want to complain as such, but there is something bothering me.”
The School is here for you and your child, and we want to hear your views and your 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 School as we are here to help.

“What happens about confidentiality?”
Your complaint or concern will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be initially limited to the Complaints Manager and those directly involved. The Principal or Chair of the School Council may also need to be informed. It is the School’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 School 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 Department for Child Protection or the Western Australian Police Service for advice or immediate action. If such action is required you would be fully informed.

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 School.

The confidentiality and complaints and concerns for Full Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS), as required by the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 and the National Code 2007, will subject to the Complaints and Appeals Policy for Full Fee Paying Overseas Students. This policy is available from the School directly.
“How long will it take to receive a response from the School?”
If the concern is raised face-to-face or by telephone, it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction.

If you lodge a complaint in writing, we will make a written response within 3 working days to acknowledge your complaint and, unless further exploration of the issue is needed, detail what action is proposed or will be taken and the timeline for this action.

“Will my concern or complaint be treated appropriately?”
Procedural fairness is of the upmost importance and all parties will be treated justly and reasonably within the law and the School’s rules. In the interest of finding a just resolution, complaints will be examined and investigated by the Complaints Manager. A hearing appropriate to the circumstances will be held free of any bias. Substance of the complaint will be provided to the subject of the grievance and a clear record of the incident, the action taken and the outcome will be kept. An evaluation of the action will be carried out and any related procedures will be reviewed.

“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 School Council. Alternatively, you may wish to write directly to the Chair. The 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 Chair will invite you to a meeting. You may wish to be supported by a friend, but legal representation would not be appropriate at this stage.

Perth College recognises 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.